Rs 20



### EXCLUSIVE

## Bank accounts

Can a person's bank account details make newspaper headlines? Senior cabinet member Chiranjibi Wagle had his bank statements printed in the national media. Who is next? Girija Koirala, Madhav Nenal, anyone who has submitted property details? No one seems to have any doubts that Wagle has been up to hanky panky, but what about due process' Lawyers say that Rastra Bank officials can only order banks to divulge the privileged stigating agency. So who leaked? And why?



Weekly Internet Poll #52. To vate go to: www.nepaliti O Are conditions right for meaningful elections in

TOP CLASS

## SARAD KC in LIBANG

Negal are food-deficit even in normal times. But nine months of emergency and escalating violence have crippled food convoys leading to severe undernourishment of hundreds of thousands of people.

In addition, the monsoon failed in western Nepal this year, and villagers who would otherwise have corn, potato, or millet this time of year have almost nothing to eat. Women and small children have already started showing signs of malnutrition.

"We used to grow enough food to last six months, but with the drought and the food embargo, we may have nothing this year," says Ram Bahadur KC of Ramdi in Pyuthan. Locals traditionally migrate to India for work to feed their families, but fear of harassment by Indian police of Nepalis suspected of being Manists is keening them home "But there is no food for us here," says Rekh Bahadur Pun of Pang in Rolpa.

The security forces have been trying to starve out the rebels by restricting food going ip the valleys, but that has had the oppo effect. Ordinary villagers are hungry, while the ists smuggle in supplies on secret iungle trails. A student at Sirjana Jyoti School in Sumchal told us: "The village has no food, but the Maoists eat rice, noodles, powder milk, biscuits." Worse, the student adds, militia regularly raid villages for the little food farmers have kept aside for the winter. Some local officials say hunger isn't that

## When food is used as weapon, the innocent starve

bad, and accuse the Maoists of propaganda. "They've felt the effect of the embargo, that is hinterland. In towns the food embargo affects why they've asked the locals to talk of a shortage," Rolpa CDO Birendra Nath Sharma told us. But local representatives of the Nepali Congress and the UML say their constituents are on the verge of starvation due

to the embargo and the drought together. This year's drought is expected to reduce Nepal's total rice production by 100,000 tons, much of it in the mid- and far-west. Last year Nepal produced 4.2 million tons of paddy. The country may have enough food, but how will it get to those who need it? With no jobs, locals don't have cash to buy food. "Business is down 70 percent," says Dor Bahadur Khadka, a hotelier and school teacher at Sulichaur. "We're not allowed to bring in hatteries mondles and rice." The food shortage gets worse further west and north. Having food at district headquarters would make little difference: the Manists wouldn't allow people to go to get it. Not just food is in short supply, a half-full matchbox is sold for Rs 5.

The district headquarters of Kalikot. Jumla, Humla and Mugu are under govern ment control, but Maoists hold sway in the civil servants and officials, and in villages people have no food due to Maoist extortion.

The Nepal Food Corporation has shut down its godowns outside the district headquarters fearing Maoist raids. \*We understand the hardship, but we can do little," says Rup Singh Bhandari, chief of the NFC's Nepalganj office. The godowns are full, but there are no helicopters to take grain to remote districts. Mule transport to Mugu and Kalikot has stopped after Maoists destroyed the suspension bridge on the Tilla at Raraghat.

There's been an exodus of villagers from the five districts of the Karnali Zone. "Every one between the ages of 10 and 50 has left," says Deep Bahadur Shahi, former Kalikot DDC chairman. "Women till the fields, but can't produce enough. Besides we have 'guests' to feed," Shahi says, referring to Maoists. Security concerns for staff and the

difficulty of working in insurgency areas is forcing donors in food for work programmes to re-evaluate their projects. The UN's World Food Programme and the German aid agency GTZ suspended programs in Jajarkot and Mugu in April after Maoists looted their food stores. The two are now trying to find ways. to work directly with user groups to take food to the districts. "The situation isn't as bad as it is made out to be now, as there is something in the fields," Dietrich Stotz of

GTZ's Integrated Food Security Project told us

"I expect bigger problems after December, when the people have eaten whatever they could grow." .

## HONDA

## CYEN IS PIECE

Creating pride and satisfaction in ownership of My First Honda







## Heads you win, tails we lose

he Election Commission's verdict on Tuesday may have given the Girija Prasad Koirala faction of the Nepali Congress the party flag and the tree symbol, but it wasn't much of a victory.

After sitting on the dispute for four months, apparently deliberately, the FC came out with such a wishywashy verdict that it evoked ridicule. And instead of resolving the dispute once and for all, so parties can

now get down to serious campaigning, it has stretched the uncertainty by another week by allowing the Sher Bahadur Deuba faction to register a new party. In fact, the controversy will linger even after the elections, because the FC said that its decision was not final. Now, the real gues-

tion is: what if the elections can't be held on 13 November? The Maoists have been picking off potential

Sacks full of voter lists ready to be dispatched to the districts. UML candidates in the districts one by one, "They have attacked some of our most popular cadres in the districts," the UML's Raghu Panta told us. "It has forced us to ask whether they are sincere about talks." The Maoists have killed over 65 UML workers.

The Congress has lost more, and other political parties have also been targeted. According to the human rights group INSEC, the Maoists have so far

killed 184 political workers. "As a believer in democracy I cannot say no to elections " says Hirdaya Ram Thani former Congress MP from Surkhet. "But it will be impossible to go beyond the district headquarters to canvass for votes if the security situation does not improve."

Legally, after finalising the preliminaries, the EC needs 40 days to hold elections. But the security forces have said that they need at least six phases

possibly even as many as eight, which could stretch the elections over three months. And yet, as a senior minister told us, "Politics does not matter anymore. We've reached a stage where the security forces may be deciding how and when to hold elections. Last week police

chief Pradip Sumshere Rana touched a raw nerve after articulating what security agencies thought was the ideal way to go. Based on an earlier assessment, that

involved holding elections in 150 constituencies in five phases to leave more time for the remaining 55.

The uncertainty lingers, and in thi scenario, the worst motives are ascribed to the king, irrespective of whether he decides to invoke Article 127 to try to take the country back to absolute monarchy, as some fear he might, or works with the government to devise a tional way out of the stalemate. •



## Shed the politics of exclusion

To be relevant in Nepali politics now, parties must be inclusive. Today's Manists were inside the

parliament till they were excluded from

'national" stature by the election commis

sion and the supreme court, and forced to

The district government in Rolna which

prove their political point from without.

**KLEPTOMANIACS ANONYMOUS** Rush hour Kathmandu. Roll down your window and sniff the air. That is the smell of kerosene, and it is the smell of corruption. It is surprising that when the Centre for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) began its dramatic crackdown on corrupt officials last month, it chose not to

begin with the most blatant and obvious area of malfeasance in Nepal today: More than 60 percent of the diesel and nearly 50 percent of the petrol sold in gas stations in Negal are adulterated with subsidised kerosene. This is done right under the noses (and with the connivance of) the Nepal Oil Corporation by retailers, wholesalers and transporters. The tentacles of Bahadur decimated his opponents and

adulteration reach up to the highest echelons of what has come to be known limited major government positions to as "Nepal Oil Corruption", and through them it lubricates with payoffs the nalms of politicians rule ended, the ostensibly democratic There have been numerous investigative reports in media in which the culprits have even allowed themselves to be photographed and have spoken prevent their access to power. Political on record, defending their right to dilute our diesel. When the administration exclusion became a refined art with the cracked down on gas stations last year, they went on strike and the government had to back down: effectively saying that it was okay to one could be a member of the national adulterate legislature only if one were a bonafide Leave aside for now that the adulteration has serious health hazards: suspended particulates cause respiratory infections and When the 1980 referendum forced the asthma, the benzene and toluene in emissions are carcinogens. (See "Adulterated economy" by Chakra Khadka, #105). Let's just with a Panchavat policy politburo that look at what it does to the health of the nation: Nepal Oil Corpora could filter out undesirables.

conservative average of 50 percent adulteration, we are looking shenanigans of the past, except that they are at a Rs 6 billion loss to the exchequer. The CIAA had to start unfortunately very much our democratic somewhere with its crackdown on graft, and it is understandable nresent. It all started with the 1990. that they went after the parasites in the tax department since the constitution itself where the larger parties in government's revenue is hit badly by corrupt officials. the interim government introduced article But cracking down on adulterers wouldn't just result in healthier citizens, it would also yield Rs 6 billion a year in cash 113(2) that handicapped campaigning by savings—nearly eight percent of Nepal's national budget! Need competing smaller parties: only "national" we say more? The culture of corruption has become ingrained narties that had narnered at least three because of the politics of exclusion that, in turn, has tainted percent of the total votes would be entitled the system inviting the dangers of democratic reversal. (See Dipak Gyawali's adjoining piece.) We don't know why Nepal didn't make it to Transparency International's latest Perception of Corruption Index in which Bangladesh got the grand prize. Maybe because in Nepal graft is not a perception anymore, it is an everyday reality. The CIAA's arrest of 22 tax officials has spooked some in the customs department, but elsewhere

impossible to do things legally, we are penalised for being honest. Corruption is like fish: it rots from the head down. We can't wait for the CIAA's crackdowns to trickle up the food chain. And we will know this country has been cleansed when ordinary citizens can go about their daily lives without being asked to cheat, bribe, or lie to get the simplest things done. And will also, ultimately be the test of our democracy.

it is business as usual. It is now

s corruption-tainted kangresis engage to an election symbol. A in a Bollywoodsy running around the party tree, what is often lost is the larger picture. What political chemistry allows corruption to flower on our soil like the rhododendron in spring? The answer seems to lie in our long-standing culture of

had their elected majority, was hounded out Monopoly politics is not new: Jung with brutal police action in 1994 on trumped up charges, leaving them no official space to express their grievances. Today. members of only one family. When Rana this exclusion has pushed out the UML as well as the Koirala loyalists: the rump centrists banned the leftists for a while to Deuba Congress has refused a year extension to all the local government bodies. allowing them to large into limbo because five years ago the opposition UML managed Panchavat's tightly supervised democracy: their elections. The clear message: "It's now our turn to rig and exclude you." member of any of its "class organisations" Such undemocratic sequestering has not helped the larger parties either, since the panchas into adult franchise, they came up

process of exclusion, once started, does not stop at the party office gate. If the name of the political game is merely to control the rent-seeking apparatus of HMG, it will These could be laughed away as inevitably seep into the politburos and the central committees. While a few in the top leadership of the Congress and the UML helped themselves to duty-free Paieros and life-long pensions (mercifully struck down by the Supreme Court), the vast majority of r party cadres felt swindled. The politics of exclusion and the

infighting it entailed has now brought the system to a dead end. If this system—and more importantly, the country's economic future-is to be saved all the three major political forces will have to begin the painful politics of inclusion. The Maoists who epresent genuine rural anger must realise that angst without a theory of governance will only force them into mindless violence which cannot succeed because all its opponents can never be wiped out to stablish a one-party dictatorship. If they continue on the current path much longer, it will severely compromise their

The traditional forces, including the army, cannot wish the Panchayat back and nust realise that the monarchy must represent not just the past but also the future of all Nepalis, especially those who think non-traditionally. The Congress and the UML, who have represented the aspirations of the urban modern sector from

1950 to 1990, will be around as a force in one form or the other as long as a modern economy dependent on the consumption of traded mass goods is around. It is mostly they who have to understand that, to be relevant in Nepali politics as creative force, they must initiate the politics of inclusion. How can they do that?

They can begin the process of reform, ridding themselves of their corrupt image with credible effort. Calling the CIAA efforts "politically motivated" is actually moving the wrong way, that of eventual political irrelevance. If there is any indication of such a change of heart, then the following three steps to peace may stand a chance

- An immediate ceasefire by the Manists. It needs to be followed by the army holding their guns and initiating the negotiations for arms surrender. (If a political force is going to keep its goons and guns, we can forget peace, development or anything else.) With this process underway the king may have to announce amnesty for Maoists without criminal "Alok tendencies"

. Retter if the Congress and LIMI take this initiative, but failing which the king should call a roundtable of all political forces, use article 127 to postpone impractical national elections, form an appropriate interim government, appounce a constitution reform commission, and instruct the interim government to hold local elections to municipalities and VDCs one by one. Reviving politics at the grassroots and beginning the process of inclusion from there upwards is important to produce fresh and untainted political leadership and to

allow democracy to survive. A vigorous debate on constitutional reform should be carried out for one year and local elections should be seen as mini referendums. These reforms should be implemented using the Article 127 provisions, and a national election should then be held to constitute a parliament that has the right to change whatever it wants in the constitution with an

overwhelming majority. The alternative to such a middle course would be the suffocating stagnation of restrictive party politics and the terrifying extremism of the Manists neither of which the country can afford any longer. •

The 7 represents

You have a centralised power structure, a

weary and angry public, and the Maoists

stirring the pot. There is a need for

fundamental solutions.

eaving aside the doubts people have about whether elections will be held or not, there are welcome signs that some political parties in the fray have come up with new ideas in their election manifestos. This is a welcome sign.

Two major parties find \*feudal elements" in the Nepali society as being major problems. The Girija kangresis have decided to push for regional autonomy, whereas the UMI under Madhay Nepal sees radical land reform as a solution. These are responses to the daunting challenges ahead: problems that range from healthcare, education, child labour to abject poverty And, of course, never far from our minds the Maoists insurgency.

You have a centralised power structure a weary and angry public on the sidelines, and the Manists stirring the not. There is a need for fundamental solutions. Many of the problems are the symptoms of the disease, and we need far-reaching compre hensive strategies to tackle them. There are seven fundamental issues with political economic and social empowerment that need to be tackled (see box)

Educational opportunities and fair access to quality public education (not quotas and handouts) will give suppressed minorities a level playing field. Elected, decentralised, regional governments will deunlue decision, making self-reliance resource mobilisation capacity at the grassroots. Then, a popular mixed proportional representation system of election will hring more halance in our representation system, especially in favour of the millions of voiceless ethnic and political minorities.

A system promoting the ideals of separation of power, including the direct elections of the prime minister and the regional governors can reduce the conflict of interest between the head of the government and the post-seeking legislators. The Norwegian approach prohibiting any narliament dissolution during its regular election cycle is also an idea worth consid-

ering for political stability The state must fulfil its social responsibilities in the areas of infrastructure. education, science and technology, health, environment, social justice, law and order, and personal liberty and free speech. But it must also free the economic environment to foster private entrepreneurship and investment to generate jobs, tax base, and

wealth, and to ensure the benefits of the

Institutional comunition can be reduced by breaking the alliance between political parties and big business. Punitive neasures alone cannot provide a long-rur solution. Bureaucratic discretionary power to award grants, public projects and licenses must be replaced by transparent rules and conduct. Such transparency will remove incentives for the corrupt.

The UML's Madhav Nepal's singular focus on a radical land reform will in fact be counterproductive. If the goal is to spur investment, generate production and break feurlalism, then the answers lie in policies promoting economic freedom. A wide-open financial market involving mutual funds, pension funds, bonds, tax free retirement annuities for the private and public sectors the foreign direct investment (FDI) and transactions of bonds and stocks without any government red tape is more likely to help the UML achieve its economic goals and expand the

country's productive middle class Eventually, increased tax base and revenue give the governments more resources and power to fund public education, irrigation, health care, infrastructure and environment. However. without the seven fundamentals in place, public policy debates on a score of these and other socio-economic issues

will be mont. Democracy welcomes diversity and pluralism and, at the same time, makes the act of governing messy. It is flexible and allows changes. These seven fundamentals could even provide a basis for a penotiation strategy with the Maoists since they are common to their 40-point list. (see: "An end to the means", # 107). The public and the civic society must be vigilant and demanding. Otherwise they will get the

ethnicity, caste, or gender Commitment to eradicate untourhability

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## 2. Institutional corruption

- Remove bureaucratic discretionary nower in favor of transparency Public disclosure of party financial
- Encourage democratic practices within party politics to attract good civic leaders

3. Economic freedom · Ensure economic freedom and ensure henefits of the free market for all in an increasingly interdependent world

Promote democracy in technology, information, and finance

## · Protect private ownership rights

- 4. Economic comparative advantage Increase national and international private cooperation in hydropower to spread
- out development in five regions Promote tourism and its downstream
- Identify other areas of comparative

## advantage in the agro-economy

### 5. Regional cooperation Safeguard and promote Nepal's economic interests within SAARC and

- SAFTA by promoting our comparative advantage Show commitment to fight terrorism by
- not allowing such activities in Nepal against
- its neighbours

  Revive the ideals of a zone of peace

6. Civil liberty and freedom · Safeguard personal liberty, freedom of expression, and free press

 Safeguards against arrests and seizures without a due process and respect for human

## 7. Political stability and faimess

- Take measures to ensure fair election
- (caretaker government to supervise elections and a well-represented election commission? Commitment to the constitutional
- monarchy, depoliticising it, and clearly defining its power and responsibility vis-à-vis the house, the prime minister, and the other constitutional hodies
- Separation of power to minimise conflict of interest

## LETTERS

## Re: "The moral high ground and the rules of war", #111 by Samrat Rana. I believe that the Nepali people in general support the Royal Nepal Army. It is the army's own actions that has had adverse effect on this support. The support can be enhanced with the following Leave the press free and use them and their information to the

ong reporting in special courts. Take actions against few errant personnel that are carrying out activities detrimental to the image

tion sells some Rs 12 billion worth of fuel every year. Based on a

of the army.
3. Admit mistakes and provide compensations to victims or families of the wrongly accused. 4. Take prisoners and stop

These actions will garner a lot of moral support from the Nepali



(#110) made me totally confused and very angry. Although I look forward to CK Lal's columns. I find that his articles are wandering more and more off the issues that he tries to highlight. This particular one urged Nepali people to rethink

### worth a lot more than any material henefit. Mr Gautam even gave me an insight: that CK Lal could be "more Indian than an Indian".

wanted to write a strong lette

Calcutta summed up all my

and pride of being a Nepali is

against CK Lal's arguments, but

felt that Shovendra Gautam from

feelings in his letter (#111). I totally agree with Mr Gautam that dignity

. This time, CK I al really hit it straight. Nepal is not like Bhutan or Sikkim, It is much bigger and India will not be able to support our people, politicians and bureaucrats with its largesse. The answer is more like what Mr I al's friend "ID" all but admitted that the Maoists are

enjoying patronage in India. India will never dare to alienate China, and neither will China feel easy with India having a complete sway over us-even though Indo-Sino relations are warming and the advantage of Nepal as a buffer is

vanishing for both of them. It will not take long for the Maoist to be like the LTTE was for India. It is ndeed intriguing that "ID" thinks that the Manist will come to an abrupt end as soon as India backs

Last point: no matter where a Nepali is toiling, or how badly we are governed, a real Nepali would never think of being a colony just R Khadga, Kathmandu to have a better life. Dipak R Tuladhar, Thamel

> · "Distant neighbours" by C K Lal gives us a deep shock. As an emotional Nepali I don't like to believe what he says. But unfortunately it is true. We are an endangered species. Many internal and external forces are haunting us, and some Nepalis are carrying guns to finish not only poor Nepalis, but the whole Nepali nation that our forefathers defended with their lives. Baburam and Prachanda are cloned from Kazi Lendup. But that

other is the betraval of democracy by the parliamentary parties that allowed the Maoists to rise and take our country to the brink of extinction. Sooner or later, the people will realise the anti-national nature of the Manists but I am

## afraid it may be too late. Giri Raj Dahal, by email . The government, and political

parties, have failed to provide even the very minimum sense of security to the common people. We can think of basic necessit only if we live. People are being assacred like livestock, and a that government and political parties think of is getting political benefit through propaganda. It seems that they have lost their humanity and compassion. We wonder whether it is really the incompetence of the governmen and political parties, or is it their deliberate intention not to resolve the Maoist problem? The problem

could be resolved through negotiation, intelligence and international politics. And we need the complete cooperation of India. The Maoists are operating from India, that is a fact. Many Nepali leaders have visited India, shook hands with Indian leaders, and nothing really happens. Why should India solve Nepal's proble when our own leaders don't show any genuine intention to do so? We have neither any exper tise nor statesmanship in the country needed to deal with the

## Rajeeb L Satyal, Baluwatar

· The anonymous Indian diplomat that CK Lal spoke to at Bangkok airport didn't tell him anything new. We have known all along that India is using the Maoists as a bargaining chip to turn Nepal into a Bhutan, or worse, a Sikkim. Now, we have it from the horse's mouth

**ENOUGH** "Enough" by Ramesh Poudel (#111) was commendable. I think it is time to stop violence and start talking peace. If the government cannot do good for Nepalis, it has no right to do harm either. There has been violation of human rights from both sides and the victim is always poor Ram Bahadur or Shyam Bahadur who has nothing to do with the dreams of Prachanda or Sher Bahadur. If there is peace and political stability in the country, Nepalis can show that they can prosper even

> · The government declared an emergency, called Magists terrorists and started going after them Now we hear another Manist-government dialogue may be underway. Am I the only one confused?

without these political leaders.

Excuse me, aren't these the Chitra B Pun, Kathmandu same people we put a reward on

their heads, dead or alive? Negotiations, compromises, discussions with terrorists? How can you talk to preachers of The question then is, are they really terrorists? Aha! Now that

makes you raise an evebrow. Take

away the terrorist yeil, and what

we see are rebels for justice, Nepalis craving real development, disillusioned by the homelessness and starvation, angry at the injustice and inequality. Nepalis are sick and tired of being cheated and wasted, and they are ready to risk a revolution. The violence and Kiran Nakarmi, by email brutality is never justifiable, but that is what people do when they have no hope. Why is there so much hypocrisy? Rebellions are sure to be born in these conditions Declaring a state of emergency and activating armed forces may kill a few thousand insurgents. But the insurgency remains. Let's say all the Maoists were successfully

eliminated, and the underlying

remained another rehellion will be born. What then? Will the government declare these new rebels terrorists too? Nepal's rulers and would-be rulers need to transform themselves and become genuine and accountable repres of the people. Stop playing with

### Nepal and Nepali de Ekta Ghimire, 16 Budhanilkantha School

FIGHT FOR RIGHT As soon as I read Samrat Rana's

"The moral high ground and the

thing to say: "Exactly". It is so true that the public expects the army to deliver peace but are too lazy to provide support. I'm not saying that the army have done no wrong. There are people who you have to be careful of everywhere Unfortunately that's life but if you put yourself into their position, into their situation where Maoists who use children and women as doorstep, things might be very



The seven fundamentals

Elected regional governments, devolve

political and economic power to regions.

Mixed proportional representation

system of election to embrace ethnic and

· Five autonomous and publicly sup-

Five autonomous and publicly sup

Commitment to reform the public

ported regional universities to close regional imbalance in higher education.

ported regional technical institutes with the

education system without destroying private

· Quality and access in public education.

No workplace discrimination based on

1. Empowerment

political minorities.

Educational:

university status.

Devolutionary:

you are interested in a job. The conditions during any operation i probably against human rights: the food is not adequate, equip ment is not sufficient and wher you die, no one will support you family and send your child to school. However, the soldiers fight on and that in my view makes them real heros. I find it galling that general Nepalis, cially in Kathmandu criticise the RNA and do not appreciate a soldier's sacrifice. Quite frankly they are selfish and just plain spoilt. They should be sent to the jungles to fight for the right to see their children grow up in a Nepal where there is peace.

cially, the RNA is no attraction i

## S Gurung, Kathmandu CORRECTION

pictures on page 15.

Several photocredits were missing in issue #111: Min Bajracharya for page 2 and 3. Gopal Guragain for the

Red threatens green



RAMYATA LIMBU him Prasad Shrestha, chairman the Federation of Community Forest Users of Nepal (FECOEUN) is a troubled man. The ongoing Maoist insurgency has affected nearly 11,500 forest user groups in 74 districtswhich amounts to more than the increase in poaching in 1.196.199 households, undermining one of Nepal's most successful environmental and conservation initiatives which took decades of nersistence to build up of emergency, the army has pulled

Following the Maoist insurgency, the movement of villagers in community forests around the country has been restricted due to the fear of both the insurgents and the security forces. "In some

HERE AND THERE

districts, it's extremely risky to go In the initial phases of the into forest areas. You might meet insurgency, a couple of villagers Maoists who think you are an out looking for fodder were shot informer for the security forces. dead mistaken for Maoists by Or you might be questioned by army patrols who think that security forces. Today, most of FFCOFUN's activities are largely you're a Maoist," says Shrestha. restricted to district headquarters, You're also likely to meet armed where members focus their energies poachers," he adds, referring to on developing human resources. "Even then, it's risky for villagers as protected areas, where the army they have to pass through Magistcontrolled areas or through security escalation of the violence, and the posts," says Shrestha. subsequent imposition of a state

All this has already taken its toll on community forestry and conservation efforts. Twentyseven districts have been identified as hotsnots for Manist activity, while 25 are affected. Reports so far say that the insurgents have destroyed nine

Grassroots success stories are the silent casualties of the insurgency.



protected areas, with some exceptions, like Annapurna Makalu Barun, Manaslu, and Kanchenjunga, where communitybased initiatives are taking place.

In areas like the Manaslu Conservation area, where community-based initiatives have been taking off, there is no army presence and the Manists have destroyed offices of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation in the villages of Philim, Prok and Samagaon in northernmost Gorkha Recent visitors to the area expressed concern at the amount of illegal timber being transported by yaks to Tibet. \*When we were here seven years ago, we would see

caravans of about 30 yaks

bordering regions of India and Tibet have increased. Existing data indicate that there is no damage done by Maoists where a large number of army personnel continue to be posted. The Department of

transporting timber to Tibet. This

number," says journalist Mohan

subsidised by the government ran

out four months ago and there are

signs that the government is wary

of supplying more food, fearing it

may be intercepted by insurgents,

local villagers will be increasingly

reports of smuggling of timber to

compelled to fell trees and

transport them to Tibet for

money. Since the insurgency

Mainali. Since food supplies

time, we saw double that

## Himalayan elections

Srinagar - Perhaps it's a taste of what Nepal can expect later this year. Perhaps not. I have learnt, you see, never to say anything definite about Kashmir, where I have been covering the first of four days of voting in state assembly elections. The BBC says "Indian-administered Kashmir" to describe that portion of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir that is retained by India. The other bit, roughly a third of the old state, is described as "Pakistani-administered Kashmir

has been pulled in. Since the

out troops from remote outposts

in protected areas, especially in hilly

regions where insurgents are most

likely to attack by night and steal

arms, and where it is hard to send

reinforcements due to the terrain.

These two tarnished terms annoy both Delhi and Islamabad, who each insist that the other is evil incarnate and their respective approaches to the thorny Kashmir question is "just" or "principled". Fach prefers to think of the other's portion of Kashmir as "occupied" and a source of endless human rights abuses and/or terrorism. Fach takes aim at the international media for perceived transgressions into this holy territory of semantic rights and wrongs. Neither really seems to give the views or aspirations of the Kashmiri people-on either side of the ludicrously named Line of Control-a great

But I write neither to praise nor bury India or Pakistan. As I trundled down dusty roads, apple orchards a blur on either side, in search of the real story of this election. I couldn't help but reflect on what might be relevant about this experience for Nepal. It's not the shallow parallels that interest me, it's the notion that somehow elections are a panacea, a sacred rite, a way of resolving the depredations of time, geopolitics and bad fortune. That's a notion not confined to India. Nearly 30 foreign diplomats travelled. to Kashmir to put a stamp of approval or otherwise on proceedings. All were from mature democracies. Like me, they travelled about from constituency to polling booth, town to village. Unlike me, they had armed guards and their cars had little red lights on top. Their drivers were imperious, mine was cautious and thoughtful. But we were looking for the same things: a view on the election process that allow us to decide whether it was good or bad.

## Can elections deal with big problems rooted in history?

district offices, 33 area office and

ment has received a rude awaken

ing, but this is a crucial time to

take stock of the situation. The

implications will be large. long-term

scars in terms of both environment

degradation and lost opportunities

in conservation," says wildlife

hiologist Pralad Yonzan, who has

been tracking the impact of the

insurgency on bio-diversity and

So far, analysts point out,

community forestry has sustained

management practices in some

8473 km sq of forest-an area

cumulatively larger that the total

forest cover of 5827 km sq in the

protected areas. Since 1975, the

army has been patrolling most

wildlife conservation efforts.

142 range posts. "The govern-



None of us questioned the efficacy of elections in such a situation. Whether you see the violence in Kashmir as cross-border terrorism or an indigenous freedom struggle, it begs the question: can you really hope that democracy, how ever well it is practised, will have a positive impact on such a situation. No one really knows how many people have died in Kashmir: somewhere between 30-60,000, but everyone agrees that most are civilians. There are 450,000 armed members of the Indian security forces. They patrol, rumble around in armoured personnel carriers, and dominate most

aspects of life. Everyday, attacks by separatist militants result in loss of life. It's a dire situation, and I wish the new government all the best. No doubt many of those who govern once a result is declared in mid-October

will be of good will, and the legitimate choice of their electors. There will be some bad apples, corrupt or cynical or both. It was ever thus in democracy. But what can a group of lawmakers do about a situation that predates their campaign, and actually is rooted deep in the mists of history, a legacy of the partition of British India in 1947, and the different way that two independent states developed.

In Nepal too, do we not have a situation that calls out for sweeping reform of society as we know it, an end to corruption, undue privilege and ineffective government? Do we not have the security deployed with more or less a free hand? Do we not have militant opponents of democracy who will stop at nothing to discredit or maim the system they oppose? Do both sides in the conflict not demonise each other beyond redemption? Can we really solve such problems of such

magnitude and context with an election? Maybe, is the only answer I can give to that last question. Maybe we can ... maybe we can ... To like Kashmir. I'm learning to blur my certainties about Nepal. Not my good will or earnest wish for peace, development and a bright future, but my glib, pre-packaged, journal-

ist's explanation for everything. So I tell friends and colleagues that elections in Nepal—like in Kashmir—will be difficult, fraught with danger, possibly violence. Courage and perseverance will be required by all, not least by the reporters who cover the proceedings. But it can't hurt to keep hammering away with a democratic blunt instrument at the men of violence, the cynics who think themselves knowledgeable about the will of the people.

If that's all that democracy does for troubled places like Kashmir and Nepal, then that's enough. •

DOMESTIC BRIEFS



Maoists made a major attack two years ago killing more than 20

policemen. In Chitwan, where a

killed by poachers has doubled in

the past year. Between July 2001

higher number of army remain

posted, the number of rhinos

and lune 2002 38 great one. horned rhinos have been killed.

Only the carcasses or skeletons

community forestry in Nepal were

were found with skull bones

working up to being success

stories. While statistical reports

indicate that Nepal's aggregate

reflecting deforestation largely in

ment, timber lobby groups, illicit

tree felling, and local politics -

everyone agrees that the resur-

gence of canopy in the mid-hills,

particularly in districts such as

number of rhinos in the Royal

National Parks has grown six-fold

to more than 600. Tigers, which

numbered less than 100 at one

time, have now gone up to 350,

125 of them breeding adults.

There are currently 300-500

Dhading and Kavre, is real. Meanwhile, since 1961, the

Chitwan and Royal Bardia

forest cover has gone down -

the plains owing to encroach-

minus the horn. Both conservation and

National Parks and Wildlife Reserves has received just one damage report from Langtang and none from Chitwan. Neither area has seen a decrease in the number of troops deployed for patrolling But in other protected areas that are closer to the heartland of the insurgency, or that are very remote, and where the army is not stationed—such as Annapurna, Manaslu, Makalu Barun-some 40 instances of insurgency-related damage have been reported. In the remote forests of Makalu Barun and Manaslu areas, the Maoists train their cadres and extort money

from tourists. "The exceptions are Bardia and Sukhlaphanta in west Nepal, which are used by the insurgents as base and escape routes to India." says Yonzan. While the army, which maintains two companies in the western and eastern parts of Bardia, has tried to maintain as many of the original posts in the park area, at least 30-35 percent of park area is unreachable. So far, of the 112 original guard posts in 11 protected areas, only 34 remain The reduction of armed posts by an alarming 70 percent has been a boon to poachers.

In Dolpo, where strict conservation and patrolling in the past twenty years has raised the population of rare species like the musk deer and snow leopard, nnachers are having a field day Rangers and game scouts tell of finding traps with deer skeletons. Since 1998, officials at the Sekpa check post of Shev Phoksumdo National Park have discovered some 500 traps meant for musk deer. Game scouts say they found fifty such traps on the steep slopes directly below the Suligad barrack near Dunai, where

## SYMPHONY OF COLORS exhibition of paintings by

Madan Chitrakar

- Nepai Art Council Hall.
- Babar Mahal, Kathmandu Sept. 22 28, 2002
- Dally 11 am 6 pm

## Mandala House

Columbia, Ratherenio espera, opera pide un - 1-be p name that produce

snow lennards....one tenth of the world's snow leonard popula-But the ongoing conflict,

together with the recent disputes over logging benefits and forest registration processes to manage the woods, may destroy the strength and authority of forest user groups that took decades to develop. According to government statistics, owing to the insurgency, Nepal's GDP has already dropped by 10 percentabout \$512 million, which includes trade, tourism, infrastructure and industrial produc

The loss of human life, the dysfunctional administrative units, the displacement of people these same ground realities have had an equally serious impact on community participation and the management of common property resources, a vital factor in not just conservation, but the sort of rural development that address. many of the concerns fuelling the insurgency. "Biodiversity conservation is the key element in sustainable development, " says Yonzon, "But unlike what many donors think, putting money into poverty alleviation can't quarantee improvement in biodiversity." ♦

## APCA does it again

The publisher of The Himalayan Times newspaper, India's Asia Pacific Communication Associates (APCA), has once again triggered controversy on whether foreign direct investment should be allowed in media. Although FDI is not allowed under the National Communication Policy, the APCA group launched its Englishlanguage daily last year, affiliated with the Himalaya Times company. The Himalayan imprint line names Ujjwal Sharma, the publisher and editor of the Nepali-language Himalaya Times, as publisher of The Himalayan. It is said that APCA agreed to inject into the financially-ailing Himalaya Times in exchange, but in a turnaround, the group has announced its own new Nepali daily with an investment of Rs 44 million. This time around, the group is promoting Bhawani Maskey as publisher of the planned 12-page broadsheet daily. The Federation of Nepalese Journalists, Press Chautari and the Federation of Editors-Publishers have already expressed their displeasure, claiming that APCA manoeuvred the legal provisions on FDI in media. In the meantime, Himalaya Times, which has started printing in colour after its tie-up with APCA, has gone back to black and white printing

## Manisha's second debut

Nepali movie stars all seem to be turning producer. First, Bhuvan KC made it big as a producer, followed by Karisma Manandhar and Sharmila Malla, who had somewhat less thumping successes. Now our bestknown export to Bollywood, Manishs Koirala is making her debut as a producer, but in Mumbai. Koirala's brother, Sidhhartha, who never really made it in Bollywood, is to assist his sister, while former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen is the big marquee name in Manisha's first production.

## Pay cuts, downsizing, and more

If you are upset about the increase in income tax (up from 10 percent to 15 percent) starting this Nepali month, don't be. There's worse coming. Government, semi-government and private employers are all downsizing. The Timber Corporation of Nepal bid farewell to 220 employees effective 17 September, while the strunnling Negal Industrial Development Corporation has already announced that it wants to do away with 56 of its 226 employees. Official data is not available, but private sector hotels, airlines and other tourism enterprises are all cutting jobs drastically, or sending a large number of employees on long, manda-

Jobs for the boys
Old army boys, in contrast to the other Nepali professionals, are likely to actually be offered jobs. The government is planning to induct 15,000 ex-armymen on contract basis to consolidate the Royal Nepal Army's strength to maintain law and order for the upcoming general elections and to continue fighting the insurgency. The re-recruitment will be done on the basis of physical fitness, age, and track record during the former soldiers' first stints with the army. The RNA plans to up its present strength of 55,000 to 60,000 by the end of this fiscal year.

## Environmental Nobel

The Austrian NGO Eco Nepal has been awarded this year's King Albert Medal of Merit for its work in Solukhumbu. Eco Himal has constructed a 620 kW hydropower project and been conducting other conservation activities in Thame, Solukhumbu, Sankhuwasabha and Dolakha. This is the first time that an organisation working in Nepal has received the award, considered the Nobel prize for the environment sector, John Hunt, who was on the 1953 expedition to Everest is also a past recipient of the award.

## More heights to scale

In a recent cabinet meeting the government has decided to hand over 15 more trekking peaks to the Nepal Mountaineering Association. The 15 peaks stand between 5,500 and 6,000 m in height. The NMA now has the authority to issue climbing permits to 33 peaks. In 1978, the government handed over 18 peaks to NMA for the promotion of adventure tourism in Nepal.

NMA sources say that the income from the new trekking peaks would be invested for construction and velopment of the International Mountaineering Museum in Pokhara, the Mountaineering Training Academy in Solukhumbu, and the International Mountaineering Memorial Park being built in Kakani. In addition, 10 percent of the income would be set aside to fund development activities in trekking peak areas.

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

The Commission for Educational European Industry the Collect States and Naval 4 1999; Nepal) announces the competition for the Nepali Scholar Post-Goctoral research grants for ecademic year 2005-2004 sinder the auspices of the Fulbright academic exchange program. Depending on the availability of funding, USEF (Nepai will provide grants to any as four Nepall scholars to conduct post-doctoral research at a U.S. university during the 2003-2004 academic year for a period of six months.

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 presuraged to apply

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

- eligible to apply. Applicants must present a fully-developed research proposal, three letters of
- reference, and the documentary evidence of the following:
- a recognized declaral degree;
- a MINIMUM of three years post-ductoral professional experience in Nepal;
- Negalesis citizenship
- a portificate of good health; and
- letter of invitation or appointment from a U.S. university

Detailed instructions and application forms must be obtained from the Falbright Commission (USSF/Maps) affice at the American Center in Quantities, Kathmania by 4:00 p.m. Friday, October 18, 2002. No applications will be given out after this date. Completed applications must reach the Pulbright Commission (USEF/Negat) no later than 4.00 p.m. Wednesday, Nevember 20, 2002.

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Corruption, coercion, or both?





nrime minister Giriia Prasad Koirala linked the widening anti-corruption dragnet to a thickening plot to throttle democracy, we're still missing his larger point. The democracy-corruption link he brought up needs to be probed in its full depth if we are to enrich our understanding of both.

To be sure, Koirala is at an obvious disadvantage here He's been prime minister the longest in our dozen years of democracy. Mention some of the sleaziest scandals of the period and his name just seems to pop up everywhere. Nepotism and favouritism are nouns most prominently associated with the country's most famous political surname. When Koirala castigates the government for covering the putrefaction of the partyless decades, he draws the

how he could have decimated the panchas with the Mallik Commission findings but didn't don't want to listen to his paeans to perfection.

Before you come around to concluding that politics is too serious a matter to be left to politicians, you mustn't disregard one distinction. The current anti-corruption campaign is rooted in laws adopted by the very people we demonise as depraved. Koirala's predominance probably entitles him to part of the credit.

Ridicule is something the ex-premier has confronted from the moment he described the success of the People's Movement as a victory for the panchas, too. As the Maoist insurgency was becoming bloodier, he regretted the decision to do away the panchayat-era zonal commis sioners. Earlier this year, he

If you think corruption is good reason to do away with democracy, think back to Nepal's three decades of corruption and coercion.

to our democratic struggle. Since only the living can be libelled, that part of history is as good as dead for purposes of settling scores. The philosophical relevance of the inquiry persists. For today's political class.

corruption has become a compulsion. In terms of conspicuous consumption, the panchas looked like saints because they could afford to. Austerity can be a clear disadvantage in a highly competitive arena. To prosper, politicians need to pamper, patronise. plead, pressure and promise. The only thing that links those five, apart from the letter P, is pelf. Once you get this straight, it becomes easier to understand how people once considered paragons of probity could plunge so deep into debauchery. And once that's clear, you realise that being corrupt isn't being un-

nothing. See how easily Prime

dissolved the chamber? Would

the broader democratic alliance

have drawn such derision had

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai made

a more profound issue this time.

Can endemic corruption ever be

a justification to end democracy

Koirala recollected how such

allegations were used to oust

Nenal's first elected government

42 years ago. The worst evidence

of malfeasance the post-satra sal

generation associates with the

time are the Indian banknotes

minister's residence. A more

exhaustive study of the money

have to delve deeper into the

contributions of Subarna

politics link of the fifties would

the soon-to-be panchas said they

Koirala has put his finger on

There is anecdotal evidence in our part of the world suggesting that a populace termented by political licentiousness is slow to recognise threats to personal liherties. The fact that the reactionary right considers this sufficient to strike at the heart of

democratic.

the system reflects their disconnect with the nublic nulse. What they also overlook is the power of common cause in uniting the bitterest rivals. The "liberal panchas"-an oxymoron one would have thought-who detected how Kangresis and comrades started hating the system more than they did each other could easily secure their place in the Rastriva Praiatantra Party

A more instructive paralle

oes back a generation. The

Gorkha Parishad-billed as the

party of the waning Ranas—was thought to be sworn to the Nepali Congress' annihilation (Actually, its forerunner was the only non-state party gunning for BP Koirala's life). When politicians were caught between submission, incarceration and exile, the main opposition party in the dissolved parliament cooperated and later merged with the Nepali Congress to fortify the struggle to restore democracy. Even if the LIMI were to join hands with the Nepali Congress in a third movement to restore democracy, there's a scary side of history: three decades of corruption AND coercion. ♦

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All proceeds from the auction will go directly to the families of seventeen innocent civilians from Dhading District, who lost their lives to the violence of the insurgency and counterinsurgency

Venue: Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited Date and Time: September 22, 2002, 3:00-5:00 pm

Tea will be served



## Higher insurance rates

The Insurance Board has allowed insurance companies to raise some premiums for policies covering losses from sabotage and terrorism almost eight times. The coverage for damage caused by arson is Rs 0.50 for Rs 1,000 of the value of property insured, up from Rs 0.06 per Rs 1,000 of the insured value. The decision will be effective retrospectively from 17 July. The rates for insuring private vehicles and those used for public transport have also been raised by 0.25 percent and 0.50 percent of the insured estimated value. The Board approved increased premiums for storage and transport of cash and also introduced a rate for insuring engineering works.

On track, slowly

It was an all too familiar ending to the most recent talks held on railway operations in New Delhi last
week: officials from Nepal and India agreed to a third round of meeting. The Nepal officials been looking at marking the railway from Kolatas to the Infland Container Depot in Biggarij operational by September, have set themselves a November deadline, a full two years after construction of the ICD was completed. Officials said that the recent round of negotiations was helpful in sorting out matters like insuring cargo handling and documentation, but it remains to be decided how customs clearance will be handled. Nepal wants sealed containers to be allowed to the ICD without hassles on the border India wants to look into the containers before sending them on. The operation of a broad gauge rail between the ICD and the port to Kolkata is estimated to bring transport costs down by 30-40 percent.

## Rescuing RNAC

Another report on what should be done with Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation (RNAC) has been completed, and it repeats what has been said all along-the private sector is good at running airlines, so bring it in to manage the ailing flag carrier. The plan is to break the corporation down into two doing domestic and international operations and bring in private partners to run the foreign operations. The RNAC has already formed a committee to prepare an action plan to get the process started. The report says that RNAC's liabilities now stand at Rs 2.04 billion. The airline flies two Boeing 747s and about half

The trade numbers for 2001/02 are in—and we're not doing too well. According to customs data compiled by the Nepal Rastra Bank, exports tumbled by about 15 percent to Rs 47.54 billion, down from Rs 55.65 billion in the same year-earlier period. Imports were also slow, at Rs 106.7 billion in 2001-02, down from Rs 115.7 billion in 2000/01. Exports to India kept growing, but at a low 11 percent to Rs 28.9 billion, while imports from India grew by 0.3 percent to Rs 45.4 billion

Not fuelling the economy

The slow economic activity in 2001/02 has caused the consumption of diesel to fall by almost 12. percent, According to the Nepal Oil Corporation, diesel consumption in 2001/02 was 286,233 kilolitres. down from 326,979 kilolitres in 2000/01. Likewise, the use of aviation fuel has also dropped to 47,453 kilolitres down from 63,255 kilolitres in 2000/01. There was also a marked decline in the use of furnace oil by industries—down eight percent to 18 188 kilolitres, down from 19 810 kilolitres in 2000/01. There were increases in the sales of petrol, kerosene and liquefied petroleum gas.

Pushing drugs

KIRAN NEPAL

KIRAN NEPAL

epal's pharmaceutical makers
have a 25 percent share of the
Rs 6 billion local market for allopathic drugs, which is growing by 15 percent annually. Some Rs 4 billion has been

invested in Nepal's pharmaceutical industry, with individual investors putting in anywhere between Rs 4 and Rs 200 million. A manufacturer told us that if you invest Rs 100 million and produce 25-30 medicines, you'd start earning a profit within five years The industry provides roughly 5 000 jobs directly, and indirect employment for another 15,000-20,000 people.

And yet most pharmaceutical companies say that they are operating at 50 percent capacity because of marketing constraints Of 35 factories registered at the Department of Drug Administration only 26 are still manufacturing. Four companies shut down last year and the state-run Royal Drugs Limited has been reporting Insses

Competition in the market is cut throat. The industry association of retailers and wholesalers has fixed commissions at 16 percent with the producers but in reality it is a free. for-all at individual retail outlets. Some Indian manufacturers have been selling "buy one get three" schemes, and offering higher commissions.

Doctors and health workers are an important link in drug sales. Nepali producers say that the Indian companies have pampered them to such a degree that local producers cannot offer them competitive incentives. It is not unusual for doctors to nut down brandnames on prescriptions, though medical ethics dictate that they should be using

## The growing Nepali drug industry needs government monitoring.

generic terms. Hospitals for their part charge exorbitant rents for medical store concessions within their compounds. A drug vendor paving Rs 350,000 as rent at, say, the Teaching Hospital, will naturally try and sell the most expensive brands

Royal Drug used to meet most of the government's drug needs until an open market policy was adopted. Initially, Indian companies dominated this seament, but the recent policy of procuring drugs from Negali companies, even if their prices are up to 10 percent higher, has changed

The problem now is price: the government looks for the cheanest Nepali drugs during its annual procurement of medical supplies. Three years and the Ministry of Health requested bids and then purchased 5.5 billion tablets of an antibiotic for 42 paisa per pill. Nepali producers sav it is impossible to produce the drug at that price, and that companies are

compromising on quality to cut costs. Recently, a Department of Drug Administration (DDA) official at a public program organised by the association of drug manufacturers alleged that 25 percent of drug supplies purchased from private manufacturers are counterfeit. The WHO recently issued a set

of manufacturing and staffing guidelines called Good Manufactur ing Process. The DDA requires that all pharmaceutical companies obtain GMP by the end of this year. But a recent inspection of Nepali pharmaceutical companies by WHO representatives revealed that only four Negali companies can be granted the GMP certification. Data from the department shows that 6.000 different brands made by 278 companies are being sold in Nepali markets. Prior to the provision of GMP certification. 1,100 different foreign companies used to supply drugs to Nepal. •

## "Figures look bad, but the fundamentals are sound."



It's been a bad fiscal year for Nepal: for the first time in the past 18 years, economic growth was less than one percent, both exports and imports have dropped, reserves have begun to erode, and the budget deficit has expanded by almost seven percent to Rs17.1 billion. We asked Yuba Raj Khatiwada, executive director of Nepal Rastra Bank's Research Department about just where we stand.

## Nepali Times: The mid-July numbers are in, how would you rate the health of the economy?

Yuba Raj Khatiwada: We all know it isn't sound. Our concern is where all this could take us. The past fiscal year was generally unsatisfactory. Our real and external sectors did not do well. The external sector was affected by external shocks and domestic violence, which was expected, but we also have problems with the real sector in terms of the decline in domestic production, and the stagnation of agriculture. The overall growth was less than one percent, which meant our per capita income went down. The present growth rate is the lowest in 18 years.

Still, the fundamentals of the economy are sound. The output may have dropped, but the structure of the economy is still intact. We've seen some increase in investment, if only of the short-term kind. Prices are still manageable, the exchange rate is stable, and the reserve position is still comfortable. The monetary aggregates have been hit by the recession, but are also in place. Fiscal imbalance is a chronic problem, but the deterioration was not very different from 2000/01. Revenue collection percent, prices are up by less than 3 percent, and imports are down.

Where should we look for danger signs?
For stability, in the external sector. For the first time after 1995/96 we have a Balance of Payment (BOP) deficit of about Rs 2.5 billion in 2001/02. A large BOP deficit can lead to reserves depletion and exchange rate culation. This hasn't happened, simply because imports are down. We can't be satisfied about our low price situation: it could be suppressed economic activity. A further slowdown in the domestic market could give a second blow to manufacturing, which has been hit by external shocks.

Third, agriculture cushioned us for most of the 1990s. It at least ensured food supply, so people could survive any hardship. Now agricul ture may not be able to provide that cushion. The rains weren't on time, that could reduce paddy production, which is about a quarter of the agricultural GDP. In the case of other agricultural crops like wheat and vegetables, there's no incentive for farmers as we get cheap subsidised wheat and vegetables from India. We don't have subsidies here. If farmers' income does not rise, they cannot buy manufactured goods and services. That hits domestic demand and slows the economy down further, pushing us deeper into recession. If agriculture can't provide

## Did the government contribute to this by over-borrowing and overspending? The central bank has repeatedly cautioned the government on release of

funds for development at the end of the fiscal year, but it happened this year, too. The about Rs 4.5 billion overdraft could have been prevented if the government had not released funds towards the end of the fiscal year. There may have been political compulsions and security reasons, but the central bank warned the government beforehand about the fallout, the skewing of the budgetary balance. Development spending was down 16 percent in terms of cash, which could be proportional to foreign loan receipt. Foreign loan disbursement decreased last year, which means new projects were not implemented. If the aid money had come and been mobilised effectively, it could have improved the external sector in terms of capital inflow and the increased investment would have caused the production to grow, and the real sector would have gained.

### Have we entered a downward spiral?

In a way, yes. Low income will suppress domestic demand and discourage production of goods and services for domestic consumption. This might further discourage investment. Breaking this spiral calls for higher spending, probably through higher fiscal spending. This is where our hands are tied. The revenue does not support spending, donors are shying away, and excessive domestic borrowing might create more problems. By resorting to excessive central bank finance, we have already exacerbated the problem in the last two years. The only cushion is that our monetary growth this year was slower than last year, which has lessened the impact of the overdraft.

### Could trade start looking up?

The Nepal-India treaty is one of the factors influencing trade. It took India months to send the new instructions to the customs points, and then we had our own delays in distribution of quotas. There was a delay in setting up the purchasing authority in India. About 40 of export to India was affected by procedural delays even after the treaty was renewed. We didn't have much new investment for new products, which affected exports to India. Now as there is no more confusion regarding the treaty and exports to India, new investment might come to promote our exports. I'm not very optimistic about Third Country exports unless we have new products. We've understood the limits on the carpet industry, and on the competitiveness of garments. We missed our chance to diversify exports in the early 90s. People advising us on external sector policy used to tell us 'as long as carnets and narments are doing well, you don't have to worry'. They said used to ask, how can industries shift to other products immediately.

### How can we stop the economy from slipping further?

First, we need to expedite processing investment proposals in manufactur ing and services-even if we have to be more flexible. If someone wants to come and invest even in this adverse situation we should give them easy entry. Next, we need to explore the trade and tourism potential in the Tibet market and think about trade based on re-exporting imports. Just reviving tourism can have a multiplier effects in other sectors and raise demand.

There are problems of governance, too. We are sometimes in situations where we can't use aid resources already in the country because of delays and other interests interfering in decision-making. We need effective devolution. Having the elections on time has economic impacts An election will bring resources into the economy, which can generate demand for domestic products. We're talking about Rs 4-5 billion entering the economy. It can also help raise business confidence and short-term investment. Of course, the present political conflict has to end.





aveswere not on my itinerary when I set out for Upper Mustann Admittedly I had pictured myself in dark monasteries lit only with butter lamps, squinting to make out brilliant Buddhist frescoes painted hundreds of years ago. But mostly I imagined wandering a landscape spotted with herds of yak and decorated with oversize chortens and giant prayer wheels would take in the awesome spectacle of the trans-Himalaya, with its dramatic snow-capped peaks and stark high desert terrain, and I would spot all manner of endan-

Finally in Lo Manthang in early September, I did all these things and much, much more, Nomad families who still roam the moun

tains with their herds invited us for tea in their tents. Fields of buckwheat blossoms painted whole swathes of Mustann a brilliant pinkish-purple. But what I found most attractive were the ruins left behind by ancient troolodytes.

Upper Mustang.

Gas Sky Light's

and offerending to second

der rel der here, weber down atting districts and now have:

A complete range of high quality

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main hall, a wood-frame and mud construction painted a deep red. Troglodytes? Needless to say. juts conspicuously out of the side of was surprised to learn that a place I the mountain. The rest of the thought of as the land of yak-herding complex sprawls through several pastoralists had once been inhabited adjoining caves. As we climbed the primarily by cave-dwellers. Carved stens outside the monastery, the into Mustano's cathedral-like cliffs are sounds of chanting and drumbeats thousands and thousands of caves. grew gradually louder. The source These played a key part in the region's of these sounds—a young monk of often-violent history, when they were no more than twenty-did not look used as forts and sentry posts. Many up. let alone miss a beat, as we still play important roles in the lives of entered the gompa. His colleague, a contemporary residents, mostly as slightly younger monk, came sites of religious devotion. As we forward to meet us. learnt firsthand, exploring these caves is one of the highlights of a journey to

After a look around the small. sparsely decorated main hallwhich took barely a minute-the rounger monk showed us to the abbot's quarters. The abbot inhabits a low room just off the main hall in what is really a small

village of Nyphu, about a four-hour

walk up the valley leading northeast

out of Lo Manthana Dating back to

the 14th century. Nyphu monastery's





After a short scramble up the rocky base of the cliff, we reached a ladder leading up to a door that the young monk unlocked with his large key. Inside was like a life-size game of chutes and ladders. We climbed a series of rickety wooden ladders up five stories, only to find large holes in the floor preventing us from moving forward. Retracing our steps, we would climb down again. walk under the gap in the floor, and then up and around to continue our explorations. In places several rooms deen the innermost parts of the cave are dark and a little scary. Some rooms were evidently for cooking, while others were designed for habitation. The monks had been good custodians: for a derelict fort.

coated with the smoke of years of

burning yak butter lamps. Dozens

darkened, hang around the room,

the deities now nearly unidentifi-

monastery kitchen refreshed and

fortified us for the next stage of our

complex which at various times had

guided us across the riverbed to the

caves, dangling the key to the cave

door on a chain attached to a large

piece of metal, and carrying a small,

shoulder. Reaching the entrance to

the cave complex, we saw dozens of

dark openings of various shapes and

the cliff wall soaring high above us

sizes scattered at random throughout

pink Hello Kitty bag draped over his

been used as a fort, a monastic retreat

journey, a visit to a nearby cave

and a temple. The young monk

A quick cup of butter tea in the

of ancient thanks, equally

able behind the soot.

ne complex was remarkably clean.

Inside Mustang's hidden mountains





After returning to Lo. time, and we screamed in unison-Vlanthang, we left via the eastern

route to seek out what is by far the Our party hoped to explore one most spectacular cave in Upper more cave on our last day in Upper Mustang, adjoining Lori Gompa in Mustang. We altered our route back an area Peter Matthiessen wrote to lomeom so we could nose about in East of Lo Manthang. We Rangchyung cave, which sits in a had read about the cave and the valley east of the village of Samar. spectacular chorten that filled its Inside, we found a set of chortens and exquisitely painted cavity, and after "miraculous" carvings of deities that friends in Lourged us to make the nave the place the appearance of trip, we could not pass it up. After having been a favoured site of pilorims journeying half a day from Lo for generations. Mounds of khadas were piled atop the chortens, and Manthang we camped at Dhi. The next day we left early for Lori. the residue of countless candles ran planning to return to Dhi late in down the cave walls. Much nearer to the Annapurna circuit, and thus In the valley leading to Lori, more frequently visited, this cave geology has worked architectural has an anarchic touch due to the

wonders on the landscape, carving graffiti left by visitors the mountains so that they Approaching the cave site, we left resemble the ribs and piers of our horses at the river's edge and natural cathedrals. Lori Gompa walked up the narrow valley leading came into sight before lunch. like to the cave. As we approached, we Nyphu monastery a splotch of red saw an old man, stooped and carrying stuck in the middle of a sheer cliff a plastic jug, making the ascent ahead visible from the far side of the of us. Catching up with him, we learnt valley. Our quide quickly located that he was the caretaker. He'd none the caretaker, an aged monk who down to the river to fetch water in his lives in a house at the base of the jug, which we carried for him up to his mountain, and he came with the lling at the mouth of the cave.

key to let us in A muick look was all we needed to Four small children accompasee that we had arrived at a site of nied the keyman. After the five of great religious devotion. The them led us up into the temple, cut custodian cut open a package of large into a dark cave, they began to sing batteries for his flashlight, and our a prayer in Tibetan. When they tour began. Despite his age and frailty were through, they showed us into he become surefooted once we started the adjoining room that holds the walking on the uneven, and at times famous chorten of Lori. We were slippery, floor of the cave. Guiding us not disappointed: the entire room is up and behind the large central a fine art object. The paintings on chorten, he pointed out figures in the both the walls and the chorten itself cave wall that resembled rough-hewn deities that, he told, us, occurred are well-preserved, even though reportedly dating back 500 years. naturally. A bit sceptical of this claim, Wild swirls of flowers on a dark we had to acknowledge the devotion background contrast with the of generations of pilgrims, whose chalk-white chorten and the offerings had darkened the statues many colourful painted deities and the walls around them. We surrounding it. waved goodbye to our cave-dwelling On the way out, the children held host-he had spent more than three out open palms and asked for money. "Slip me some skin," I said, offering the long climb up and out of the

to slap it. They quickly caught on.

back, teaching them how to slap

fives," we all scrambled down the

we mounted our horses for the

my own palm and showing them how valley to the main trail. Our adventures in the caves "Skin!" they screamed, slapping my were only a small part of the many hand in turn. "High five!" I answered wonderful experiences we had in Upper Mustang. Even in Nepal, not hands in the air. After a round of "high many places remain where you can experience the Himalaya without rocky trail to the row of crumbling the outside world barging in. chortens at the foot of the hill, where Whatever the cost of travelling to Lo Manthang, it is worth it. Sell journey out of the valley, while they your car, mortgage your house, but turned off to return to their small ov all means on. You can always home situated below the monastery They held up their palms one last Mustang's millions of tiny caves.

Kingdom within a kingdom Mustang, asks a doctor just back from the trans-Himálava.

ARUNA UPRETI Q: Do you know the name

of present king of Nepal? Q: Do you know the name

of Prime Minister of Nepal: A: No. Q: Do you know that in Nepal there is a state of

emergency? A- No Q: Do you know anything about the election that will take place soon in Nepal? A: What election?

Of the 200 women we interviewed at health camps in Mustang recently, only two knew the answers to the above questions. And it is easy to see why: this is the part of Nepal

where there is no insurgency, no emergency, no checkpoints, no guestions. Who am I, where am I going? No one rummaging to Lo Manthang and back. The nutritious food of the through my rucksack.

Having travelled through the Manist heartland of the midwest earlier this year. I was used to these hassles. The security forces were suspicious of medical sunnlies: where was I taking the medicines? Who was I treating? Did I have a letter from the Ministry of Health?

But in Mustang, I was in the real Nepal of the old days: where you could travel freely, where people are not suspicious of strangers, and indeed welcome them into their homes Maya Bista at Ghami cooked for us, and wasn't sure we would

like her millet chapatis, but they were so delicious, they became our staple throughout our journey

people of Mustang is one of the reasons for their good health. Millet, barley, potato, and milk are widely available, and rice now omes down from Tibet along the highway from the border to Lo Manthang. In comparison to far west Nepal, very few of the women we treated suffered from malnutrition.

The other difference is that of the nearly 300 women examined, there wasn't a single case of prolapsed uterus, which is such a common affliction in the far-west Successive childbearing, lack of rest during maternity and hard

work has made prolapsed uterus an epidemic in the mountains of western Nepal. The medical problem is a direct result of the

We were glad our hypothesis

low social status of women

there. Here in Mustang, the women had never heard of any such thing, and they had no word for it. One woman asked: "How can a woman survive, it is like having your heart or your intestine outside your body. that women across the moun-

tains of Nepal all suffer from prolapsed uterus was proven wrong. But the good health of women in Mustang is not due to health posts and hospitals-the level of medical penlect by the ministry in Kathmandu is as bad here as elsewhere in Nepal. No,

EMTH CAMP ine-up for their medical exams at a health camp in Lo Manthang it is directly related to the ness and the arid climate make it difficult to survive just on

higher status of women in the family and community.

A pregnant woman here is not denied certain foods, milk or meat as she would in the midhill villages to the south. She is not forced to work, even when she is sick, and she does not have to sacrifice her life for the sake of her in-laws. A woman is treated as equal eating together with other members of the family.

happily and demanding that her

mother fix tea. She wasn't going

to school, her mother explained

she is off to the fields to take

The harsh trans-Himalayan What is surprising is that climate means work is hard, and despite the lack of health care and a district hospital that is four winters are long. But, again, the big difference here is that in the days walk away, and medicines are generally not available, the ields or while grazing livestock the men and women work public health problems are not as together. In one of the homes acute as elsewhere in Nepal. On the flight back to we staved along the Kali Gandaki trail, we were woken up before sunrise by a seven vear-old girl packing her bag

Pokhara, we thought: why can't the rest of Nepal be like Mustang: at peace, full of hardworking and happy people and where women are treated equally with men. Something to wish for as we

farming and livestock. That is why there has traditionally been

out-migration, and this process

has accelerated. In the village of Chhuksang, nearly every young

Thailand or in Japan. Although

little of that is going into village

this has brought remittances,

development. Locals invest in

real estate in Pokhara or

man or woman is either in

morning tea to her father. This celebrate another Mustang wasn't exploitation, or child Festival this week. Let's go to labour. This was an early Mustang and find out how they inculcation into a work ethic. It's not all as romantic as all

(Dr Aruna Upreti is a that, of course, Mustang has a share of problems. Its remotewomen's health activist.)



JAKARTA - Another round of talks between the Indonesian government and Aceh's separatist rebels of the Free Aceh Movement, known by the acronym GAM, is due in weeks, but real headway in the two-year-old peace process looks difficult. Aceh province, at the northern tip of Sumatra island, has been fighting a secessionist war against Indonesia since 1976. Violence continues after the May neare talks, the most recent being the ambush of the Aceh governor's convey this month.

The Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG) estimates that the conflict, fuelled by years of resentment over rights abuses by the military and the meagre benefits Aceh received from the revenues Indonesia gets from its resources, has killed around 2,000 people last year alone. A ray of hope emerged in the last round of negotiations in Switzerland in May, but failed to stem the bloodshed in the province rich with natural resources, including natural gas. After the May peace talks, the GAM spokesman in the provincial capital Banda Aceh was shot dead by Indonesian security forces. In January this year the military shot dead GAM commander Abdullah Syafi'ie, also after a round of negotiations. Reports from Aceh suggest that more young Acehnese women have joined the ranks of the GAM foot soldiers, while GAM says the Indonesian security agencies have been recruiting, sometimes forcefully, young students as informants. (IPS)

Wrong on rights
IPOH, Malaysia - Caught between a rock and a hard place, Malaysia's Human Rights Commision, known as Suhakam, has been trying to win popular appeal by remaining independent, but at the same time trying not to usest Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's government. Three-year-old Suhakam's record came under scrutiny when NGOs recently met to review its performance over the past year. Expectations were high on 9 September, 1999 when parliament formed Suhakam to make recommendations to parliament about the nation's human rights conditions. The commission has received good feedback for some of its positions, including attempts to create more room for itself when the government frowns on political dissent. But civil society groups were disappointed at its turning a blind eye to detentions and torture. Suhakam's relevance and the importance of its work have also been belittled by parliament. In June, its speaker rejected an opposition motion to take up Suhakam's 2001 report on the grounds that it lacked urgency to warrant being put on the agenda. In its 2001 report, carefully written given the sensitivity of its position, the commission itself said that people's right to a fair trial and right to peaceful assembly have been severely curtailed in that previous year. (IPS)

All ILI-DOOI

LONDON - Expansion of intellectual property rights is working against poverty reduction in developing countries, according to a major new study. A 180-page report titled Integrating Intellectual Property Rights and Development Policy presented last week to the British government by the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights called on developed nations, the WTO and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) to take the circumstances of poor countries and their development needs into account when seeking to develop interna-

tional intellectual protection (IP) systems.

The report makes some 50 recommendations on introducing IP protection that does not work against reducing poverty in developing nations. The recommendations cover IP issues related to health. agriculture, traditional knowledge, copyrights, software and the Internet, and the role of WTO and WIPO. The commission report says the present system increases the costs of access to many products and technologies that developing countries need. #PSI

## Organisation Development Centre (ODC) As part of its 6th Anniversary Celebration, OOC is organising an OPEN HOUSE EXHIBITION together with selecting Plantage Organisations from the Development Sufficiency Dectors. The Cathleton is co Managing Development Initiative in Nepal

-experiences & practices

This Criticism is open to the general space (for will be of special interest to Development Franchismins) Safetymigement Professionals.

one thursday, sep 2s. 2002

Venue: Hotertox & tips

## The problem with Sweden

 Europe's voters have been turning right ward. But as Europe's most recent parliamentary election shows. Sweden's Social Democrats—in power for 61 of the past 70 years—remain relatively immune to serious challenges from the right.

Opinion polls just a few months ago gave the Social Democrats 44 percent popular support. Together with the former Communists and the Greens the left held a comfortable 12. 15 percent lead over the four nonsocialist parties. This margin shrank during the campaign, and the left retained power by the skin of its teeth, but the lead ultimately proved insurmountable.

The immediate reason for Social Democracy's enduring appeal is foreign policy. In early 2001, Sweden held the EU presidency, giving Prime Minister Göran Persson, the country's dominant politician, a bright spotlight in which to shine. The Social Democrats also benefited by supporting the US after 11 September—a popular position that thus pre-empted the non-socialist opposition. Persson bolstered his image considerably after winning the 1994 election by tightening government finances and eliminating a huge fiscal deficit. But he has done nothing remarkable since winning again in 1998. Sweden's economy rose and fell with the IT bubble, reflected in telecoms giant

Ericsson's troubles today.
Foreigners often idealise Sweden's welfare state, but its economy has been losing ground for 30 years. In 1970. GDP per head was the fourth highest in the world; now it is in 17th place in the OECD. The decline has been

COMMENT



As in most recent European

elections immigration loomed large

which campaigned in favour of free

labour immigration, tripled its

gradual, so it fails to alarm voters, but Swedes notice it when they go abroad. One reason for this is that Sweden remains the world leader in taxation with public expenditures claiming nearly 60 percent of GDP. Even so, they fret about the

vouchers and free choice of alterna-

tive schools. The Social Democrats

support. The Liberals make the sensible argument that anybody with a deteriorating quality of services. They complain about year-long waits for eye job should get a work visa, but that operations and hip surgery—a direct knowledge of Swedish be a citizenship result of a 1994 Social Democratic requirement and that unemployed reform that abolished the right of immigrants he harred from receiving social benefits for five years. Roughly patients to seek alternative care at public expense if they are not treated 70 percent of Swedes support free within three months by their regional immigration of labourers-far higher council. The Social Democrats than elsewhere in Europe. Immigrants reversed themselves on this point tend to be qualified East Europeans, during the recent campaign, but many physicians, while the number of health care entitlements have gone too Swedes registered as sick or in early far. Deteriorating public education retirement has underpinned a severe poses another worry. Stockholm, ruled. labour shortage. Persson, kowtowing by conservatives and liberals, has to trade unions, insists on xtended its free-market experiblocking labour immigration for ments such as privatisation of the next decade subway trains, to education

Although this stance cost the Social Democrats many votes, its unseemly control over key public

goods helped it stay in power. The two dominant state-owned TV channels are under strict Social Democratic But in Sweden the small Liberal party supervision, and the party also controls professorial appointments and academic research. After so many years of Social Democratic rule, a large political caste has also developed. The main qualification of two current ministers is that their parents were ministers. The party is awash in trade union money, which is exempt from taxation due to sheer cronvism.

But while Swedes worry about the quality of public services, they are not prepared to join Europe's rightist revival. So Sweden's Social Democrats don't have to concede much to remain remarkably strong-even if this weakens the integrity of Swedist democracy. ♦ (Project Syndicate)

(Anders Åslund, a former Swedish diplomat, is a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International

by FELIPE FERNANDEZ-ARMESTO

## Designer demagogues

he world needs a Europe committed to internationalism, generous to its former colonies, and willing to absorb migrants and refugees. But a successful electoral platform in Europe today includes shutting out mmigrants (especially poor or black ones), abandoning multiculturalism for cultural integration". limiting access to social welfare, halting or reversing he progress of European unification, and pouring police onto the streets.

This looks like classic right-wing revanchism, but it goes with a new nopulism, unclassifiable in traditional terms. In France, Italy, Holland. Denmark and Austria rightist programs have re-shaped national elections and sometimes beloed new parties into power. Through regional legislatures or influence on mainstream parties, the trend extends into Germany and Belgium. Even in Spain and Britain, where few electorally successful rightwing extremists exist, governments pre-empt them by poaching their policies and their rhetoric. The old-style right, with its fascist ancestry lingers on. But, as the failure of the French Front National shows, it cannot gain power. The new extremism is stylish and trendy. Its language is that of the Enlightenment, wired into the zeitgeist. The old right can hardly compete; but the establishment can hardly cope.

The party founded by the flambovant populist Pim Fortuyn is now the second largest in the Dutch legislature. Until his assassination, Fortuyn's rise was conspicuous because he flaunted his wealth in the land of "the embarrassment of riches". He had a Rentley and butler, whereas most Dutch politicians make do with a housewife and a hicycle. He was showily louche and selectively libertarian, ostentatiously gay and indulgent on drugs. But old right-wing planks formed much of his platform. Fortuyn proclaimed that purity was in danger, national culture ripe for a restorative purge. He offered outrage and hope to the traditional far-right constituency. And yet Fortuyn's demagogy was different from and more insidious

In Denmark, the Danish People's Party, which received 12 percent of the vote in recent elections, similarly resists classification. Its program of slashing welfare benefits for immigrants is marketed as a "defence of the welfare system" against interlopers.

The new populism claims liberal virtues. Old-fashioned fascists talked the language of order, so lovers of freedom rallied against them. The new right talks the language of liberty, and freedom lovers get suckered. Little will be genuinely free in a future crafted by these populists.

A return to the Europe of the 1930s is not in the offing. The new right accepts capitalism and modernity, and mostly avoids anti-Semitism. It is

The new European right twists liberal values to modernise chauvinism.

not revolutionary or violent. But modern does not mean moderate. The Danish People's Party is frank about its hate-list: "those who betray, who transfer power from Denmark to Brussels, who agree with having a multi-

Europeanisation stimulates nationalisms, so the EU can never be safe from a rising right. Worse, in troubled times conventional Euro-politicians instinctively reach for consensus, cohabitation, and cosiness. So now the mainstream is aping or assimilating the extremists, hoping to emasculate them by embracing them in government, or luring their votes. Europe is in for a spell of designer demagogy that thrives on affluence or ennui. But domestic peace depends on mutual respect for cultural plurality, because Europe's changing demographic profile demands more open borders, not a gated continent, and the new right's inherent chauvinism is irreconcilable with the EU's survival and



Kyrgyzstan. It has

moved into a new

players are Russia,

neighbourhood

where the big

China and Iran

India has estab-

hase in

lished a military

## A new Asia

ISLAMABAD - Although Afghanistan has been the centre border, according to a recent of gravity in the US-led 'war on report in The Washington Times

terror' since 11 Sentember, the China and Russia have quietly countries in its vicinity have acquiesced to the build-up of a US witnessed profound changes in military presence so close to their the past year.

For the first time since Iran's border. Washington, in a reversal of past policy, officially declared 1979 Islamic Revolution, there is the Muslim dissidents in Chechnya a clear convergence of interests under Russia, and Xinjiang (under between Tehran and Washington China) as "terrorist organisations" in their shared objective of During his recent visit to Beijing, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard covertly collaborating to oust Armitage designated the East their common enemy, the Taleban. Prior to 11 September Turkestan Islamic Movement not one US soldier was in Central (ETIM) a terrorist group. The biggest change could be in Asia but now the US has military bases in Tajikistan, economic cooperation, with Uzbekistan and countries in the region eyeing trade

access to the warm waters of the

Indian Ocean through Pakistan

through a pacified Afghanistan, On 27 August, President Imamali Rakhmonov of Tajikistan and President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan reportedly told *The* Washington Post that "an open highway across Afghanistan would

One year later, the political landscape

bring much of Central Asia within a day's drive of the Pakistani port of Karachi\* Pakistan has started to build, with Chinese assistance, a port in Gwadar, off the coast of Balochistan, to service Central Asia Central Asia is also energy-rich.

There are enormous gas deposits in Turkmenistan while Kazakhstan's oil reserves are estimated to be in the vicinity of 95 billion barrels. The vehicle for greater regional integration could be the Tehranbased Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), whose 10 members are Pakistan, Iran, Turkey Afnhanistan I Izhekistan Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Taiikistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.

India backed the Northern Alliance against the Taleban and now has a military presence in Tajikistan and an agreement to help train the Tajik military. Iran has pledged \$550 million in aid to Afghanistan, a promise reaffirmed during President Mohammad Khatami's visit to Kabul last month Western Afrihanistan with Herat as its main city close to Iran under the warlord Ismail Khan, who was in exile in Iran's city of Meshed during Taleban rule, is now a region where Iranian economic, political and cultural influence is strong. Vocal voices for civil liberties and democratic rights will be heard more loudly in the region, as evident in Iran in the power tussle against conservatives, with moderates and democrats around moderate President Khatami's calling for rapprochement with Washington.

is slowly taking clearer form. 

Turkey started looking east for the first time when it backed the Turkish-speaking Uzbek warlord, General Abdur Rashid Dostum, who spent the years of Taleban rule in exile in Istanbul. Today, a Turkish general heads the international peacekeeping force in Afghanistan. Central Asia nations and their internal politics are likely to come under closer scrutiny with the US military presence there.

Diplomatically, with

relations between Moscow and Washington warming the close camaraderie growing between Russia and China prior to 11 September has weakened, bringing into question the future of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The SCO, which groups China, Russia Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Taiikistan and Uzbekistan agreed to fight "religious extremism, separatism and terrorism" in a June 2001 summit. This is in question now Countries like Uzbekistan Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, were previously threatened by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) which found sanctuary in the Taleban's Afghanistan, Movements like the ETIM in Xinjiang found succour in Afghanistan as well. The threat posed by the IMU and the ETIM has subsided and will be easily contained now that their bases of support and refuge have dried up. ♦ (IPS)

Tibet update

Hopes that a meeting between an envoy for the Dalai Lama and a senior Tibetan government official could lead to a resumption of official contact between the guarrelling parties looked misplaced Monday, Legchog, Tibet's deputy party secretary and chairman of the TAR, confirmed he had met the Dalai Lama's special envoy to the US. Lodi Gvari, for more than an hour on Sunday in Lhasa, but said there was no discussion of the Dalai Lama. Leochog also said there was no discussion on the possibility of future delega tions from Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama's Tibetan govern ment-in-exile is based. "I have no news of any other delegation from Dharamsala and (Gyari) also didn't mention that. He also did not touch on the subject of the Dalai Lama." Lenchon said. Legchog said Gyari's was a personal visit, to "meet some relatives and pay homage to the monasteries of Tibet".

In the meeting he briefed Gyari on Tibet's progress and economic development since the envoy was last in Tibet 50 years ago: "He envied and expressed appreciation over the economic development and also the raising of the people's livelihood." Legchog said. Gyari's reaction to the meeting is unknown, as Chinese authorities would not allow journalists to speak to him. A secretary to the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Taklha, confirmed that his office had been in contact with the envoys but declined to give

further details, except that they would leave China around the end of the month. "It's a sensitive visit, we don't want to say anything that might upset the balance" he said from Dharamsala. But Taklha did call this the first official contact with the Chinese government since 1993 and the first such talks in Tibet itself in 20 years.

A series of moves this year, including an invitation for Gyari to

visit Beijing and Lhasa, the release of six Tibetan political prisoners, the visit to Lhasa in July of the Dalai Lama's older brother and wo organised tours of Tibet for journalists, prompted speculation that the Chinese government might be reviewing its hardline stance against the Dalai Lama. Formal talks broke off in 1993. Asked whether there was a possibility the Dalai Lama could some day return to Tibet, Legchog reiterated the official Chinese line that the Dalai Lama was welcome to visit Tibet, on two main conditions. "He must be patriotic, he must come as a Chinese citizen and he must do nothing that would break up the Chinese state,

These conditions are not new, but his statement of them sounded as if China was staking out a negotiating position. Analysts say it may be a prelude to the re-opening of formal contacts between Beijing and the Dalai Lama, and point to another reason for the seeming thaw: China's President Jiang Zemin is due to visit the United States in October and meet President Bush. (The

## The Chinese challenge

hirty, five years ann Jean, Jamues Servan, Schreiher's Le Défi Americain (The American Challenge) claimed Europe was in danger of becoming a branch office for American multinationals. A decade later, Japan's rising commercial challenge seemed paramount. Now China makes people pervous.

China owes its growing dynamism partly to the central authorities' shrewd pursuit of well-timed and complementary development strategies. Less noticed than the 15, year process of naining admission to the WTO has been the stabilisation of the currency, the renminbi (RMB), pegged to the Hong Kong dollar since 1997, when the territory reverted to Chinese rule. By prohibiting exchange of RMB abroad, the central authorities prevented the currency fluctuations that in recent years wreaked havoc in other developing nations.

But the real key to China's success lies at lower levels of government. In most regions, officials welcome foreign business, offering tax-free zones and other benefits, and promote unfettered competition to strengthen their industries. More than 100,000 component manufacturers, mostly from Japan or Taiwan, have relocated to China's Pearl River and Yangtze River Delta regions, which always had cheap labour but now also have modern highways, port facilities, and communica-

In 2000, China got nearly \$45 billion in foreign direct investment, compared with \$10 billion for Japan and less for Asia's tigers. Much went directly into raising industrial productivity. Chinese factories today are as modern, sophisticated, and automated as their Japanese counterparts, and their managers are mastering the skills needed to compete globally faster than in any other nation I have studied. China's regions learned to specialise by competing fiercely for foreign investors. Each has its cluster of suppliers and service providers, and an infrastructure of transportation lines, communications networks, and research laboratories. They are also developing links to the outside world independent of China's central government. China's domestic market is so huge, many

companies have not turned their attention overseas. But they will soon be the most competitive original equipment manufacturers-producers of goods sold under

China's growth will challenge the global status quo both economically and diplomatically.

world has ever seen. Malaysia and Thailand spent ten years building the expertise, production base, and infrastructure for precision metalworks to sell components to Swiss watch manufacturers. Chinese firms took over that business in a year. The same is happening with electronics and machinery.

It is extremely difficult for a non-Chinese company to compete with lowcost, low-price commodities, even if those commodities are precision electron-ics components. Unlike any other nation, China can simultaneously mobilise ow-cost labour and high-tech automation to produce anything. Singapore and Taiwan weathered Asia's 1997 financial crisis relatively unscathed, but their manufacturers are suffering now. Much of Taiwan's manufacturing sector has migrated across the Taiwan Strait, and Singapore is becoming an Asian Switzerland, betting its prosperity on investments in China, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, which lack Singapore's resources, are likely to suffer deprivation, fragmentation, and unrest

For consumers. Chinese industries will cut costs, raise quality, and propel innovations because of their own efforts, and because global companies in China are putting their own best practices to use there. The new wave of mpetition won't be between China. America, and Japan as

monolithic entities, but between industries and regions, as companies race to internalise China's new methods—like US management methods have been internalised by companies around the world, including within China. China's growth will pose a greater challenge to the alabal status aun, both diplomatically and economically, than, say, Islamic extremism.

> (Kenichi Ohmae, one of the world's leading business strategists, is president of Ohmae & Associates )

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Karnali districts unite

Sharad KC for the BBC

Fed up with a faraway capital that doesn't care about the welfare of people living in the remote and roadless parts of western Nenal five districts of the Karnali Zone have decided to set up their own development solidarity.

Called the Common Karnali Development Group it will have members from

local government combines, non-government organisations and civil society. "If Kathmandu keeps neglecting us, we want to show that we Karnali people can take care of ourselves," says Jivan Shahi, former DDC chairman of

Karnali's main problems are its remoteness, the lack of investment in development from the central government. chronic food shortage, lack of salt and poor public health services. Yet, Karnali is endowed with great biodiversity. natural beauty and human resources which if properly utilised could lift the region out of poverty, the group believes. "We will show them that we can be self-sufficient," Shahi said. "In five years, we will not be living handto-mouth anymore.

The group has prioritised improvements in transport, agriculture and tourism. Another member of the group. Deep Bahadur Shahi of the Kalikot DDC says, "We went through the Panchayat, 12 years of democracy, and the Karnali has remained where it was. Karnali is the only zone without a graduate college or a road. They start roads, and they never complete them on some pretext or the other. Sometimes the excuse is Manists, sometimes it is lack of budget. They have Maoists in other zones, too,

As an example, Shahi points to Salleri (Phaplu) airport in Solu Khumhu, which was nut out of action by Manists. It has since resumed operation. Manists attacked Dolpo airport, but planes have still not started flying there. The same thing has happened to the Surkhet-Jumla road. where construction has stopped because of the security situation.

The main reason for lack of development is the lack of connections in high places in Kathmandu. Mohan Baniya is from the Mugu DDC and says Karnali should be declared a "Special Zone" so its gets priority treatment for development, "Muqu's average lifespan is 36, this is less than sub-Saharan Africa," says Baniya.

The group argues that Karnali has been neglected by Sinnha Darhar because it is remote, Mugu, Humla and Kalikot don't even have airports. Dolna has been out of action because of Maoists. Karnali has been pushed further back because of the Maoist insurgency, the de struction of bridges, food supply and pulling out of development projects.

"Yes, but you control your borders. We couldn't. We first had the Soviets and then too many coming

—Hamid Karzai, Afghanistan's President responding to a question by India Today on why his

country desends into chaos and anarchy after an ineffective government changes.

Himal Khabarpatrika, 17 September-1 October

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

in from neighbouring countries.

Flag: Election Commission

### Untold stories Kedar Suhedi in Rimarsha 13 August याचाहिक विगर्श

Prem Bahadur Rana of Tanahu

some years. His wife Balkumari

ioined him a year ago. She had

cooked meat and sel-roti for the

Teei feast and was waiting for her

husband to arrive at their rented

home near the police office. The

who was also waiting for his father

as the mother cooked. The family

was planning to eat together that

night. But then Balkumari realised

that it was getting late and the food

old had already fallen asleep. When

was getting cold and the five-year-

she walked out to see what was

happening, the smell of burning

ammunition was everywhere. Still

hoping her husband would show

up, she did not eat. In the early

hours of the morning, Balkumari

been killed. The food she had

came to know that her husband had

cooked was uneaten, and lay in the

same plate she had dished it into

Tuesday (10 August), she was on a

Sandhikharka with her son and the

Balkumari spend the entire day of

the Teei fast crying. Her five-year-

old came and sat down on her lap,

Samita Karki became a widow

on the day of her marriage. Her

husband Kaii Raut was killed in

Bhiman, Sindhuli, hours after the

two had tied the knot on 7 August

Samita and Kaii were in love and

though their families and friends

temple, after which Kaii left his

us that he left about two hours

after the wedding ceremony, as he

was on duty that night. He had the

next day off and planned to spend it

with his wife. The couple did not

even get a chance to speak to each

other properly after the wedding.

India Today, 16 September

November. They got married in the

wife in his sister's house and headed

to the Bhiman post. His sister told

got married on that day even

had asked them to wait until

uncertain of what exactly was

hannening but aware that the

Manists had killed his father.

the day before. The day after.

helicopter heading out of

dead body of her husband.

couple have a five-year-old son.

at his home in Sindhupalchok on 6 or 7 August, though he had promised his wife that he would come to take her to her parents' house in Hetauda. She waited for had been based in Sandhikharka for two days, but her husband did not arrive. She was angry at times. She tried to console berself thinking that something must have come up to delay him. In the end it was the body of her husband that was brought home on 9 August. She has

Pradip Dangol did not show up

a two-month-old son to raise. . The Maoists had taken their medics along for the attack on Sandhikharka. They also rounded all the security officials and took them to the cottage and small industry office, where some of the wounded security officials were treated. According to Tikaram Pradhan, a policeman now receiving medical treatment in Pokhara, the Maoists held about 100 security personnel in that room for about two hours. Their medics administered some primary care inside, but the building was also being bombed and shot at from nutside

Non-election 2002 Deshantar, 14 August

Excerpts of an interview with Lokendra Bahadur Chand, Rastriva Praiatantra Party.

You seem unsure about whether elections will

I think there can be elections only for the sake of elections, say 10 people voting and a candidate winning by six votes. The situation shows that people may not be able to participate in voting in many places. And if we don't care about the participation of the concerned people, then we might as well just line up the ballot boxes of all districts in Tundikhel and hold elections like that

So even if they are held, the elections won't provide a solution? Yes, even if held it won't be able to

provide a solution What can the government now do? It has to do what it promised to the nation, if it can't, it should

So Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba should

resian? If anyone else had been prime minister they would have resigned by now. Others would have resigned for having taken the nation towards darkness. Any thinking person would have already thought about it that way. . . If he were to think with a cool head, the

time has come for him to resign. What would happen if elections weren't held? This government is a caretaker government and cannot take any policy decisions. So it would be wrong to say that this government would remain if elections were not held. The prime minister and the ministers would become like any one of us is now. If there comes a situation where there are no elections the Sunreme Court

would have to step in and decide what happens next. Do you think democracy would end if there were no A staged, fixed election can end

democracy faster than that

because then people will lose the trust they have in such a process. The fourth force Pratispardha, 12 August

Excerpts of an interview with Gore Bahadur Khapangi of the Rastriya Janamukti Party Today we dalits and people of

ethnic groups are not organised. Taking advantage of that, the organised forces in power have repeatedly raping [sic] our rights. Those who exploit others can never be free themselves. The government has not created the backdrop needed to engage dalits, people from ethnic groups, madhesis and other minorities, in development. The state has not brought about a program for dalits who have also shed their blood for this nation and nation-building. We have a commission for dalits but what can we do, the appointees are cronies of those in government. The problems of the dalits are as they were before the Commission was formed.

. In this country we have

been used to recognising only three forces, the leftists, the rightists and the royal palace. This constitution (1990) was drafted as a compromise between the three Now we are seeing a fourth force also organising and taking the shape of a major force, those who have been exploited on the basis of caste and class. The dalits and the madhesis are also organising that is another force. But those in government have continued to neglect these forces. These forces have to be brought into the fold. This democracy needs to be quaranteed for future generations.... In less than 12 years after we established democracy, there are already bloodstains on the path to democratisation. At a time when we should be only worrying about getting enough sleep, we have to fear being shot down. Those who have been elected to lead us have turned out to be corrupt. Democracy cannot remain in a situation that is leading to the wakening of the nation. Nationalism can remain even without democracy, but democracy cannot

only that can safeguard sover-Maoist murder . . . . Spacetime Dainik 17, September

remain without nationalism.

Nenal's nationalism is more

important than democracy because

म्योजनाहास निर्मित

The Maoists abducted and killed Krishna Prasad Sapkota, former chairman of the Raleigh VDC in Kayre district on 15 September. Sankota was abducted from his house in the village at around midnight and his body was discovered the next morning. The Maoists had chopped the head and cut Sankota into two parts. Sapkota was cremated on 16 September, and hundreds came out of their homes to join the funeral procession. The LIMI has said that the Manists should investigate the murder and punish the murderers or be ready to face strong retaliation.

1,000

All parties, unite Sanghu, 16 September Excerpts from an interview with Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary, CPN (UML)



Why does your party seem to be more involved in convening an all-party meeting rather than campaigning for elections? The country is heading towards more disaster. In this situation esponsible parties should be united. Ten political parties have displayed unity through an allparty meeting, which is what the country's needs. Unity also helps ensure that the elections will be

What is the outcome of the all-party meeting? There has been confusion about the elections recently, and the ten parties have agreed that the government should immediately clarify matters. Second, all the parties agree that the government should be ready to talk with the Maoists. We have also appealed to the Maoists for sincere and genuine moves towards talks. They should initiate a unilateral

ceasefire, and then the government should also be ready for a ceasefire. Do you think the Maoists will listen to you? Will you pressure the government for talks?

Going by the recent statement issued by Prachanda, we are assured that they are ready for talks. On the other hand, the government is not at all positive on this matter. We have appealed to the government to rethink its stand against talks. If the govern ment is accountable towards the people and the country, it should work towards creating the right through dialogue.

Even people in responsible positions have started claiming that the forthcoming elections might not take place? What will be your reaction if the elections do not take place as scheduled? The elections have to be held as declared. The government should immediately begin dispelling any doubts about the 13 November elections The Flection Commis sion will also have to end the confusion it has created among the people. Not holding the elections is unimaginable. The government dissolved parliament because it was confident that an election was possible. To save this country from a constitutional crisis it has to

government should first prepare emselves for a dialogue. For that the government should take a lead. Back at Sundarijal >18

# "As long as I can write, there will be no maddening depression."



BP Koirala, writing his prison diary in English has also been trying to do other writing as a therapy against depression and anxiety. It seems to help, except when he realises that he can't write the history of the Nepali Congress on toilet paper because it blots. And he is using the inchwide margins of old newspapers to write the words to soothe his nerves.

11 February, 1977

Sundarijal: Didn't get sleep last night. Had very disturbed sleep till 1:30 am. Thereafter didn't have a wink of sleep. Got up to read, but couldn't. The worst part of lack of sleep is that it promotes anxiety, which starts some kind of a chain reaction. I am anxious that I may develop insomnia. I have seen the misery of people suffering from insomnia Bunu in 1951. Inside prison, the anxiety becomes some kind of a panic, I was in panic the whole night. It was only at 4:30 am when GM came with tea and he told me a story in reference to my anxious state how unhealthy imagination leads one from one anxiety to another till he becomes mad for nothing. The story is very telling and it did help me restore my equilibrium to some extent. I wouldn't worry if I could get sleening nills and some medicines for southing the tension. But doctors are not available. In the morning I did not do my daily round of

pranayam, etc. But by breakfast time I was almost normal. GM says that I mustn't in any case ask for medicines for sleep or for the soothing of nerves because they will start thinking that the iail has demoralised me

During breakfast time, the captain presented me with a copy of the account for expenses incurred for our food during the month Magh which is coming to a close today. Tomorrow perhaps a new major will take charge. Our total allowance for the month was Rs 812 (NC) out of which they spent Rs 712, the balance Rs 100 was handed to us. We are again intrigued as why they have to give a full account in writing properly signed both by the major and the captain and give us in cash the balance of the allowance not spent. This is not done and was never done. Perhaps the intention is to show us that the allowance is liberal and also to indicate that all our needs other than food, like soap, paste, toilet articles (perhaps cigar or cigarettes too, now perhaps they will permit me to get cigars), zarda, etc can be met by the money left over

do the guessing as to what their intentions are. They are not frank. Yesterday the major indicated that the non-supply of writing paper was due to a misunderstanding. Today the captain says that the matter has been referred to above. Obviously the major was not speaking the truth.

I am in a better mood today, after lunch. Immediately after lunch I felt depressed as usual. After lunch hour is too difficult for me to spend. I tried to get some sleep without success, then all of a sudden I felt that I should starting writing the history of the Nepali Congress which has not received deserved attention by writers. If I don't do it, who else will? Then I got up and started writing-I wrote about 1,000 words. Since I have very little paper to write on I have started cutting the margins of newspaper that are supplied to uslong strips of over an inch width. History of Nepali Congress is being written on these long strips of paper. I have tried improvising in toilet paper a roll of which has been supplied in my bathroom. I have brought the roll to my room and have kept it safely in the cupboard as a very precious material. The toilet paper is very thin and will not be suitable for writing. So a dot pen will help here. As long as I can keep myself engaged in writing there will be no onslaught of maddening depression, and as long as I am psychologically all right improvisations can be thought of to carry the burden of jail life without much tension and worry. The idea that I have to write a history of the NC promoted the thought that I have my biography to write. I intend to write a novel on the Revolution of 1950-51. All these will be of 900 pages-300 each. Then I will write articles and small political discussions on theory and practice of politics with particular reference to Nepal. One year's job, if not longer.

## Lovesick, homesick or simply sick of Tibet

Zweig's well-known Brief einer

Unbekannten (recently immortalised

in a French TV movie) and took this

novella as the model for this book.

Chittadhar went on to have a long

receiving the title Kavi Kesharifrom

the King of Nepal, and publishing

and impressive literary career,

'son', while the 107-page

knew, was his 'daughter'.

The central conceit of

narrator's account interweave

esar Lall, Nepal's ever-prolific storyteller and parrator (and now the holder of a distinction from the prestigious Nepal Bhasa Parishad), turns his hand again to translation in this delightful new book In the same vein as his recent Newar Merchants in Lhasa ("Banias along the Barkhor", #34), Lall unearths an intriquing tale written in Newar, and through translation and annotation makes it accessible to a wider audience Readers who remember the charming Newar Merchants in Lhasa may recall that an excerpt of Chittadhar's Letter from a Lhasa Merchant is one of the chapters. Lall delivers the complete translation with Mimmanahpau.

In his Translator's Note, Kesar Lall stresses the numerical and economic prominence of Newar traders

tion of 1959, around 1,000 Newars lived and traded in L hasa and towns such as Shigatse, Gyantse, Kyirong and Kuti. Given the circumstances this book. Lall is careful to point out that few Newar businessmen based in Tibet were accompanied by their spouses and children, and that many married a Tibetan woman as a second wife. Interestingly, sons born to Newar men with Tibetan wives were accorded Nepali citizenship, while daughters born of such unions were perceived as strictly Tibetan. Chittadhar was born in 1906 into

a Kathmandu-based Tuladhar family with a long tradition of trade in Tibel As a young man, he managed to not follow his father's footsteps. That he should later choose the life of a Newar trader in Tibet as a literary subject is thus all the more revealing. The

emotional entreaties to his distant asymmetry between spouse with cultural, historical and author and protagonist is social observations on the traditions of further accentuated when both Newars and Tibetans living in we learn that Chittadhar Lhasa. Perhaps because of the was 'very faithful and oscillation between romantic devoted to his wife. confessional and amateur ethnores (page 7), in marked phy, or perhaps because we are all much more exposed to stories character of his and images from Tibet, the descriptions often come across as a little Mimmanahpaumay patchy. While certain sections are be a hypothetical riveting to read, others are somewha bland, and the overall effect is autobiography. Chittadhar's life ar strangely uneven with the reader left hoping for more detailed observations it might have been had he not broken in some places, while wishing for a fast-forward button during the page

long reports of feasts Nevertheless, the text has plenty of high points, which make the book as a whole worth the effort. Early on in his epistle, the scribe challenges th tions of traditional Menali letter writing, which dictate that hearts are not bared and formal terms of address are maintained 'It seems to me that the use of the polite form of 'you' for one's husband, possibly the closest person is necessarily to put him at a distance. I do not quite appreciate it.' (page 13)

The physical distance between

over a hundred works before his the letter-writer in Tibet and his death in 1982. He called two of his wife in Nepal stands in contrast to major works his children: the 350the familiarity and intimacy of his letter, as if the trader is compensatpage poem Sugata Saurava was his ing for physical distance with Mimmanahpau, which he dedicated newly-found emotional intimacy to his mother-in-law, whom he barely On more than one occasion, the scribe imagines his spouse's reaction to the content of his letter and urges

Mimmanahpau, a novel-length letter her not to blush. is that it is meant to be read by one Mimmanahpau is all about reader only, the scribe's wife. The change and transformation. While the writer takes great pains to articulate his undying devotion to his wife in the first fifteen pages of the letter, by page 25 the reader begins to doubt his sincerity. His description of meeting the locals of Lhasa is particularly revealing: There were many women among the visitors, some of them quite young. A slight tremor went all over me when they sat close to me'. This aside is prescient, and a small but

> The scribe goes on to note, with impressive candour, that Newars were 'proverbially entangled in so many social and religious affairs in Nepal related to our guthi that we never had time to do well in other activities' (page 32). His depiction of Newar life in Lhasa would support this judgement, a life of endless rituals, feasts and gather ings. The nuggets of social observa

tion secreted in these descriptions

perceptible change in tone marks the

narrative from this point on

are interesting and insightful. The of self-doubt the scribe proclaims scribe is, for example, impressed 'But what sort of a person am 121 with the standard of housekeeping asked myself. To abandon you and in a typical Lhasa home: 'The come so far away to earn a paltry kitchen was clean, unlike ours in sum of money! The profession of Nepal. The maidservant fetched the trader is indeed to be conwater and saw that there was no demned!!' (page 41)

accumulation of dust or dirt' (page

32). Likewise, he is envious of the

more relaxed social interactions be

Tibetans, the couples are insepara-

ble, even when they go trading. As

these melancholic thoughts occupied

me, a sigh escaped involuntarily

(page 55). As the letter progresses

away from Nepal in general, and

Newar social life in particular.

towards more noticeably Tibetan

sensibilities. He writes of the 'frail

women of Nenal' (nage 91) of the

Theravada monks of Kathmandu

who 'lure lay people to abandon

their home and family' (page 97)

deprecating, if rhetorical, statement

'I don't have to tell you that we

Newar are a very strange people

(page 97). Without divulging the

dramatic conclusions of his letter, in

confused and uprooted man, deeply

scribe undergoes are profound, and

bear testament to Chittadhar's skill

as a portrayer of complex characters

On re-reading Mimmanahpau I

noted prophetic pointers to the

dénouement: 'After all men are

men. Even the common folk seemed

to know that we need diversion from

our sorrow' (page 19). In a moment

The internal changes which the

suspicious of organised religion.

the course of writing, the trader

develops from an earnest and

lovesick husband into a bitter

and concludes with the self-

the scribe's allegiance moves subtly

witnesses in I hasa: 'among the

When read in the context of what is known about the author's life, Mimmanahpau may be seen as a gentle sermon on the dangers and entanglements of the pursuit of business. Perhaps college professors in Nepal should encourage eager students embarking on their studies of Commerce to read this letter of nenance.

In his careful translation, Lall brings an important work from the substantial corpus of Newar literature to an international audience. His translation is a fitting illustration of the unexpected spin offs of globalisation: a Newar writer is inspired by a German novel to write a novella in his mother tongue, which is rendered into Ennlish half a century later by another Newar writer, folklorist and translator. The multilingual puzzle is not complete yet, as the eminent French anthropologist of Nepal, Professor Corneille Jest, is presently working on a French translation of Mimmanahpau: Letter from a Lhasa Merchant to his Wife.

Mimmanahpau: Letter from a Lhasa Merchant to his Wife. By Chittadhar 'Hridaya', translated by Kesar Lall. 2002. Travel Series. Robin Books: New Delhi. 139 pages, including 81-87138-55-6. Rs 200.





### 20 - 26 SEPTEMBER 2002 NEPALI TIMES

## **EXHIBITION AND AUCTION**

 Images of a Landscape Paintings by Pramila Bajracharya. Until 25 September, 11AM-6PM, except Saturdays Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited. 411122

Symphony of Colours Paintings by Madan Chitrakar. 21-28 September, 11AM-6PM, Nepal Art Council Rahar Mahal 227866 AGROEXPO 2002 Showcase for Nepali floriculture, apiculture, dairy production, sericulture

and more. Until 22 September, Birendra International Convention Centre.

Art in solidarity against the disillusioned Auction of art produced at Bichalit Bartaman, 22 September, 3PM, Exhibition until 22 September, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baher Mahal Revisited 411122

Reaching out about drugs and HIV Paintings by renowned Indian artists to raise awareness on substance abuse and HIV/AIDS. 24, 25 September, courtyard, British Council. British Council and UN Drug Control Programme. 410798

Punchtatva plays at Kilroy's at 1905, 20 September, 7PM. Tickets Rs 250 per head at 416242 or at the venue. 225272

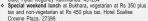
 Full Circle Acoustic R&B. Mondays and Thursdays, 7 PM, Yak & Yeti Piano Lounge, 248999 Jazz your blues away The Jazz Commission with Vidhea, Fridays 7PM on, Fusion, the bar

 Live at the Rox Teesta every Wednesday and Friday, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234
 Music at the Bakery Café The Strings Fridays at Nanglo Café & Pub, Darbar Marg, 6.30 PM on, The Heartbreakers, Saturdays at Bakery Café, Teku and Sundays at Bakery Café, Baneswor, 6.30 PM on.

Live music by Catch 22, Friday nights at the 40,000 ½ ft Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant Thamel 414336

 Oktoberfest Bayarian music, German barbecue, beer, 21, 22 September, Kirtipur Restaurant Beer Garden, Chovar Gate, Kirtipur, 330349

 Marwari Food Festival Vegtarian Marwari from Rajasthan. Lunch and dinner at Rs 600 per head, until 28 September, The Cafe, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 491234



 Rarbecue lunch with complementary wine or beer for adults, soft drink for children. Satur days and Sundays at the Godavari Village Resort. 560675

♦ WOK Lunch combos from Rs 80, as well as a la carte. Wok Oriental Cuisine, Heritage Plaza I Kamaladi 227157

 Barbecue with live band 6.30 PM – 9.30 PM, Wednesdays and Fridays, Splash Bar and Grill, Radisson Hotel,

 Full moon celebrations Butter lamps, guitar music, vegetarian food. 21 September, 5PM on. Stupa View Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha. 48026

 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 Krishnarpan Fifty percent discount for five guests or

more, reservations preferred, Dawrika's Hotel. 479488

### **GETAWAYS** Monsoon mists Horseshoe Resort, Mude two-and-half

hours from Kathmandu. Nature walks, birdwatching, drizzle walks. Finnish sauna. resort@horshoe.wlink.com.np Monsoon in Shivapuri Birdwatching, short hikes, writing. 30 minutes from Kathmandu, two

acres 6,000 feet by 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 Behind the wall Local residents buy one night for \$99.00 plus tax get the second one at 50

percent, single or double at Dwarika's Hotel. 479488

 Bardia National Park Full board, 'on stilts' cottage, pickup, \$10 a day, park activities extra, Jungle Base Camp Lodge, 061-32112
For inclusion in the listing send information to editors@nepalitimes.com



## **BROTHERS AND SISTERS** MOTHERS AND FATHERS OF THE LAND DO NOT COMPROMISE WITH EDUCATION

This satellite picture shows three low pressure distributions extending east of the Bay of Bengal an early sign that the monsoon is finally retreating from the west, roughly around the official nonsoon ending date of 22 September in Nepal. Expect the last hurral of this almost-toohumner monsoon this week with nartly sunny days and intermittent rains or thunderstorms in

## remain more or less the same KATHMANDU VALLEY





the afternoons. For now, the temperatures







What is Patriamby Kamla Rhasin



This question-and-answer booklet looks at patriarchy as an analytical category to theorise women's subordi-nation, and how it is constituted; at its origin and how it has evolved historically in different parts of the world. It locates women's struggles for social change in a context where the patriarchal control of major social and political institutions makes for special forms of discrimination against women

## Understanding Gender Kamla Bhasin

Kali for Women, 2000/2002, New Delhi

This booklet starts off by explaining the difference between sex and gender, the form as a biological category and the latter as its socially constructed expression. It goes on to examine the intersection of gender with other identities such as caste, class, ethnicity and nationality. The author explains the historic context of redefinitions of gender and sees how it can be integrated with other factors to analyse and plan development.



## Igniting India: Unleashing the Power Within India APJ Abdul Kalam

/iking by Penguin Books India, 2002, New Delhi Rs 400

India's new president examines why people in India, given their skills, resources and talents, and capable of being the best, settle so often for the worst. Kalam sees the necessity for a patriotism that transcends religion and politics, and for role models who point out the path to take. Eventually, he says, the people of a nation have the power, by dint of had work, to realise their dream of a truly good life

> Emerging Voices Kanchan Pudasaini, ed Vishnu-Chnadra Vangmaya-Mandir, Kathmandu, 2002 Rs 500

Including in her definition of 'Nepali', anyone of Nepali origin, regardless of country of residence, Pudasaini puts together this collection of poetry. Nepali poets established and otherwise from Nepal, India, Bhutan, Burma, Hong Kong, England and the US are translated into English from Nepali Maithili, Newari, Yakkha Rai, Yalung Rai, Rapcha Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Gurung, Magar, Tharu,



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

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expatriates. 680006, 969107153

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Visit Ground Zero Fine wines, designer candles, cards, exclusive Nepali paper products, silver iewellery, wooden items, perfumes and more. Darbar Marg, opposite Hotel de l'Annapurna

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 543333-36.

1993. Some 150 elite US Delta Commandos and Army Rangers are in Mogadishu, Somalia, to hunt down a warlord intercepting inter national food shipments for starving Somalis. The mission goes horribly wrong—the Americans didn't plan for thousands of angry civilians protesting the intrusion into their internal affairs. First one, then another, helicopter is shot down, and suddenly the peacekeeping nission becomes war, as the soldiers must res

## Black Hawk Down

## JAINEPAL CINEMA





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INDRA JATRA FESTIVAL



his Friday is the beginning of the weeklong festival Indra latra the annual Newari carnival when the king of Nepal comes officially to pay his respects to the

living goddess. The Kumari will be dressed in resplendent red and gold, bedecked in a nolden tiara and Sesh Naan around her neck as she rides her rath. On her forehead is painted a vermilion third eye on a black backdrop of mustard oil and soot—this is the mythical divine eye which sees everything. She can see through every individual's mind, and fathom things beyond a common person's understanding.

When she rides the main charint she will be followed by two of her friendly deities, Bhairab and Ganesh who are also chosen and made god the same way as the Kumari herself. But these incarnates have it slightly easier they can stay in their narent's house They can go out, and play but the Kumari can't. On Friday, the three will tour the city in their chariots and the streets come alive with the mask lakhedance, music, and feasting. Indra latra lasts a whole week and it will be a whirlwind time for the Kumari as she

Manager For the Addition

dancing every day from the setting up of the Indradwaja pole at Basantapur on Thursday

This is the annual festival dedicated to Indra, the god of rain. But it is also dedicated to Taleiu Bhawani, the powerful goddess and protector of Kathmandu who will manifest herself in the Kumari to empower the king and his citizens with divine power. Interestingly, Taleju is supposed to be the family deity of Ravana, the demon king of mythic Lanka and the Taleju of Kathmandu is and general merriment. said to have been brought from India in ancient times.

King Gyanendra, accompanied by invited dignitaries high officials and diplomats will observe the commencement of the Kumari Rath Yatra from the balcony of the Rana Victorian-style stucco Gaddi Baithak. On Saturday, after the King and

gueen flag off the rath vatra from the Gaddi Baithak the three chariots take an ancient route which on the first day will go to the southern part of Kathmandu, the "tallo tol"-Chikamugal, Gofala Tol, Bharma Tol, Huumat laisi Denal Kohiti Bhimsenthan. On the full moon day takes part in the rituals and drums and Sunday, the 'mathillo tol' people will



get to see the chariot being pulled north through Pyafal, Yethka, Nardevi, Raktakali Pyannal Nynkha Bannemuda Ason Balkumari Macchendra baha, Indrachowk, Makhhan and back. The chariot pullers, and other revellers when they arrive near the Akash Bhairab statue near Hanuman Dhoka drink the Newari holy liquor streaming from the deity's mouth with a belief that it will wash away all sins. The thhon flows freely, there is feasting

The next day there is the brief Nanichya Rath Yatra when the Kumari chariot is taken up to Nardevi and turns east through Kilagal and then towards Bhedasingh and back to Darbar Square. This route has significance because it was started by Malla king Jaya Prakash Malla, to let his nirlfriend named Nanicha see the jatra from the comfort of her own home in Kilagal. By this time, the novelty of being pulled all around town begins to wear off, and the young Kumari usually dozes off as the throngs dance and null the

chariots through the narrow streets. Then on Wednesday the king



monarch so he can protect his

coin, an asarfi to the goddess.

kingdom of Patan.

citizens. The king will offer a gold

The Kumari house, a quadrangle Newari structure bearing the most exotic of all wood carvings in the area is a 1757 construction made during the regime of king Jaya Prakash Malla-the last of the waiting downstairs. "Ladies and Malla kings who was denosed by gentlemen. She is the goddess Kumari. Please clap..." and there is a the invading army of King Prithvi Narayan Shah during Indra Jatra clatter of applause. Many guide festival itself. History books tell us books will tell you that the Kumari that Jaya Prakash Malla was pulling herself comes around to playfully the Kumari chariot himself when romp in the courtyard, this is not enjoying every hit of it. But by the so. Her caretakers take full authority time the chariot had reached Lagan over who the Kumari can visit and Prithvi Narayan Shah had already when. "She has to do puja, eat, sleep and play," a family member told us. The present Kumari will reign, captured the throne at Hanuman Dhoka. Jaya Prakash then fled

across the swollen Bagmati river to as Kumaris past have done, until she seek refuge in the neighbouring gets her first period. Amrit Shakya, father of the previous Kumari, Photographing the Kumari is forbidden anywhere inside the lobbied hard with palace bureaucrats to secure an education allowance and courtyard. But to get a glimpse of a "pension" for his daughter. He is her, either before 12 noon or after 3PM, she is brought to the window full of praise for King Birendra who finally agreed to his request. Present by one of the priestesses to give Kumaris now get Rs 6,000 and Rs audience for the non-Nepalis 1.000 rupees for a tutor every

month. Retired Kumaris like Amrit's daughter get a Rs 3,000 "pension" every month. Says Amrit "At least the Kumaris to come will have a better future "

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There are at present nine living ex-Kumaris from Kathmandu city and more from Patan and Bhaktapur. The Kumari of Kathmandu is selected from the 11 toles or communities around Ason. from the gold and silversmiths Shakya families who are Newari Ruddhists. The process is similar in Patan, whose Kumari comes from Shakva or Maharian families. In Bhaktanur, the Kumari stavs with her parents and is only required to make public appearances during the nine days of Dasain. •





COMPITIONS APPLY, VALID FROM SEPTEMBER 01, 2002



Under My Hat NEPALIS

## by Kunda Dixit

Subcontinental drift

A some of you go about your daily lives observing bandhs by staying indoors to learn more about the reproductive habits of wombats on the National Geographic Channel, there are others who have to keep the vigil and guard this country's international borders so that at the end of evertake every average inch of Neadli

territory is accounted for.

Just as the male wombat will sprinkle anointed water on termite hills on the perimeter of his

domain to mark out his territory, we too have to constantly guard ourselves against expansionist and hegemonistic tendencies in the vicinity.

But, geologically speaking, this is a losing battle. For the past 65 million years, Nepal has been progressively squeezed between India and China, a fact that King Prithin Viarayan Shah recognised when he colined the phrase. "Nepal is a Bazooska"

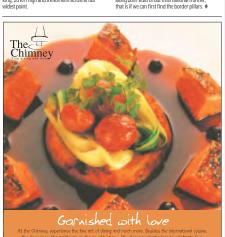
Bubblegum between two large moters. The result of the Indian plate pushing us relemitesly against the Eurasian plate is that we we and no recourse but to gou. This was fire as long as it gave us the highest mountains in the world which we could clim 15 times without artificial copyen, without thermal underwear, and clad only infig-ribops, so that we could land outselves regularly in the Guiness Book of World Records. But at the rate we are being gueded and showed, in another couple of million years, Nepal will be faltered to a link jragay wall about 2,000k long 20 km high and a kilometre across at our widest point. There are indications that this process is already underway. In Navaleparsi district, which geologists call the zone of the Main Boundary Thrust (NBT) and under which hie numerous geopolitical fault hies, border pillars was sometimes been known to move northwards by as much as 500 m in the ocurse of one nitro. Nowhere else on the planet is continental drift happening all such a rapid pace.

It is due to these tectonic movements that

there are unconfirmed reports that the birthplace of the Ruddhais creening away from Kapilbastu, and at press time was located nearabouts Orissa. Another millennia or so, and we will probably be told that the Buddha was actually born on what is now the Indian Zone on Antarctica.

on Antardica The more sharp-witted among you may now be asking: a) what is be trying to get ar?, and b) why doesn't be get to the points owe can all go borne, and watch the mating habits of wombats on cable?

My thoughts exactly. But I can't let you go without this last message to our seemingly unconcerned authorities about the wild elephant memore in hape district. Press report say dwild elephant seem of cross border terrorists disguised as merauding wild elephants have been we cking have calmed the Lask of Control (LOC) plunder ing villages on the Nepal side. This calls for greater vigilance along both sides of our international fromler.



## Ghana gourmet aver old and already time. Back in Tamale, any time lood with its libilary.

bigwigs such as the prime minister,

his entire cabinet and entourage

put together a feast of northern

Ghanaian food with perennial

favourites like the nutty melon

fish palm butter soup. West

seed-based egussi with meat or

peas, and the polenta-like fufu made of a combination of yam,

cassava or plantain. Sometimes

she says shaking her head, there

were five or six hundred people.

to play with other kinds of food,"

says Maria. Today, La'Soon hits that spot right between fancy

dining and down home comfort

"After I married Sepp. I started

African-style greens with black-eyed

visited, she was commandeered to

Jat over a year old and already
a Lalitpur institution. The face
and culinary brain of La'Soon
Restaurant and Vinotheque is fortysomething Ghana-native Maria
Zimmerman, who runs the restaurant with model-turned-entrepreneur Dolly Gurung.

Maria's a familiar, smiling face to Patansiders for whom La Soon became something of a lifeline in what was then the dining wasteland of south Kathmandu. But many are still puzzled by one thing: what's a Ghanaian doing running a cult restaurant on Pulchowk?

In 1992, some ten years after she married her Swiss hasband, who she met in her horsetown Tamale, in northern Charan, and had moved with him to Kenrya and South with the same than the same that the

when Maria realised that the massive parties she did every six months for her Nepali and expat friends always got rave reviews, not least for the food. So, in early 2001, she and Dolly decided that this side of the Bagmati needed some stirring up. Maria's love for feeding people until they drop happily away goes back a long American-influenced dishes Maria is the perfect restaurateursolicitous, but not overhearing. willing to accommodate diners' tastes, but encouraging them to try new tastes. She's already got regulars habituated to Ghanaian peanut butter soup. Starting next week, there will be a West African chicken stew and some other surprises on the menu, so Kathmandu foodies can come back to life again. Between that and the African and Caribbean nights La'Soon organises, Valley residents finally have a place they can eat truly different food, look at contemporary Nepali art, and

dance their hiking boots off. ♦



