Nepal's famous all-purpose knife.

27 September - 3 October 2002

Cyber Khasis and Virtual Bokas for Dasain p6

BINOD BHATTARA here are 47 days to go for polls. But

to let people vote.

minus ten days of Dasain, three days

of Tihar, three days of the Maoist

strike and it is clear there isn't much time left for campaigning. Even if there was,

canital or district headquarters. Many local

candidates cannot venture outside the

king to use Article 127 to reinstate

parliament and open the way for a

multinartisan caretaker administration?

Unhappy donors

The latest trend is to troop over to hand over memos to the government. Even the donors are joining the

procession. They are worried about the vacuum at the grassroots with bureaucrats running local bodies, and have written to the government again to hint that the current situation will only help the Maoists. The 10 September letter also warns that donors who had suspended funding to local bodies will wait until local elections to start writing cheques again. Signatories to the letter are the World Bank, DfID, GTZ, SNV, SDC, NORAD and UNDP who together control over 70 percent of foreign aid



Weekly Internet Poll # 53. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com 2. If elections were held tomorrow, which faction of Nenali Connress would you vote for





held. Or, they pretend it can.

activists have been abducted and brutally murdered by Maoists, who have vowed not So, there must be a reason why the politicians are not worried. Do they have a *Plan B*? Is the fallback option asking the

Subhas Chandra Nemwang of the UML told us: "The first option is elections and the expectation is that the government will make it possible to have it. If that isn't possible, then other alternatives may be explored." Nemwang was part of the ten party group that handed over a memorandum to prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Thursday (see picture).

Deuba needs to put on a brave face and project elections as a "constitutional ompulsion" which can give continuity to multi-party democracy. But he is cornered, as parliamentary parties array themselves against him. King Gyanendra is said to be displeased with the government's inability to restore confidence.



but is said to be luke-warm to an all-party

problem-solving approach. In all this confusion, only the Maoists seem to know exactly what they want: no elections, period. They have declared a three-day general strike on 11-13 November, and announced a build-up of actions before that, threatening to behead candidates, declaring "election-free districts", and breaking the legs of

anyone who dares help in campaigning The seven-point memorandum handed to Deuba Thursday is said to contain a list of options: among others convincing the Maoists not to disrupt elections, an allparty consensus on reforming the constitution, asking the king to reinstate



parliament invoking Article 127, and

and talk peace with the Maoists.

forming an all-party government to try

suspicion free. Pro-Girija Kangresis are said

to be insisting that Deuba step down, the

leftist UML suspects the centre-right

RPP of being too enthusiastic about

Article 127 and in a hurry to claim a share of government. Others suspect the UML of similar intentions. But even this multipartisan effort is not

Editorial p2

White water

p8-9

For his part, Deuba still has survival instincts intact, and will do anything to cling on to office. It would suit him to get some kind of multi-phase elections going however flawed. •



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If we want tourists, scrap visa fees

Forcing visitors to stand in three different gueues to fleece them is no way to boost tourism.

JANAKI GURUNG

As if it wasn't bad enough getting tourists to visit Nepal, the way we treat them on arrival at Kathmandu airport is so disgraceful that it is surprise they still come. Maybe that is why they call them "adventure tourists".

After overcoming fear of air travel, fear of nuclear war in the subcontinent, fear of the insurgency and bandhs they finally land in Kathmandu. They enter the arrival area to be greeted by a chaos of queues: lines for the Nepali-Indian counter, lines for visitors with visas, lines for visitors without visas,

lines to apply for visa, lines to pay visa fees. And there are no helpful hints about where to go first. "Do I pay the fee first and then apply for the visa, or do I apply for the visa and pay the fee?" one perplexed Swedish tourist was overheard asking an equally puzzled bystander on Monday.



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rafting down political rapids have we been as close to the edge as we are now. The politicians clinging to floats risk going over, but there is the danger they may take the rest of us down with them.

It is survival instinct that is drawing fractious political forces to coalesce, and this process is still tentative and fraught with hazards. Still, for the first time in as long as we can remember, there appears to be a sense that extraordinary situations demand extraordinary measures. At stake is not just the durability of our democracy. but also our existence as an independent nation.

To be sure, the main parliamentary parties that brought this crisis upon us are not coming together for anything as grandiose as "saving democracy", they just want to save their skins and know now that divided they will fall. Better late than never is all we can say.

Kathmandu's disunity, discord and greed was giving the Maoists their revolution by default. Selfish politicians squandered the democratic process, the Maoists are just delivering the coup de grace. The life of the local councils were not extended and handed over to centrally-appointed bureaucrats, so the Maoists either destroyed or dismantled half of all VDCs in the country. The prime minister dissolved parliament and declared elections to protect himself from a vindictive colleague, and the Maoists proceeded to make it impossible for him to hold polls.

Faced with a constitutional dead-end and ambiguity in the interpretation of Article 127. political parties had no choice but to get together.

And paradoxically, in a classic example of the Nepal tendency to muddle-through, we have inadvertently hit on a way out; an alliance of political parties with a constitutional monarch to face revolution-minded republicans

That the "group of ten" (six in parliament, four outside) could even agree on a memorandum of recommendations which it presented to the prime minister on Thursday is itself a bit of a miracle. They don't seem to need a leader now, the crisis is itself leading them on. This all-party road map could be what we need to take us out of the rut.

A multipartisan approach could legitimise a constitutionally-kosher arrangement for any of the following: reinstating parliament, agreeing on a truce and talks with Maoists, enticing the Maoist leadership into the political mainstream, postponing elections, setting in motion the process for constitutional reforms, or even organising a referendum on the monarchy

One thing is sure: Prime Minister Deuba and his caretaker cabinet have neither the political legitimacy nor the mandate to undertake these decisions on their own. The sooner we move on to an all-party approach the better it will be for all concerned-even the Maoists who are looking for an honourable political

When senior political leaders meet King Gyanendra as a group in the coming days, they will hopefully use the memorandum as a blueprint to get this country back on track. And the long-suffering citizens of this country will just have to cross our fingers that the politicos have learnt their lessons well, and will paddle back from

to an arbitrarily interim recognition. And

by default, the controversial declaration

has also challenged the legitimacy of

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuha's



STATE OF THE STATE

KAI MAR (Sweden) - News from home

The Quagmire

The harder this government tries to extricate itself, the deeper it sinks.

makes the gloomy weather of this strange city even more unbearable. Faced with ubiquitous questions about the state which dithered for far too long to of Nepal, I often take resort to the time reach indecision on the Congress tested explanation and say that these legitimacy issue. are just the pangs of political growth. A political party with over half a But are we? century of history has been held hostage

It is looking more and more like the phase of institutional decay, and nothing Illustrates that as starkly as the strange declaration of the Election Commission



government. In asking Deuba to register a new political outfit, the Election Commission confirmed what has been clear right from the outset: the country was being administered by a partyless prime minister who had lost the moral authority to govern the moment he was expelled from his party.

Earlier, the Supreme Court did give the drowning government a straw to hold by declaring that the dissolution of Pratinidhi Sabha was constitutional, and that there was no anomaly between a state of emergency in the country and the general elections. But that's too weak a thread to lift the Deuba cabinet from the

status of a caretaker government. The present government has neither the legitimacy nor the authority to do anything other than hold the parliamentary elections. Unfortunately, the chances that it can hold elections as promised are rather remote. The government-and the country along with it—is in a quicksand of its own making. The harder it tries to extricate itself, the deeper it sinks.

Unfortunately, other political forces seem as perplexed. Despite his ability to inflict heavy casualties on the army and the verbal bravado that he comes up with after every battle. Comrade Prachanda perhaps knows quite well that the Maoist insurgency is a "war" that he can never win without losing the country in the process. That's precisely the risk that even the most hard-boiled royalist of the Panchayat school would be unwilling

A compromise needs to be worked out to save the country from becoming a failed state, but no one seems to have a

clue on how to go about it. It is a challenge that can be turned into an opportunity by the political parties of the country if only they could get out of their collective coma. The Deuba Company had no legitimacy, so it went about dismantling the credibility of all national institutions. It has succeeded to such an extent that political parties of the country seem to have become their own worst enemies

How could the national parties fool themselves that elections were a possibil-ity without getting the Maoists on board? How did they get hoodwinked into this mass hallucination? Political parties must rethink their strategy and change their priorities and begin at the beginning all

over again. Fortunately, the seed of democracyreignty of the people—still survives. Starting from there it should not be too. difficult for all political forces of the People's Movement of 1990 to arrive at a common plan of action. Since constitutional monarchy is an integral part of the Jan Andolan agenda, there is no reason for the king to be alarmed of any political

coalition that yows to abide by it This coalition (give it any other name if you can't stand GP Koirala and his Broad Democratic Alliance) can then begin negotiations with the Maoists in right earnest. The present government doesn't have either the mandate or the political legitimacy to talk to Maoists. A constitutional king, by definition, can't be party to any political bargaining.

So who talks to Maoists if all other political forces opposed to their violent methods don't come together to the fore?

....... We already know that high-wire human rights activists can take us on the road to peace only so far, and it is the political parties that have to take over

Once such a political force comes into being, the government will have no option but to behave-expel tainted ministers, trim the cabinet and be answerable to the legitimate political parties of the country in the Upper

If not, the alternative of an all-party ernment led by the Speaker will still be there. Indeed, there is no need to explore the possibilities of a handpicked technocratic ministry under Article 127 of the constitution. The very idea of a non-political cabinet reeks of authoritari anism. Apart from bringing the Maoists back into the mainstream politics, the other main priority of the political alliance has to be the extension of the term of the local government units until r fresh elections are held.

Parliamentary elections can wait for now. local elections can't.

And it's no use blaming IGP Pradeep Sumshere for saying something that each one of us knows to be true: for elections to be of any use, it needs to be postnoned. The storm doesn't cease to exist just because an ostrich has its head nicely buried in the sand.

It's time to think the unthinkable: we aren't going to have elections any time soon, so we better brace ourselves for an uncertain Dasain. Another sad thought in a faraway country where sadness is said to he a national characteristic: why is it that common sense is so uncommon among Nepali politicians?

LETTERS

apparently clarified in the letter

that he did not say any such

thing) There is a system-wide

understanding the fundamen-

resultant uncritical tolerance

delusion when it comes to

tals of democracy and the

INCLUSION The comment by Dipak Gyawali "Shed the politics of exclusion" (#112) caught the sentiment of all Nepalis at this hour. His point about political parties needing to be more inclusive is well taken. It is this winner-takes-all syndrome that has plagued governance in this country for so long, and democracy did not resolve the problem. It is not too late for the isolated political parties to mend their ways and show that they can provide an alternative leadership. And they can only do this by being united and inclusive. Let us hope that our big heads will think with cool minds. Mahesh Pokhrel

NATION

Nepal Science Campus

Kathmandu LIKE SADDAM'S IRAQ A Chief of Police entrusted with the most important task in the coming months of overseeing and planning security for the upcoming elections cannot speak his mind on this matter. Is everyone blind to this

That no one seems to

see anything wrong in the fact that the police chief was chastised and asked r a letter of explanation for suggesting that the elections he postnoned or with the uncritical coverage in the mainstream media. says it all. We in Nepal have a long way to go towards internalising the concept of democracy. The mere utterance of that word, and its recent frequent use in phrases like "to save democracy" gives one the illusion that we know what we are talking about. We

It is totally irrelevant whether or not the chief of police made that remark (he

COPPECTION

This picture printed in From the Nepali Press (#112) of the funeral sion of Krishna Prasad Sapkota, former chairman of Ryale VDC of Kayre district on 16 September was by Ram Krishna Chapagain of Nepal Samacharpatra. The caption was also missing Sapkota was beheaded near his home by Maoists on the night of 15 Sentember and the photo shows a mourner at left carrying his



opinion of our institution or the faculty working with us.

Ariun Karki, MD Kathmandu University Medical School (While every care is taken to

of practices that are so blatantly undemocratic. This act of demanding a letter of some slips do occur. We clarification from a high ranking official for expressing his opinion on a matter that is of primary relevance to BRING BACK THE YAK his task, regardless of the Unlike Mr Tim Ackerman content of the remark, is akin to extortion. We did not elect (Letters, #111), who was the government for that. Such things are supposed to be common only in places

governments, like Saddam's Arun Neupane, by email

where people do not elect

LIBRARY HOURS

recently went to the Kaiser Library at 10AM only to be told by the arrogant security personnel that the minister has given orders not to send in anyone through the gates before 2PM. The library opens at 9AM and the staff arrive around that time, but we who use the facility are not allowed in Anyway I went again at 2.30 PM only to find that the shelf containing old encyclopaedias was locked. The fellow with the keys to wisdom had gone home early. How can a ministry that can't even manage a library on its own premises run the

TIM ACKERMAN This letter is to point out an error in the "Letters" section of your issue #111. A letter titled "Anti-American" is written by Mr Tim Ackerman who identifies himself as being affiliated with the Kathmandu University Medical School. I would like to clarify that we do not have any employee or volunteer with that name, and therefore education sector. It is hard to

his letter does not reflect the

country's education sector?

The increasing numbers of advertisements from Indian boarding schools in the national press proves that the exodus of Nepali students is gathering pace. A word of advice to our underground friends: instead of hurning school buses and bombing classrooms why not try to improve the quality of govern ment schools? But what is the use of trying to convince you to be rational? If logic worked, and if your intentions were natriotic we wouldn't he this crisis, would we?

S Thapa, Kathmandu

SPEAK FOR YOURSELE After the all-party meeting organised by the Flection Commission, Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka vowed on behalf of the Deuba government to hold elections in a peaceful manner throughout the country in seven phases. At

the same time, the Maoists

declared that they would do

tails we lose", #112)

everything possible to disrupt

the elections. ("Heads you win.

How can the government

be so sure about its security

arrangements? It looks onto

general strikes called by the

terrorists from its offices

without taking any action.

affirms peace and security

peaceful. The people are

claims that the strikes were

scared to go to polling booths.

the insurgency, the government

has shown no signs that it can

restore neace in the kingdom

Corruption is still on the rise.

Commission for the Investiga

tion of Abuse of Authority also

On whose hehalf does the

Deuba government assure us

peacefully? The RPP, the UML,

the NC (K), and others oppose

they are the opposition groups

Pravesh Saria

They show no support for the

government, though they all

want to come to power.

Our motherland should be

dearer to us than heaven, but

what message are we giving to

our young sons and daughters

when they see innocent blood

being spilled here? ("Enough"

future will they have when they

#111.) Children are the future

of this country. What kind of

witness such violence? Will

they grow up to be the same?

I want to ask the political

leaders, the custodians of this

innocent Nepali lives have to

be sacrificed in the name of

the demigod Mao? Our politi-

positions instead of working

cians are fighting for high

minister does not sit on a

magic chair, as we have found

out in these last twelve years

of the multinarty system We

need leaders who are true to

their consciences, if they have

country, how many more

COMPASSION

everything they can because

there is no proper judiciary.

administration or law and

seems to be quiet after a

that it can hold elections

handful of actions.

order in the nation. The

and so far, since the start of

verify the authenticity of letters we receive at Nepali Times, apologise to the Kathmandu University Medical School -

quickly able to file his complaint about your alleged anti-US editorial policy and take rapid, Bush-like remedial measures by immediately discontinuing his subscrip tion. I do not have regular access to the Internet, hence this rather belated electronic gripe via an America-based

A regular comic strip with insightful content is the hallmark of a good paper. By dropping Miku's strip with our dear friends, the Yak and the Yeti, you have done great harm to vourselves. What caused you to discontinue this wonderful strip I do no know, but unless you bring Yakyetiyak back I will, a la Mr Ackerman, fulfil my vow of punishing myself by a) not peeking over others' shoulders to read your paper, b) not borrowing the NT from friends and c) immediately Dinesh Rai, Naxal discontinuing the very healthy practice of stealing the office

Bhim Gurung, Lalitpui

(The Yakyetiyak comic strip is on extended leave, and will be back in the not-too-distant future. - Fd

BOMBING SCHOOLS I now know on whose behalf the Manists are attacking schools in Nepal: the Indian

imagine who else this systematic destruction of Nepali education benefits other than Indian boarding schools which are now filling up with "refugee" students from Nepal. Is this how the comrades intend to reform our education: by turning back together and giving up their destructive egos. The prime the single most important achievement of the past 10 vears by which Nepalis were increasingly attending schools in this country rather than going across the bor-

> any, and to the country. We need leaders who can be neither bought nor sold. We don't need more election manifestos, which are so much khichadi. We know that even ton, experienced leaders of major parties do not hold a magic wand that will fulfil our aspirations. What we need is for them to realise that sitting on committees and condemning the killing is not enough. There is no compassion without action Bhaiu Ram Shrestha

("Don't blame the private power producers", #111). However, his information on Kali Gandaki A is incorrect. Even allowing for contract variations that were approved during the construction, as well as possible remaining claims, the total cost of KG-A will be approximately \$380 million compared to an initial estimated cost of \$452 million. This translates into a cost of \$2.64 per MW. In addition. unlike most of Nepal's run-of-river projects. KGA has daily pondage capacity. It can therefore be operated as a peaking plant, providing energy to the system at times of peak load, when it is at its most

PRIVATE POWER

Siddhartha Rana discusses a number of very important issues

Also, there is nothing surprising about the fact that the NEA borrows from HMG-N at interest rates of up to 12 percent despite the fact that the loans from international agencies, such as ADB. are provided at rates of only 1-1.5 percent to the government. This reflects the clear policy of such funding agencies with respect to the provision of 'soft' loans to commercial sectors such as nower and civil aviation, as well as the need to cover the foreign exchange risk that is borne by the government. It is worth noting, however that a lower on-lending rate is used in the case of projects or

components of projects specifically targeted at rural electrification. Finally, while acknowledging the many barriers Mr Rana identifies to the domestic financing for development of medium and large-scale hydropower projects in Nepal, this points to the urgent need to develop the local debt and capital markets so that Nepal can draw more domestic capital into financing hydropower developmen This will also require much-improved project finance skills, project management expertise and legal capacities

Richard Vokes, Country Director Asian Development Bank



 It would perhaps be more appropriate for Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to respond to Mr Rana's opinion piece, but since they don't seem to be doing it I have decided to do so. At \$1.92 million per MW, with 52 MW installed, the Bhote Kosi Power Company (BKPC) confirmed that its total project cost was \$99.8 million This magical 52 MW figure is 44.4 percent more than what the 36 MW government licensed and Power Purchase Agreement approved capacity. Now if this same yardstick is applied to the 144 MW Kali Gandaki, then the figure of 208 MW will emerge as the new installed capacity. Inclusive of the interest paid during construction, the total estimated cost of Kali Gandaki was \$452 million. I am not privy to the actual figures, but some savings were made by international contract biddings. By applying the BKPC logic this results in 435/208 = \$2.09 million per MW for Kali Gandaki, as compared with \$1.92 million ner MW for Rhote Kosi. Crunching such cost ner MW figures can get tricky but what really pinches is the "take or pay, dollar

denominated, US consumer price indexed" cost per unit.
The BKPC should be congratulated for running their 36 MW power plant with only 20 personnel. The NEA's 10 MW Sunkosi plant needs 97. The 342 staff indicated includes those looking after the transmission, distribution and customer service. Sunkosi is more than 30 years old, while the newer Bhote Kosi has made full use of

state-of-the-art technology.

The aim of the private sector is solely profit. The public sector has other social obligations like employment opportunity. For this reason, the German government just pumped in over \$350 million to MobileCom to safeguard 5,500 jobs.

True, the NEA has management and technical problems, weak financial control, non-payment of dues even by government offices, high technical and non-technical losses, high employee to installed capacity ratio, low employee productivity, low revenue to employee ratio, low fixed asset to employee ratio. Mr Rana thus concludes that, "the problem is not the PPA with independent power produc-

Some, however, believe that the PPA is one of the last straws on the camel's back. The main reason for the poor adverse ratio is the small 600 MW capacity and the fact that the NEA is run by "political masters" as a perpetual employment centre.

Mr Rana's main message is that the international financial community is watching the performance of the Bhote Kosi and Khimti projects closely before committing any more resources in Nepal's hydropower. Some interpret this as a veiled threat to the NEA's management, which has publicly gone on record that it will renogotiate the PPAs. Former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Energy Calvin Humphrey, in a talk at the Ministry of Water Re sources, said that the sanctity of the contract must be respected by

But he went on to add that national interest and the future of our children should never be compromised when exploiting natural resources. It is this basic message, and not the rating of the international financial community, that our political masters should bear in mind when developing our hydropower.

> Santa Bahadur Pun, former NEA managing director Kathmandu

general elections in November, the All Negal National Independent

Students' Union (Revolutionary), the ANNISU (R), has made public

a list of demands they want met. Otherwise, they've threatened

to force all educational institutions to close on 1 and 2 October

That is besides the three-day strike preceding elections 11-13

nercent and increase the education hudget, end "privatisation."

the immediate release of 13 student cadres who have been

and commercialisation of education", provide free education for

all until high school. The Maoist student body has also demanded

missing and the punishment of those guilty of arresting and killing

November. ANNSU (R) wants to reduce the security budget by 75

The trouble with TU

HEMLATA RAI

olitical slogans welcome you at the main entrance of Tribhuvan University. Different student unions teacher associations and employee unions inclined towards various political ideologies vie for your attention, claiming to protect the rights of one group or another, and saying that they alone can safeguard university interests. The highsounding claims are the most obvious indicator of what underlies any discussion amongst TLL functionaries about the development of the university, its academic obligations, and achievementthere's too much politics on

Under the partyless Panchavat regime, TU served as a forum for intellectual and ideological debate The student unions camouflaged a political movement that surmounted ideological restrictions and made possible Nepal's first referendum in 1979, which allowed the Nepali populace to choose between a multi-party system and the Panchavat, Today, well after the restoration of democracy, propaganda and politics are still as much part of TU's offerings as coursework and degrees, 1990. Political parties. still find TU fertile ground to train young people on their ideologies, while students use it as a launch pad for their budding political careers. The recent success stories, such as that of former MP Jaganath Khatiwada, and former state minister NP Saud, who cut their political teeth in T.U. have encouraged other students to use student unions as political platforms. "There is no harm in having a nolitical ideology Once elected we concentrate on student rights and

HERE AND THERE

Tribhuvan University has infrastructure it can be proud of. If only students and faculty would give up politics for academics.



the well-heing of the university " claims Dipendra Acharva, who was elected vice president of the Nepal Student Union from a Nepali interests of TU. Congress-affiliated union.

The professors and bureaucrats at TU are not much better. Equally involved in politics and divided along ideological lines, they contest their own elections under the auspices of established political entities. As for the administrative employees, in the last elections to their professional union, the main fight was between the familiar symbols of the tree and the sunthe Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML As a result, says Madhay Knirala a TI Ladministrator "all did Negal hit upon the idea of

administrative decisions are politicised, and chances are slim that all decisions serve the best

TLI was established in 1959 as Nepal's first university under the patronage. It was first part of the larger drive to modernise education in Negal. The physical infrastructure was constructed at the present location in Kirtipur only in 1966. Three years later, in 1972, both public and private colleges across the country were declared constituent campuses f TU under the National Education System Plan Only much later, in the early 1990s,

Tribhuvan University Act with royal

multiple universities. Separate National Education Commissions in 1993 and 1998 recommended the establishment of four regional universities in the eastern, western, mid-western and far western development regions by integrating TU constituent

campuses and private affiliated campuses and then specified what exactly it meant by the 'regional and multi-university concept. Today there are five full-fledged universities in Nepal, and efforts are on to create technical universities.

The concept however never really took off mostly due to But TU continues to face the resentment at TU over the problems that the multi-university perceived diminishing of the concept was supposed to deal with. authority of the institution due to The Purhanchal I Iniversity and redistribution of its nowers. Since TU's charter states that it is an autonomous, self-administered institution, the university felt that the committee formed by the povernment with the National Planning Commission to facilitate the handing over of its regional satellites to the new universities was interference

27 SEPTEMBER - 3 OCTOBER 2002 NEPALI TIMES

As a result. TU continues to be overburdened with students and mired in administrative complications. This academic year, approximately 143,000 students-90 percent of all tertiary education studentsstudy at TI I campuses. Each year annovimately 48 000 graduate from high school, and an estimated 80 percent of them opt for



higher education. Despite the government having adopted a 12year school system, popularly known as Plus Two, to replace TU's proficiency certificate levels with the higher secondary education system, most students still join TU campuses after passing the SLC examination Phasing out the intermediate levels was expected to reduce TU's student load by almost 30 percent. This could have allowed TU to spend more of its constrained funds on academic activities But TU continues to spend as much as 80 percent of its government subsidy on salaries and

Journalism, war, and peace



every crisis that has gripped this continent, from the Vietnam war to the killing fields of Cambodia, from the Babri Mosque riots in India to—most recently—the American assault on the Taleban and the search for Osama

bin Laden. I dare say Nepal has seen him a time or two as well. Now a German organisation follows the rules of employment laid down by the government back home, so when Terzani's 65th birthday was approaching last September, he knew that it would soon be time for him retire. Then came 11 September, 2001, Terzani retired on schedule but moved by the horror of the terrorist atrocities in America, and later the American response to them, he packed his pen and started travelling again This time though, the great man of Asian journalism wasn't recording events and the thoughts of kings and warlords for Der Spiegel. He was writing front-page letters in Italy's largest newspaper, Corriere della Sera, letters of anguish, fear, anger and eventually hope. Tiziano Terzani has collected those letters in his latest book. Letters Against the War.

On the back cover, a short sentence says it all. "After 30 years as a war correspondent for a major European magazine, Tiziano Terzani turns into a correspondent against all wars". This is not one of those spurious bits of praise known in the trade as a "blurb", the sort of thing you ask a friend to write before even showing him the book. No. I dare say Terzani, never shy of the theatrical



gesture, has given himself the title of "correspondent against all wars". At first, I fought shy of the concept. The tenets of objectivity are engraved on my soul. may hold opinions, and willingly disseminate them at the drop of a hat, but not as a journalist, and never in my news reporting.

Terzani was much the same in the long course of his career. His reporting—sharp, incisive, interesting—was no parade of polemic. But in the evening of his life, the late night of his career, this distinguished fellow has dropped all pretence of journalism and is now a pamphleteer, a campaigner for a worthy cause, and that cause is peace. Some time ago in the pages of this newspaper, an earnest fellow from some earnest country argued in a somewhat earnest manner that we needed fewer war correspondents in international journalism, and more "peace correspondents" I snorted with slightly weary cynicism at the time and pointed out to whoever would listen that such a notion could hardly be journalistic. You weren't getting all available sides to a story, then printing them without

An old South Asia hand turns to peace journalism.

comment. You were commenting by choosing your sides.

Pokhara I Injuersity were estab-

lished by two separate parliamen-

tary Acts in 1995 and 1997 to be

developed as regional universities

regions. The governing acts clearly

specify that the TU constituency

respective regions should gradually

he made part of the new institu-

process was again emphasised in

the 1999/2000 budget policy.

tions. The importance of this

and affiliated campuses in the

in eastern and mid-western

Having read the first book of "peace correspondence". I remain sceptical. Letters Against the War is not a bad read, not at all. Terzani writes with passion and precision; his arguments are worth listening too his sincerity unquestioned. The anecdotes from the well-trodden trails of post-11 September journalism—jihadis in Peshawar, the reconstruction and development gravy train in Kabul, the civilian casualties of American bombing in Afghanistan—are familiar ones, and they serve Terzani's main thesis well. War is hell, the innocent suffer, and we rarely learn a damn thing from the bloodstains and failures of history. He suffers a little from the instinctive anti-Americanism of the European, the failure to see just how flexible American culture and politics can be. But this isn't why I am not yet convinced by the notion of a "peace correspondent"

This is a book that should be read by people on all sides of political opinion about the "war against terror". It is literate, humane and convincing. If logic lay behind decisions to make war, then arguments like this would most certainly bring us peace. But I fear we are violent, territorial beasts, afraid of the dark and apt to lash out at the mildest of provocation. We are lavish with revenue, and ration forgiveness. Most of all, we ignore the wisdom of experience and age. Still, Terzani may be onto something here and I could be wrong. And for once, I hope I am. •

(Letters Against the War, India Research Press New Delhi. 2002.)



Clockwise from above: Class ir progress in the Department of Tribhuvann University Centra Library: TU Vice-Chancellor een Prakash Jung Shah; TU

administrative costs.

"We have continued the intermediate levels on humanitarian grounds, as the private Plus Two schools are unaffordable for most school graduates," explains Naveen Prakash Jung Shah, vice-chancellor of TU. But, he adds, "Political commitment is needed to phase out intermediate levels, unless affordable, government funded Plus Two schools are established, it is not possible."

The government had planned to gradually phase out intermediate levels by 2001. The private sector responded enthusiastically and by the fiscal year 2001/02, 775 Plus Two schools were running, but students especially from rural areas continue to throng TU campuses for intermediate levels mostly for economic reasons—a student in TU campuses can complete the intermediate level courses for about Rs 4000 while the average expense for the Plus Two years is about Rs

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60.000. In addition, these private university exams pass Shortage of funds and colleges are concentrated only

misallocation of what is available is another reason for TU's troubles and the declining quality

Add to this a drop in quality. Teachers at the Plus Two level like teachers at TU-are required of education there. TU generates to have Masters' degrees, as a result only 15 percent of its expenditure of which a large number of teachers from its own sources, 85 percent are moving to better-paying private is covered with government school jobs. The recent move to subsidy and foreign aid, though expand two-year Bachelor's courses this has been dropping of late. to three years has also led to a This academic year TU needs an shortage of teachers at TU camestimated Rs. 2.24 billion to run puses, which has directly affected the 27 different degrees it offers, teaching hours, and quality. Though but the government has announced a grant of only Rs 1.56 the academic calendars allocate 180 lecture hours for each paper, in the last academic year students. appeared for the exams with only

are no mechanisms to recognise the

contributions of devoted teachers,

Professor Tri Ratna Manandhar a

TI I dean On average less than 25

percent of students who appear for

rules are being followed," says

in urban areas.

Mandala House about 100 hours of lectures. "There or, conversely, check that university Delawara Kathanah SATE ADDRESS OF BUILDINGS AND A SAN AND ADDRESS OF THE PARTY AND ADDRES

billion. Under pressure from the student unions TU has not been able to revise its rock-bottom fee structure Recently Kathmandu's Padma Kanya College was shut down by the Nepal Student Union when it tried to raise fees Presently, a TU Master's student pays only Rs 70 a month for

fact that the performance of denartments and the demand for a narticular discipline is not taken. into account when allocating funding. As a result, for instance, the history faculty has 21 teachers for the seven students of the 35 enrolled who actually attend classes on a regular basis. The Hindi and Sanskrit departments only admitted five students each of which only two attend, but their budget has not been significantly changed in



DOMESTIC BRIEFS Shutdown The country appears to be in for some more bandhs. Following their announcement to hold a three-day bandh on the eve of the

recent years.

"We don't know yet how will we manage the fund gap created by the cut in the government subsidy," says Yogendra Shakya, chief of the TU's Economic Administration Division. Two years ago the division recommended a 100 to 150 percent increase in tuition fees, but nobody within the TU machinery is hopeful that anything like this will happen anytime soon. The unions, as they know, are too powerful. ♦



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The target is over 500. Clean-up act

Sub Metropolitan City, with the help of a

number of Rotary Clubs, has taken upon

itself the task of controlling the canine

population in southern Kathmandu in a

humane fashion. There are to be no more

cruel killings or poisonings. Instead, stray

dogs are caught and neutered in a 15-20 minute operation that leaves them free to continue their amorous activities without

adding to the dramatically growing

population, due to which rabies has

become a significant public threat. An estimated 1,000 stray dogs live in Lalitpur and the number could be 10 times more in Kathmandu. The Spay and Neuter program, initiated two months ago, has already attended to nearly 200 canines.

Fifty Nepali and French mountaineering enthusiasts have got together to clean up Mt Dhaulagiri. It is estimated that Dhaulagiri is littered with about two tonnes of garbage piled up since the 1960s, when the region was first opened for mountaineering. The four-week long clean-up campaign, starting 23 September, is expected to collect 1,700 kg of waste. The less harmful items such as clothes will be burnt, recyclable metals will be sold within Nepal, and highly toxic batteries will be taken to France to be recycled. Dhaulagiri is the world's seventh highest mountain, and considered one of Nepal's most difficult trek routes.

Dasain discount

The government has decided to be festive. It's offering discounts on essential commodities such as rice, vegetable ghiu and soybean oil, and salt on the festive occasions of Dasain and Tihar. "The price of essential items distributed through the trading houses owned by the government will be reduced as usual." says a press release issued by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and Supplies. There will also be a five percent discount on clothes. District officers have been asked to see that the prices are maintained, and a 19-member coordination committee has been appointed to ensure that the process goes smoothly. It will be interesting to see what, if any, impact this has in places like Karanli or Mugu, where there's not enough food on a good day anyway



nine Maoist workers, including Krishna Sen, former central committee coordinator of the ANNISU. Bhandari's gaffe Leftist leader Bidya Bhandari has put her foot right in it. Bhandari, who is a member of the All Nepal Women's Organisation, is being taken to task for criticising the worship of Kathmandu's virgin goddess the Kumari. Of course, she's a progressive woman, so at first glance her stance seems admirable. But not when she

reasons like this: men who marry former kumaris are fated to die early. It's no wonder that Kathmandu's irate Kumari worshippers are up in arms, and the Association of Vedic Realisation is demanding action against Bhandari. Has the job market shrunk so drastically that people are willing to take any risk? Certainly seems so. The government recently called for applicants to fill 700 teaching positions in Maoistaffected districts to temporarily substitute permanent teachers displaced due to the threats and other fallouts of the insurgency. It received more than 20,000 applications. These teaching

volunteers will be removed from their positions as soon as the security situation improves and the permanent teachers can return to their designated workplace. What's more, they will be paid only half of what the permanent teachers are paid. The insurgents have already killed about 100 teachers and thousands have been threatened with physical harm, which has resulted in their being transferred to safer areas by the government. creating a shortage of teachers in insurgency-affected districts Patan's sterile dogs Cause for the Society for Protection of Cruelty to Animals to smile: the Lalitour

tions-by purchasing a khasi

or boka online and having it

delivered to their loved ones

Recipients of gifts could even

go along with someone from

otherwise examine a number

of khasi in the price

range specified by

the sender, and

abduct it from the

The growth of e-

khasi bazar.

shopping sites that focus on

Nenal-there are probably

half-a-dozen gift sites-has

Dasain, Tihar, and just about

anything else with more-than-

Father's Day

websites saw brisk

as suits and shirts,

sales of gifts such

liquor, cakes and

sweets, while Teej

Hallmark potential. For

saw specials on saris

Dasain is definitely the

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busiest time. That's when

most of our 2,200 registered

customers send aifts to their

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khasis online.

goats) seemed to

Thamel.com sold 69

The way to the diaspora's wallet is through its collective, nostalgic heart.



Buy a khasi for your family: \$89.99. If that's a bit steep, you can buy a boka for half that amount at \$49.99. With Nepal's biggest festival just around the comer, Nepali online shopping sites are putting up their best hargains. Last year thamel.com, one of Nepal's pioneer e-commerce sites, did brisk business selling khasis online, "It was great, seeing the expressions of surprise and delight on the faces of

people while we made the deliveries." says Rajesh Joshi, CEO of thamel.com. "Some even thought the goat had flown all the way to Kathmandu. They would ask after their family in the US." What an online shop needs to do to be a hit is play

on the hold of tradition and add a judicious amount of sentimentality to the essentially soulless process of shopping on the Internet. The idea of selling khasis online was suggested by a regular customer of

thamel.com who wanted to surprise his family in Nepal with a khasi delivery. And so Nepalis residing abroad were offered a chance to feel close to their families back in Nepal and involved in Dasain celebraand even clothing. What began with bouquets of flowers and boxes of

chocolates has extended to a wide range of goodies that the Nenali diasnora in places like UK, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Australia, the US can pick from online to send to dear ones in Nepal. Like the gift, the payoff is pretty timely too-senders are emailed a digital picture of

> are made in Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Kirtipur and Patan "We're

efficient and cost effective. Tuladhar advertises his site in community newspapers ahroad and on nonular Nenali

websites. "Things can only get better," he says. Tuladhar is so optimistic, he's thinking of extending deliveries to other major Nepali cities

"Of course we can't include perishable items like cakes but maybe gifts like CDs and so on would be possible." Anything goes, really, so long as it tells senders that a

Where to go to send gift a

families in Nepal," says Joshi. Thamel.com recently upgraded its site to include Dasain specials on more than just bokas and khasis. You can now order juju dahi, sweetmeats,

The deliveries

always getting asked why we didn't start earlier," says Suresh Tuladhar, CEO of netfornepal.com, another online shonning site "There are so many Nepalis abroad who would like to send gifts home but didn't have a medium that was quick.

like Pokhara and Biratnagar

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In the October Himal



General attitudes, Aung San Suu Kvi and the future of South Asia's east



dolphins in the Indus and Ganges



• RAMACHANDRA GUHA ON SOUTH ASIAN BIOGRAPHY • SRI LANKAN PEACE MANOEUVERS
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 EXPLORING INSURGENCY IN INDIA'S NORTHEAST PLUS MORE - ON NEWS STANDS THIS WEEK

Unopposed, unbeaten



I ith the police chief's ith the police criter a inner instincts and the Election Commission's interim order having cast a wider shadow on the general elections, it's time to narrow down our options. We must start the electoral process on 13 November not just to save democracy. We need to find out soon which cluster of Kangresis will eventually get

The Manists have threatened to disenfranchise voters unless something resembling a constituent assembly figures on the ballot paper. It wasn't supposed to be like this. Politics is war without bloodshed while war is politics with bloodshed," the Great Helmsman once said. The political and military wings of our revolutionaries often have been working at cross purposes ever since Prachanda blazed his trail two years ago. It wouldn't be prudent to count too much on any unilateral pre-election cease-fire. Since we're pressed for time, we must impress upon the rebels that free and fair elections are crucial to contemplating a new constitution.

As for the one we have, Article 127 has prompted too many questions of propriety and legitimacy. We might be hest off with the restoration of the House of Representatives We can't afford, however, to

let our justices lose faith in the system by overturning their unanimous verdict. Especially since we've enshrined the bench as the ultimate arbiter of whether we can cast our ballots. Since the security forces are worried about law and order. regardless of the number of voting phases, pluralism has become a high-risk pursuit. With helicopters going missing or smouldering in rebel fire, we can't even start comprehending the logistical nightmare remote

regions would confront. So here's a hetter idea. Let's re-elect the entire 205 line-up unopposed. The UML and RPP seem ready to re-nominate prominent MPs any way. An across-the-board extrapolation would have a therapeutic effect on the body politic. The deceased and those who decline a second consecutive term can be succeeded by runners-up in the 1999 election. That way we'll preserve faith in ourselves as worthy custodians of the spirit of '90. We also will be spared the Khrushchevian anguish of having to listen to candidates promising to build bridges even where there are no rivers.

The next all-party conclave should unanimously reaffirm our commitment to forward-looking change by restoring the status quo ante. Be sure to invite the Deuha hrinade Praia Parishad Hariyali Party and the other

Re-electing the entire MP lineup unopposed would have a therapeutic effect on the body politic.

smaller outfits to make the esolution truly representative The UML would have the most to gain. How many parties in the world can take satisfaction in having sacrificed an imminent majority for the sake of the system? This solution would also help prevent Bam Dev Gautam from exacerbating the Madhav Nepal-Khadga Oli squabbles over ticket distribution.

The Nepali Congress could get one last chance to put its house in order before the parlia mentary party formally splits. The RPP might have a problem, since some leaders have just started pepping up supporters with visions of their own majority Until a few weeks ago, the party seemed set to improve its tally in the dissolved legislature. You can't make such predictions based on the three-way split over whether to tie up with Koirala, Deuba or the UML. For many former panchas, preserving what they had might not be an entirely

fatalistic proposition The radical communist groups, which are part of the parliamentary process to expose its fraudulence, should have the least objection. Parties boning to make their debut in the Lower House will have enough time to improve their chances in the next polls. Independents could make gains in a normal election, but it would be difficult for them to stay that way in the post-9/11 you're either-with-us-or-against-us global environment

The prospect of another parliamentary cycle could encourage the Maoists to reconsider their priorities. With enough prodding, the political commissars ight be able to persuade the military commanders to let the people decide. Not that the Manists' acquiescence would animate everyone Many Nenalis remain convinced that the people who count the votes end up deciding everything. The good thing about us is that we still bother to vote. The turnout in both Rastriya Panchayat elections in the 1980s was impressive, even though the outcome in most constituencies was already known Wouldn't it be nice to know the exact composition of the next House minutes after the las nomination papers have been filed? ♦

FCONOMY

New Rs 10 notes will be plastic

The filthy, tattered notes you get from taxi drivers and vegetable vendors are unpleasant. but that's not the only thing wrong with paper money. It is easy to counterfeit-97 percent of fake banknotes are paper—and has a circulation life of about eight months at most. Worn notes also cause more errors in ATMs and high-speed note validators. The high cost of replacing high-circulating, low-denomination paper currency often takes the lion's share of

any reserve bank's budget—Rs 100 million in the case of the Nepal Rastra Bank.

There's an alternative to the highly absorbent virgin cotton paper money. Polymer. This

Dasain Nepal will be the 21st country to make the move to polymer, joining the ranks of Canada, Brazil, Romania, Thailand, Mexico, and China. In May this year, Note Printing Australia (NPA), a subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of Australia, won a tender worth \$1.64

million to produce 50 million Rs 10 notes for the Rastra Bank, Nepal's first batch of Rs 10 polymer banknotes. which come into circulation this Dasain, closely resemble the original, retaining the black buck and the garuda images, and are the first legal tender with the image of King Gyanendra. The note features a security window with a vignette of the crown.

In 1966 a rash of counterfeiting in Australia led to research and development of a more secure currency. By 1996, Australia was the first country with a full

series of circulating polymer banknotes. Polymer banknotes are expensive to make-they cost almost twice as much as paper—but their longer circulation life directly translates into huge savings for national banks. The Reserve Bank of New Zealand announced a saving of \$7.2 million over three years in printing costs after switching to polymer banknotes

The polymer substrate incorporates the polymer currency's trademark transparent windows. This is a security feature in itself, and design elements can be incorporated to make use of its unique properties. The creative Design Department at NPA say their designs are aimed at being aesthetically pleasing and also incorporating cutting edge verification technology that makes counterfeiting almost impossible. These features are immediately recognisable, making verification easier. (Trishna Gurung in Sydney)

ACNielsen Nepal

ORG-MARG in Nepal has had a formal name change to become ACNielsen Nepal. The changeover completes the reorganisation of the holdings of the Dutch group VNU that owned ORG-MARG offices in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Earlier this year, the group took over ACNielsen, one of the world's largest market research companies best known for its television ratings scheme in the US.

NEA power sales

The Nepal Electricity Authority says it is now capable of selling Rs 1 billion worth of electricity to India, thanks to the 140 MW Kali Gandaki project that came on line earlier this year. A committee formed by the NEA to assess the export potential of the utility reports that the NEA can supply about 40 MW throughout the year, during the monsoon as well as dry months. Nepal and India are expected to sit down next month to discuss the purchase prices, and the NEA says that the necessary transmission systems needed for the power transfer are already being built. Nepal and India already have a 150 MW power exchange agreement, but because they "exchange" power, the two countries have not yet had to agree on a price for actual selling.

Nepal SBI bank branches

Nepal SBI Bank Limited has opened its 12th branch in Janakpur. Fifty percent of the bank, set up in 1993, is held by the State Bank of India, 15 percent by the Employees Provident Fund, five percent by the Agricultural Development Bank Nepal and 30 percent by the general public. Nepal SBI bank's paid up capital is Rs 429.9 million. The bank says it has Rs 5.57 billion in deposits and Rs 4.58



New Hyundais

Avco International, authorised distributors of Hyundai vehicles in Nepal, have introduced four new models in Nepal. The company says that it expects two additional models to arrive "soon". The newly-launched models include the Santro Zip Plus, which comes with a 1,100 cc engine, the 1,500 cc Accent, the 2,350 cc Sante Fe, and the 1,600 cc Matrix. The diesel versions of the Accent and the Santa Fe are expected to arrive soon. Hyundai's plant in India will shortly begin manufacturing two other models, the 2,500 cc Terracan and a super compact model called the Getz, which will also be available in Nepal. Avco says that it plans to have sold a total of 600 Hyundai vehicles in Nepal this year.

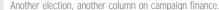
New IT horizons

The California-based New Horizons Computer Learning Centres began offering training courses in Nepal last week. The company offers different technical and application packages aimed at students as well as corporate clients. The company has over 280 centres in 48 countries. New Horizons offers classroom coaching, online training and also targeted or special training programs to meet different needs

RID heist

Revenue Investigation Officials unearthed what they said was a scam involving raw materials import when they discovered a container supposed to contain copper scrap actually made up of construction aggregates. Biratnagar's Hulas Wire Industries ordered the Rs 6 million consignment from the Philippines which arrived in Nepal via Calcutta. The government questioned Mahendra Golchha about the consignment and fixed a Rs 18.3 million bail for his release. On Monday Golchha denied any wrongdoing and said that it would be more useful to investigate the international suppliers. His group had actually told the government as soon as it found out about the anomaly, Golchha said. Business delegations met Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to protest Golchha's arrest, and insiders said one-sided media coverage after the incident showed business rivalry could be behind the

Show us the money



there are problems here too-

exceeding the ceiling, for one-but

regulation has been actively present,

which is the first thing that matters.

Some of you will argue that politics

goes beyond mere economics in any

come as a surprise that the Beed

country, and into the morality of vote-

seekers as promise-sellers. It might not

disagrees. One feels, and strongly, that

handling and regulating elections are

as much economic issues as anything

transactions and expenditure during

elections are phenomenal compared

to the national GDP and when we

have two elections between each

else. This is especially vital in a

country like ours, where the



The mechanics of corruption in Nepal—which is a different matter from the motivations for being corrupt—are enabled by one simple fact. The central problem stems from the fact that political parties cannot solicit funds, and businesses or individuals cannot in turn fund parties legally. This, combined with the somewhat overenthy sigstically stringent norms laid down by the Election Commission to cap expense has meant that political parties as well as people and institutions who have a stake in them-and we should accept that this kind of forwarding of selfinterest is part of most democraciesfind ingenious new ways of getting money for point A to point B.

Olympic games. The United States, which, as we all The political parties should realise realise on an almost daily basis is the that there is no shame in admitting world's most powerful democracy, has openly that they need money to fund their campaigns and that they would been able to legalise campaign financing by legitimising contribulike to take a legitimate route. The tions to political parties. To be sure. rhetoric of politics may be about

practice, even when perfectly honest. remains profoundly dependent on cash. Corporations and individuals should be allowed to create trust funds to fund elections, with a cap set to match a portion of their individua wealth or turnover. And tax laws should allow such expense to be claimed as legitimate expenses. In such a scenario, transparency can be demanded of political parties

through such moves as requiring them to make public the names of donors exceeding a certain amount, or making their financial statements a matter of public record. Political parties can then be audited, and if they do not comply, the Election Commission could be empowered to even debar them from contesting elections. The government is trying to expand the tax net anyway why shouldn't politicians be part of it. Maybe they don't need to be actually taxed, but why shouldn't the tax authority not keep an eye on them' Not to be snide, but given how keen all political parties are on transparency and good governance, why shouldn't these twin blessings begin at home?

The legitimisation of election funding would do something similar to business, and place tham all on the same footing. So long as the give and take in the business-bureaucratpolitician nexus is not at least partially clarified, there's no hope of anyone bu insiders ever understanding the nuts and bolts of how things get done. If the expenses of political parties can be met within the stipulated guidelines. they will not be compelled to bestow favours on special interest groups. The Beed is wearying of harping

on this so often. •

Airport hassles

behind those arriving from other destinations even though they don't need to show and stamp their passports. And usually there is only one immigration officer to process a queue of arriving passengers that stretches right out the

"We are hassled everywhere in the world, but it is nothing compared to the hassle in our own country," said one overwrought Negali in the gueue There is a purpose to this madness: \$9 million. That is the amount Nepal earns every year from visa fees, and

it is easy cash at a time when the country is flat broke. But wouldn't scrapping visa fees altogether bring more tourists, and more jobs and income to the country? "I don't know whether free visas are the answer," says Yogendra Sakya of Club Himalaya. "I think it is the inconvenience, harassment and even extortion at the airport that dissuades visitors." There is nothing preventing immigration authorities from providing a better first appreciant to visitors. Yet, the airport's motto seems to be being as unheloful, and making the visa process as cumbersome as possible.

Immigration changed its rules so that visitors can pay \$30 on arrival for a three-month visa, but they scrapped the multiple entry provision at the airport. Tourists still have to fill out a lengthy visa form, wait in line to present it at the counter, move on to another line to pay the fee, and wait again to have the passport stamped. On average

you are lucky if this takes only one hour. The subject of streamlining airport procedures has come up repeatedly at the NTB (Nepal Tourism

Board), but nothing is ever done," says Sakya, who is on the NTB board as are the directors of the Civil Aviation Department and the Immigration Department. NTB chief Pradeep Rai Pandey says there have been proposals to scrap fees for SAARC countries, and to

reduce the visa fees during the present period of low arrivals. "Reducing visa fees and making it easier to get the visa at the airport would do the trick," he told us. But unless the immigration chief at the airport takes this as a personal mission, most agree, things won't change. Despite fears of unrest, NTB

reports higher arrival figures for Indians and Japanese for the season so far and save most inbound flights are full. Still, that is no consolation to the hundreds of hotel agents, taxis and trekking reps waiting outside the airport vying for the trickle of business from an industry that is seeing half the number of visitors



Khukuri

RAMYATA LIMBU

It's time to foorget about the machete, the scimitar and the stiletto.

More than any other weapon that has made a name for itself on the
bettlefield and off, the khukur i looms large in the annals of war.

But over a century after Reverend Wood wrote his observations of
the Gurkhas and their fearsome khukur is (see box) the Royal Nepal

Army is amassing AK. 47s and SLPs to flight the Masids.
The khukurl, which termised the enemy uning Nepal's battle
with the British in 1814, and then again during both the World Wars,
figures nowhere in a collection of modern weaponry. Even in the
Imperial War Museum, there is only a small khukri in a glass case to
remindrishions of this remarkable weapon.

"There is little use for the khukuri in modern warfare," says Lalit Kumar Lama, an ex British Gurkha officer now a dealer in Gurkha



knives. "But it remains a symbol synonymous with the Gurkhas and with Nepal."

The Khukuri House, Lama's showrooms at Ekantakuna and The Khukuri, that Differ a range of 22 khukuris, the largest being the buff-head khukuri, that boasts a 53° long blade, and the smallats a paper knife measuring about 6°. Prices for these khukuris, some of which are not very different from the standard issue military knives, range from Rs 150 – Rs 4,000.

After retiring from the British Gurkhas in 1987, Lama, a former With and Toffer got logether with ex-armour srigarant Till Bahadur BK to set up a factory in Oharan to produce khulkuris. Bedre that Lama used to buy khulkuris made by more than 4,000 small khukuri producers in Oharan and sold them abroad. Since its establishment in 1991, the Khulkuri House has been the official supplier of khulkuris to British Gurkhaunist, the Gurkha Contingent in Singapore, the Gurkhar serve until its Druel and the British Museum.

The drop in British Gurkharerulments since Hong Kongwas handed over to China in 1997 doesn't worry Lama. About 95 percent of his austomers—including those who purchase the Dharamade knives online—are tourists. "They'removed by the history, the romance and the legends of bravery hat surround the khukuri." Everyone who comes to the store takes back a souvenir, "says Lama. In South Affica, it's seen been put to practical purposes—I ocu billiong, the dry mea fix aworded by South Afficians. Lama has named this particular khukuri, which has a 5" long blade and a 3" handle, the billione thakeri."

Although khukuris have traditionally been made by Kamis with

little more than an open forge and a handful of book. Lamas factory in Dharan has sought to modernise and mainsteam their expertise. Some 300 artisans work here, building on the Kami community's hundreds of years of experience. The variety of knutures they produce is actionshing—the Strougher, parend after the slim Siru led if reembler, the Dhankute from Dhankute, which has a wooden scalabrad and a wooden or aluminum handle, the Kohlimara, alkhuturi specially made for the relining British or Gurkha officer as a memento from his regiment, and the Derhadure.

Gurkhas, it is said, feel bare without their blade, and even though as a warrant officer Lama never wielded alkhukurt against the enemy, he did use one to hack down branchs to build a barker of shelter during jungle evercises, and learnt enough about the different kinds of military khukurs. The "Lungle, am unpolished full-laze khukuri, used for tackical jungle warfare, is 15 long, with a 10.5" blade. It weighs 600 gams and has a buffalo horn handle and eisher case, and the sheath is cannot laged by green cotton of oth or cannot lage.

The Service No 1, probably, the most famous khukuri, is issued to every Gurkha on enlishment and is retained throughout their army carear. It measures 15° and weighs 700 grams. The sheath is buffalo leather and the handle, bridlab horn. The khukuri is inscribed with the year of enlishment, a defail which heped some young Gurkha soldiers training in Malapais identify an old Gurkha soldier who had been living in the forests since World War II, rather out of his mind. "All frist they thought he was a bandlit, but later they were able to identify him—because of his khukuri—as a Gurkha soldier who had fought in the world war and been left-behind," say Lam.

PRIZE PRIZE PRIZE 1-10 Samuel 2-17 CT V Constitute Prize South Prize South

Nepalis wield one distinguished knife.



Make from reinforced steel, mostly sukraged from reinkey track construction, the Dehradune or World War khukuri, originated in Nepal and was later emulated by the Indian Guritha Army in Dehradun during World War II. This was the only khukuri used in the war, and Nepal was unable to keep up with the demand, which was when Dehradun started to produce these on a massive scale. The Dehradune has a 12" long blase with a 5" hand lone mostly of Indian rosewood or horn, and a subbard is of buffallo leather.

Since railway tracks, and the materials to build them, are hard to come by in Dharan. Lama's factory uses the spring-sheets of cars and trucks. Kamis genarally heat the metal in a fire and temper it in a tea kettle. This may not sound very impressive, but tests show that khokur's steel is just the right hardness to cut through almost anything, including bone, with relative ease, while still remaining soft enough to

We take pride in jobs well done.

We are formation of the formation of the

take this kind of abuse and keep a decent edge. This is why khukuris function more like extremely good quality high-grade carbon steel kitchen tools than one might imagine.

Little is known of the khukur's origin or its unusual steps. Some compare it to the Afghan knife, and others believe the blade form descended from the Greak knops within is about 2,500 years old, thus making the khukuri one of the foldest blade forms in the history of the world, if not the oblist. The shape is believed to have been crained to the sub-continent by the troops of Alexander the Great and then copied by local workmen.

There are khukuris harqing on the walfs of the National Museum in Chrhamit that as 500 years old, claing from the time of King Drays Shah (1559-1570). Along with the katari (a kind of spear), the kinadg ta blunt sword), and the kinadia (a ruved broad sword), the kinadg has been present in every collection of weapons of Khepa's famous fighting man including Arras Singh Thapa, Ball Bhadra Kunnar, Kally Banky, and Bhirmson Thapa.

Khukuris may differ in size, but vary little in shape. Most are named after the places they come from. The famous Bhojpure khukuri originates form east Nepal. Slightly bigger and heavier than the standard blade, it is not a military issue, but is found in many Nepal homes, especially in east Nepal. "The 11" blade, is mounted on a 4" wooden handle that is often engraved with dragners that reflect the craftmarship of the Bhojpure people; says Lama.

Almost every bit of a but Justine has a name. The two part not that the end of the blade is called the kaudi, which is translated somewhat gorily as "blood dripper", and is meant to prevent any liquid—such as blood—from dripping back on to the handle so the user can hold on the knife. Although there are many models of blades, most kinkursis-come with what look like two mini kinkursis—the chakmak, which is used to sharpen the knife, and the service, a utility mini-knife.

There are plenty of explenations that attribute spiritual and religious significance to the khukuri. The kaudi, for instance, is said to symbolies Shives trident, or the Nepali sur and the moon. The buttap of the knife, called the chapro, is said to resemble the eye of god, and the very shape of the blade, the or escent, is supposed to be an invocation of the Nepali moon. Among the other beliefs associated with the khukuri is the belief that Newar artisans should never touchrone.

Right now, a different kind of aura surrounds the khukuri, one that is significantly less pleasant than mythological stories, and much more in tune with the times. Lama's factory in Offaran is now focusing more on taking good care of the stock it has—in it is goodwin. "Since themenagency was first imposed, and actif under the warm demandatory over the transport of weapons, including the khukuri. Dyn millitary forces who fear it may fall into the vomp hands, busines has been slow," says Lama. That, and even the few tourists that do amble past his shop in Thamel are not sure they can take alk khukr in their luggage in the post-Septient of 1 security of algorithms are words. You still can buy a souvenier khuuri, but you need to put it in your checked-in base. "

The Gurkha knife

"The Gurkha is worthy of notice, if only for the remarkable weapor which they use in preference to any other. It is called the "Kukri" and is of a very peculiar shape.

.... Before passing to the mode in which the kukri is used, it should be mentioned that it is not employed for domestic purposes, being too highly valued by the owner. For such purposes two smaller knives are used, of very similar form, but apparently of inferior metal. These are kept in tiller cases attached to the side of the kukri sheath, just as in the case with the knives attached to a Holhalander's diff.

In the hands of an experienced wielder this kind is about as formidable a weapon as can be conceived. Like all really good weapons, its efficiency depends much more upon the skill than the stength of the wideling, and thus it heapons that the little Gurkta, a mere boy in point of stature, will cut to pieces a gapartic adversary who does not understand his mode of onest. The Gurlding approach strikes upwards with the kutch, possibly in order to avoid soundstand to the control of the control of the control of the control is sufficient one that can be lessed used de against.

When we were engaged in the many wars in India the Gutths proved themselves our most formidable enmeine, as since they have proved themselves most invaluable allies, Barev as Ilons, active as monkeys, and filter as tigsers, the lither with filter men came leaping over the ground to the attack, moving so quickly, and keeping so far part from each other, that musketry was no use against them. When they came near the sodiers, they suddenly crouched to the ground, dived under the baynorest, struck up-wards at the men with their kubris, ripping them open with a single blow, and then, alter having done all the michael in their possible, and then, alter having done all the michael in their possible with their kubris of the single that the proposed some single of salaring with knives as sharp as razors, and often escaping untur from the midst of baynorsts. They would also date under the belies of the officers horses, rip them open with one blow of the kubris, and another at the leg of the officers a hard his horse let (logdether."

(From Travels in India and Nepal by the Reverend Wood,





omething strange happened in Surperselection campaigns Germany, Holland and Sweden the subject uppermost on many people's minds—immigration—was ignored or exaggerated. As a result, fringe parties tepped in with slogans about countries being "swamped" by immigrants and the need to preserve the "purity" of nations. Can one blame voters for being suspicious of the silence of the political majority,

and even being taken in by the fringe's blustering? Some home truths about the migration of people need to be remembered and the necessary consequences drawn. Here are five such truths, or at any rate, five issues for debate.

First, emigration is no fun. People do not leave their homes on a whim or out of adventurousness. Typically, they want to escape conditions of honelessness as many Europeans did when they left their homes in the 19° and 20th centuries, usually for America Whether for political or economic reasons, it is important to understand that the price they are prepared to pay is as high as the push to leave is strong.

terms of the need to fill certain high-

tech or other positions. Gaining a few

Indian computer specialists is a bad

reason for allowing "green card" access

if only because such migrants are

likely to remain a tiny minority of

immigrants to fill the jobs that Adair

Furner, in his book Just Capital, calls

"high-touch" jobs. Most people in

rich countries don't like getting

not be dignified to expect immi-

grant workers to do these "dirty"

jobs, but to them such jobs are a

step on the ladder of hope even as

they help to keep advanced econo-

mies and societies functioning.

through the full implications of

mentina's president. Eduardo Duhalde, has been making impassioned

pleas for international support to rebuild his country. Argentina needs

A pleas for international support to redution in country. Asymmetrical and deserves such help, and the foundations for economic success-skills (a literate and well-educated population) and institutions (a federal constitutional

democracy) have been in place for a long time. But Duhalde has yet to specify

what must be done to take advantage of Argentina's favourable endowments.

No one forced Argentina to adopt the currency board devised by Domingo

Cavallo, the former economy minister, which pegged the peso to the dollar at a

fixed exchange rate of one to one. (The IMF, however, clearly should not have

adjustment when the country liberalised its foreign trade.) As a result, interest rates were largely determined in the US. Lacking access to basic economic tools

such as exchange rate and monetary policies, Argentina could not surmount the

the LIS dollar appreciated, and Brazil, the country's main trading partner.

austerity, the only alternative. Argentina is now in a deep recession, with

profound external shocks of the second half of the 1990s, when export prices fell,

devalued its currency. The government never had the political will for severe fiscal

Fiscal austerity and balanced budgets, longer term priorities, are inappropri-

unemployment above 30 percent, and a shattered banking and financial system.

ate now. The first priority should be boosting employment. Otherwise, the

country's impoverishment will continue to deplete its middle class and lead young and capable professionals to emigrate, and sustain unprecedented levels of

violence and criminality, another crucial dimension of today's insecurity. The

government must promote exports, particularly in the manufacturing and agro-

ndustrial sectors, as well as tourism and infrastructure construction projects.

Argentina's exporters will need help in returning to foreign markets. The country has already shown that under favourable conditions its exports can

Amentina's eyonts are manufactured morts with roughly one quarter classified

compete and grow rapidly. According to World Bank data, 32 percent of

external debt payments, now in default.

There can be no reliance on domestic consumption or private investment to turn

the tide. Higher exports will also generate the foreign exchange needed to resume

helped finance the currency board's operation without demanding fiscal

Fourth no one has thought

their hands dirty anymore. It may

newcomers. Rich countries need

Second, immigration is a great compliment to those countries that migrants choose as their final destination. The answer to the question. "Where do we go if we have to leave?" is not usually China or some African country nor is it any lonner much of Latin America. Countries that are magnets for migrants tend to be rich and free. Canada has become a dream for many, but so are European countries

Third it is misleading to armus for a certain amount of immigration in ANALYSIS

Home truths about immigration



today's demographic and attendant social changes, but the fact is that without immigrants the welfare state in advanced countries will become unaffordable. Using migrants to provide for the needs of natives, but without letting the migrants share all the benefits, is morally unattractive There may be ways to mitigate the result, but without immigration social benefits across Europe will have to be reduced massively within a generation. Fifth immigration can be treated as a step towards the full integration of

migrants, or as a transitional phase in their lives. Both possibilities need to be offered, but there's a lot to be said for the second. That countries can be turned around is a reason for hone Now Ireland is so prosperous, it

Recovery for Argentina

despite the overvalued currency.

substantial experience in Latin America.

Argentina deserves help, but of the

kind that recognises the importance

\$12 billion to \$27 billion (an average annual growth rate of about 8.5 percent),

President Duhalde has requested the IMF, the World Bank, and the Inter-

American Development Bank to help. Assistance should be forthcoming, and the

responsibilities and priorities in dispensing it should be spelled out and agreed

upon in advance by the government and these organisations. The IMF should

true fiscal decentralisation so the central government can regain full control of

provide technical and financial assistance to support a long-term program aimed

at redefining the fiscal responsibility of the central and provincial governments for

public finances. The World Bank should provide technical and financial assistance

federal and Supreme Court judges free from nepotism and political influence. A

prevented the investigation and prosecution of serious improprieties, corruption, illegal arms sales, and major terrorist acts. Finally, the Inter-American Develop-

industrial exports, as well as underwriting tourism projects - areas in which it has

reaching unattainable fiscal objectives. Fiscal consolidation should be a condition

for the longer-term aid that international organisations will have to provide. But

the first priority must be putting people back to work. Addressing the glaring

shortcomings in the country's judicial system should also be made a condition for

support, both as an immediate and a long-term objective.

(Project Syndicate)

At a time of deep recession, such support should not be made contingent on

shameful legacy of President Menem's government in the 1990s was that it

ment Bank should assist with programs designed to promote and finance

o support a reorganised judiciary. This must include making the appointment of

of salvaging its civil society.

attracts immigrants even from Britain Integration of immigrants makes much sense; but it is desirable to help create sustainable conditions in troubled countries with the help of a generation of emigrants who firs transfer resources and then return themselves. Viewed from the perspective such truths provide, the Furnpean Union's eastward enlargement, for example, is highly desirable not despite but because it may lead to migration from the new

> (Ralf Dahrendorf is a member of the British House of Lords and former Rector of the London School of Economics.)

member states to the old.

by RALF DAHRENDORF

one of the most advanced countries in integral management and users—farming, industry, distribution firms, urban consumers but can provide information. The aim of the 25 Councils is to manage watersheds, which encompass the area in which water river, and later a lake, reservoir or ocean, but despite the kudos.

WASHINGTON - Development activists are calling on the World Bank and other international lenders to penalise a Canadian engineering consult ing company after the firm was found quilty of corruptio by a Lesotho court last week Acres International was convicted in Lesotho High Court of paying bribes to win contracts on a multibillion-dolla dam project. Acres was accused of paving nearly \$266,000 to the former chief executive of the controversia Lesotho Highlands Water

enting 12 of the world's largest construction firms.

Ryan Hoover of the US-based development group International Rivers Network (IRN), which has been fighting to end many dam projects, says that the fate of hundreds of thousands of dam affected people depends on the integrity of Acres' work, and that the Ontario-based firm can no longer be assumed to be a "responsible". "Their environmental and social feasibility studies should be brought into question now." Acres International denied the charges and said it will take action to protect its name. Acres has worke on several controversial World Bank-funded dams before but this case has attracted international attention because of the highprofile companies involved. A lawyer at the trial in Lesotho told IPS that senior representatives from the US embassy, the British embassy, and the World Bank, also attended. The next company to stand trial will be Germany's Lahmeyer International, accused of

DN - The World Bank and other international financial institutions (IFIs) should reassess their continued backing for mining projects in poor countries, says a report released Monday hy Oyfam America

Contrary to what the report calls "folklore" propagated by the IFIs and the global mining industry, mining never acted as a major spur to development in the United States, Canada, or Australia, the three countries often held up by the IFIs as examples for developent that mineral-rich poor countries could follow. "This study shows definitively that traditional World Bank claims are wrong said Keith Slack, policy advisor of Oxfam America. "Historically, mining was never a significant source of national wealth in countries like the US, Canada, and Australia that the World Bank claims it was. So, the Bank needs to honestly reassess its promotion of large-scale mining in poor countries, which often has serious negative impacts on local communities and the

Oxfam is one of a growing number of environmental and development groups that argue that mining in many developing Groups have long argued that mining has been most damaging to

Agua problems

MEXICO CITY - The poor pay the most for potable water in Mexico, while availability per inhabitant here has plummeted 50 percent in the last half-century, and 12 million of the country's 100 million inhabitants do not have direct access to this essential service. President Vicente Fox, in response to this increasingly dire situation, has promised to push forward the "Promagua" initiative for the second consecutive year with continued joint financing and management of municipal, state and federal authori ties. The average annual water supply available per inhabitant fell from 18.000 cubic metres 50 years ago to 4.841 cubic metres today. Mexico needs to invest \$2.2 billion annually to overcome its water problems, but to date has earmarked just \$1.3 billion each year, mainly from public coffers.

The government's National Water Commission estimates that by the end of this year Mexico will treat 30 percent of wastewater for re-use, compared to 26 percent currently. The goal for 2006 is to treat two-thirds of all water consumed. Mexico is considered efficiency of its hydraulic resources due the Watershed Councils that have been operating here since 1993. The Councils comprise government delegates and representatives of various sectors of with a voice and vote, and universities and NGOs, who can't vote from rainfall or snowmelt flows into streams until reaching a main they haven't been able to halt the deterioration of these areas or prevent water shortages. (IPS)

Dam corruption

Project, Masupha Sole. Sentencing is scheduled to

take place on 7 and 8 October. Sole was convicted in June of 13 counts of bribery and sentenced to 18 years in prison for taking more than \$2 million in bribes over 10 years from mediators

paving Sole over \$250,000 (IPS)

Don't mine for wealth

countries has hurt economic development, disrupted nearby communities, and devastated surrounding natural environments the environment, but in recent years they have broadened their attack to include the less-than-positive economic impacts as



This time around, it's Russia in Iran and Irag.

Russian policy on Iran, where, despite

month ago Russia signed a \$40 billion trade and economic Cooperation treaty with Iraq while meeting Iranian leaders to discuss nuclear non-proliferation. Russia's real importance in any looming US-Iraq war lies in the light its position sheds on the Iraqi problem, and on that other member of the "axis of evil": Iran.

So far, the most striking feature of the Putin administration's handling of the US-Iraq situation has been its silence. If forced to state a view. Russian diplomats take the standard line about implementing UN Security Council resolutions and the need for Security Council endorsement of any actions against Iraq. Unlike other leading West European countries. President Putin and his government prefer to keep their heads down, reflection their wish to nurture Russia's new and still-fragile rapprochement with the US. But this explanation does not fit

US pressure, the Putin government is still selling weapons and civil nuclear technology to Teheran. The nuclear issue came to the fore during the recent visit to Moscow by US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham. The US questions Iran's motives for developing nuclear power. Given the country's massive hydrocarbon reserves, the Iranian regime has no obvious need principle for such a program besides its Deener interests underlie Russia's suspected ambition to develop nuclear weapons. Transfer of atomic energy

know-how from Russia is seen as a first step towards achieving that goal Russian officials renly that there can be no serious objection to such civil nuclear cooperation programs so long as the recipient country accepts the safeguards and inspection regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Russia argues that its conventional arms sales to Iran concerns supplies of equipment that have no bearing on concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. After talks with Abraham Russia indicated that implementing nuclear projects in Iran beyond the existing one at Bushehr would be subject to a review of domestic political developments. But that is more a tactical move to appease the US, rather than indicative of second thoughts on nuclear cooperation with Iran in

attitude toward Iran and its tacit accommodation of USwar plans against Irag. Consider the country's external financial position. Russia inherited all of the Soviet I Injon's foreign financial claims and liabilities and spends up to \$10 billion a year servicing Soviet-era debts. Soviet-era claims, on the other hand, are almost all beyond recovery. Oil-rich Iraq's debts, with a face value amounting to many billions of dollars (deriving mainly from export credits for arms sales) are a rare exception. Russia's

main interest in Iraq is to get these loans repaid, and then resume arms. sales, while simultaneously becoming a major, perhaps the dominant, foreign player in Iraq's oil and gas sector.

Since the Gulf War, Russia has nursued these goals by promoting rehabilitation of Saddam's Iraq via the implementation of Security Council resolutions and the lifting of sanctions. That route now looks hopeless. So the US goal of regime change in Baghdad does not look too bad, even if it cannot be publicly supported. For President Putin it makes sense to stay on the sidelines over Iraq, at least for now and to be repaid later for his helpful silence through US influence on the successor Iraqi regime concerning repayment of the country's Russian debts.

The contrast between Russia's handling of Irag and Irag also underlines the fundamental difference between Iran, an historical nation state, and the artificial creation that is Iraq. Russia's long-term interests in Iran require permanent engagement. Iran's Islamic revolution will inevitably run its course and mutate into a new form of nationalism, to some extent mirroring Russia's own transition out of the Soviet system With Iraq, the opposite is true. because not only the regime, the country itself might cease to exist. or at least be radically transformed, should Hussein fall. Putin's goal is to help Russia evoloit such transformations •

(Christopher Granville, a former British diplomat and fellow of All Soul's College, Oxford is chief strategist for United Financial Group, a Russian investment hank)

(Project Syndicate)

G - Communist China's workers, once the "masters of society", are dying on the job from overwork, but their grievances aren't heard by the leaders of the party that calls itself the "vanguard of the prole-tariat". The ILO estimates that annual deaths from workplace accidents are 11.1 per 100,000 Chinese workers. That compares with the US onthe-job fatality rate of 2.19 per 100,000. Millions of workers have been laid off or put on voluntary leave in recent years as part of sweeping economic reforms in China's ailing sate-owned sector, and free labour unions continue to be restricted. The official urban unemployment rate is 3.6 percent, but many economists privately say the real figure is

about 10 percent. While many of China's labourers are becoming marginalised because of the downsizing of state-run firms, others are punished for daring to protest about working conditions. China's labour law sets a pasic work week of up to 44 hours with at least one day off, but in the hybrid called 'socialist market economy', the labour law is frequently olated, and it does not stipulate what should be done in case of

injury or death caused by overwork. Now that China has signed and ratified the International Conven tion on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, which recognises the right to a safe and healthy working environment, the plight of Chinese workers is becoming an issue of international concern, and Chinese workers are also beginning to understand their rights. Both hard-line leftiets and pro-reform liberals in the Communist Party have accused Party chief and President Jiang Zemin for falling to defend the country's working class in the new The Three Represents theory.

According to this, the Communist Party should focus on representing the needs of "advanced forces of production, advanced culture and the fundamental interests of all the people". (IPS)

Tainted learning

NEW DELHI - A major conflict is brewing in India on the issue of education and religion, thanks to a Supreme Court ruling last week that upheld a controversial move by the federal government to rewrite school textbooks by giving them a Hindu-chauvinist slant. The issue has a federal devolution dimension too. Many Indian states are up in arms over what they see as blatant federal interference in their school curricula without consultation or consent. The controversy has major implications on the rights of the child to unbiased information, and for the issue of tolerance and respect for difference in this plural, multicultural, multi-religious country of 1 billion.

India's education system primarily uses government-recommended textbooks approved by the Central Board for Secondary Education through a multiple-stage process involving consultation among teachers, experts and officials, and between the federal government and states. Pivotal to the process is the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE), a 104-member body consisting largely of state representatives and independent experts, and the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), an "autonomous" body that draws up the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) based on the National Education Policy.

The curriculum framework produced by NCERT two years ago was

not approved by CABE, and yet the government arbitrarily imposed it. The wilful short-circuiting and sabotage of democratic procedure is only one ground on which the government was challenged in a public interest petition in the Supreme Court. The petitioners' second substantial ground was that the NCF militates against the principles of secularism, equality, right to education and to development, embedded in India's constitution. Under the constitution, the state cannot favour a religion or religious denomination or support religious instruction. Article 28 of the Constitution prohibits "religious instruc tion" in educational institutions fully managed out of state funds. (IPS)

Wait and see

péace talks a success.

RANJIT DEVRAJ

NEW DELHI - Although the talks between Colombo and the Tamil Tigers are being hailed as historic and path-breaking, experts in India are reserving judgement until they have heard propouncements from reclusive rehel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran (in pic). "Too much is being read into what [LTTE negotiator) Anton Balasingham told reporters at Sattahip," said Mr. Narayanaswamy, long-time Tamil Tiger watcher and author of *Tigers of Lanka*. He said there is a big difference between what Balasingham says and what Prabhakaran, the final LTTE authority, may say on the subject of a separate Tamil state

The last time Prabhakaran was heard on the issue was at a dramatic press conference in the rebel-held town of Kilinochchi on 10 April, where he said his followers were Indian analysts say it's too on the LTTE in place since 1992. A Sri Lanka expert entitled to kill him if he gave up the demand for a senarate Tamil homeland. Narayanaswamy said. Prabhakaran has a record of going back on accords, pointing to 1987, when Prabhakaran promised to help implement the Indo-Sri Lankan accord to settle the Sri Lankan conflict, and then went on to call it anti-Tamil

Academics, too, were cautious about the results of the 16-18 September peace talks in Thailand. At the Jawaharlal Nehru University, South Asia expert SD Muni said newspaper reports from Sattahip were a bit too. 'euphoric". Muni suspected Balasingham and his team might not have been adequately briefed by Prabhakaran on the LTTE's exact position, which may emerge at the second stage when substantive issues are addressed. The real muestions Muni said are what degree of

autonomy is on the table, what is the meaning of a homeland and how the idea of self-determination is to be interpreted. At the end of the talks Wednesday, Tiger chief negotiator Anton Balasingham said: "We operate according to the concept of a homeland and selfdetermination. Homeland doesn't mean senarate state as such," suggesting a scaling down of the Tigers' long-held quest for a separate Tamil homeland and for "substantial

Muni and Narayansawamy also referred to the enormous pressure on the LTTE from western powers: the carrot of a handsome economic package for reconstruction on the one hand and the stick of a ban on the LTTE by the US and its allies in the western world including Canada. Australia and Britain.

India's Foreign Ministry, which piloted the failed 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka accord that has been blamed for India's military involvement in Sri Lanka, reflected the mood of cautious optimism. India's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Nirupama Rao reiterated that India "supported, and will continue to support all efforts of the Sri Lanka government towards the peace process." But India has not budged from the position that it wants Prabhakaran extradited from Sri Lanka to

stand trial for the 1991 assassination of former prime minister Raiiv Gandhi. In May. India renewed a han at the School of International Studies, P Sahadevan, early to call the Sri Lanka says this is part of India's policy of keeping up pressure on the LTTE rather than indicative of real eriousness to get Prabhakaran, who now has a measure of international legitimacy, to stand trial in this country.

While India did not send any official observer to the Sattahip talks, both the LTTE and Colombo have taken care to see that New Delhi is kept officially briefed on progress by Erik Solheim, Norway's special envoyat Sattahio

India's official position can be gauged by how it will respond to a request by Norway's deputy foreign minister Vidar Helegesen that the UK-based Balasingham be allowed to transit through India to the TTTF's stronghold in the Jaffna peninsula, Entry by Balasingham into Tamil Nadu state, home to 60 million ethnic Tamils, has been disallowed by the state's chief minister. I lavalalithaa, who recently ordered the arrest of top political leaders under antiterrorist laws for merely expressing support for the TTF lavalalithae and her party rained enormously through a sympathy wave after Gandhi was killed at an election rally in Tamil Nadu in 1991 by a woman LTTE suicide homber. • (IPS)

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RUM DOODLE



enjoyed my two-year stint teaching at Budanilkantha School. I wept, I slept and kept my memories of one of them no more: Niraian. His Royal Highness, who came to me as a shy, untidy boy, his shirt hanging out,

the filters at Annapurna House. Curled up in his bunk, with a sore throat, his hair shadowing a pale face. This was the quality of the school: no class distinction, boys from the remotest villages hobnobbed with royalty and the elite. I wonder how many of the scholarship programs in other institutions were able to inculcate this sense of fair play and camaraderie among



They were not my pupils, I was the learner. I learnt to parent, even though I had three children of my own. They were my mentors. I learnt of their pain, their sorrow, their confusion. The confusion was mainly the result of our social norm of lack of parent-child communication. Each must be in his/her place and there is no scope for easy laughter. Children of the nouveau riche whose parents had no time for them. Daddies too busy

They would sometimes call me to talk to them. We would sit on the freezing steps, under the stars and they would unwind, nodding knowingly when they came up with problems of pubescent metamorphosis. Many, did not know how to handle, but I listened nevertheless. And they just

needed someone to talk to. There were love stories, heartbreak tales, especially when the school allowed girls to be enrolled for the first time after 20 years. They hated them at first, would not sit at the same desk, would not even look at them, resented them because the girls got printed salwar

and grey uniforms all the time. The school had a beautiful costume room that the boys had been ruling

roost over for the last twenty years, preening and dressing up, and they certainly did not like the idea that the girls now had sway over the wigs, satin, velvet. But when the girls won the shooting championship, all that changed.

What is touching now is when you are remembered even after so long. I have met them from Nuwakot to New York. On a slippery slope near Trisuli, trying to avoid the leeches, I notice a young bearded man following me. Maybe some NGO guy, I think. Suddenly this apparition speaks: Megha Maam, what are you doing here? Don't you know me? I am roll

At The Rox trying out my salsa steps, this young man sidles up. I ignore him, my gaze fixed 40 degrees off his right shoulder. He bends forward: "Maam, don't you remember? You taught me in class six." How can I connect that sleepy-eyed 12-year-old to this Latino hunk sashaying his way

Then there were the girls. The scholarship girls from the villages were transformed, they learnt fast. There was informal neer support all the bahinis. One who helped the smaller boys and girls, and who

There is no greater happiness, let me tell you, than being remembered

Referendum?

. The visible forces who want to stop the elections are the Maoists. They consider the 13 November elections to be meaningless and have promised to disrupt voting. They have already launched several activities to this end. And yet they continue to say in their statements that they will not oppose elections if they were to see them as fruitful. However, let it also be clear that there has been very little consistency between what the Maoists have been saving and what they have been doing, as a result of which, their credibility has been questioned by all political parties, and also the people at large...

...Ten of the main political parties in the country are saying that the constitution needs to be improved through changes in order to safe-guard the gains of the 1990 People's Movement for democracy. The Maoists, who began their struggle aiming to dismantle the existing state and replace it with a communist regime, also say

that they are willing to agree on multiparty competition and protect the gains of 1990. Even the parties that champion parliamentary democracy have begun to believe this. The Maoists now need to clearly explain what they mean by what they have been saying, especially whether they are only articulating the compulsions of the present, or whether they are basing their assessment on the existing political balances. In the same manner political parties need to explain what they mean by the 'gains of the 1990 movement'. What are the issues they want protected? What are the limits to the constitutional reforms they are talking about?

...It is also necessary for both government and the Maoists to learn lessons from the last negotiations. The Maoists are to be blamed for the breakdown because they made certain the suspicion that they were not serious about talks by just walking away. But the government was also to blame—despite everything, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba was unclear about the direction of the talks, as well as the limits on what was negotiable. The Prime Minister believed that the Maoists could be satisfied by social and economic reforms alone, he did not want to analyse seriously the political issues raised by the Maoists .

... We're talking about talks again, and it is now necessary to try to take the negotiations in the right spirit. It is not enough to talk about talks or create pressure for talks. The first necessity is to have clarity on the basic principles we are talking on and for. Also there is a need for honesty on both sides if the talks are to yield a solution. What the Maoists, who want a commu nist republic, have to be aware of, is that not only the Nepali Congress and the UML, even the other communist parties are opposed to ending Nepal's monarchy. Also not just the Congress and the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, even His Majesty may have no reservations about making the legal and necessary constitutional changes to give continuity to the institution of monarchy It is not that the Maoists don't understand this, which is why they have to acknowledge the reality of politics of Nepal. Otherwise both the nation and the people will lose.

The political agenda now is to find a peaceful resolution. Lately the Maoists have also been talking about a peaceful political resolution. Now the establishment (the government and the political parties) need to be ready to assess the Maoist campaign and their statements. The Maoists can also test the seriousness of the establishment by declaring a unilateral ceasefire. For this, the political parties need to propose the inclusion of a provision in the constitution that would allow a referendum if a two-thirds majority of parliament wants to seek a vote of the people on any matter of national interest. For this, the ten political parties that have come together must make commitments to include the issue of a referendum in their election manifestos, and also collectively get the prime minister to agree on the idea.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The immediate Maoist problem can be solved by reinstating parliament or by forming an interim government. But the core problem will never be solved, no matter how many elections are held. - Chakra Prasad Banstola, Central member, Nepali Congress in *Deshantar*, 22 September



Books: Flection Manifesto 1999 "Can you please change the year into 2002, and photocopy the document!"

स्पेसटाइम देनिक: Spacetime Dainik, 22 September

Bankrupt Corp. Deshantar, 22 September

वेशकारसम्बद्धीक

Hari Prasad Shrestha, director general of the Nepal Timber Corporation, has pocketed a large sum of money by elling off the corporation's land in Bhaktapur. He sold much more than was actually sanctioned for sale by the government. The corporation owns 13 ropani, nine anna and two paisa [annroximately 0.68 hectares] of land in Bhaktapur. The government had approved the sale of seven ropanis [0.36 hectares], following which tenders were invited, and it was decided to sell that land at Rs 1.8 million per ropani. But the director general cancelled the tender and arranged for a notice to be nublished. on 25 May this year. He then published a notice for the sale of land that the government had not decided to sell. The second tender fixed a price of Rs 1.6 million per ropani. The corporation lost Rs 200,000 per ropani—more than Rs

3.5 million in total Ram Chandra Bhatta, director of the corporation's Supply Department, is close to Prime Minister Sher Rahadur Deuha and was also involved in a controversy, this one regarding the sale of timber at the corporation's branch office in Hetauda. A tender notice was issued by the central office renarding the sale of timber in Hetauda on 5 September, Realising the competition, Bhatta got into cahoots with businessmen and contrary to the best interests of the corporation, decided not to sanction the 55 tender notices sold by the central office and the 28 notices sold by the corporation's

The Election Commission has said branch in Hetauda. that of the attendees marked as The management committee of present at the Nepali Congress general the corporation decided, on 3 May convention, roughly half were actually this year, not to mention the lot there. The Baneswor meeting claimed to have 772 participants. According numbers for sale, fearing that such knowledge would give rise to to the Nepali Congress constituirregularities. But the Hetauda office tion, there are a total of 1,465 flouted the decision and published the General Convention members. But lot numbers. A management commitremoving the fake signatures......of tee meeting on 23 August decided to those who were not in Nepal at the reverse its decision and publish the lot time, and those asked to sign numbers and sell land so it could pay later-the attendance comes down to 532. The attendees at the NC workers' salaries This was Director General Shrestha's doing. But Pokhara convention [in late 2000] Shrestha has also challenged the and those on the list of the management committee's earlier Baneswor convention were decision by cancelling the files of 100 annarently the same so the Pokhara lots involving 6,000 cubic feet of attendance sheet could have timber on 27 August. Bureaucrats are provided a basis for the Commission amazed by his opposing actions. On 2 to verify the signatures. There was September: the corporation called for no need to fake signatures in a tender to sell 6.000 cubic feet of Pokhara because Sher Bahadur timber at the corporation's Bardghat Deuba was also one of the candioffice. Since there was no competition, dates contesting for the post of the branch head recommended that president of the NC (so if there are the central office cancel the call. But fake signatures they must be on the seeing a chance to earn commissions. Shrestha and Bhatta are threatening

says a source in the timber industry. Uncivil service

Deshantar, 22 September वेशन्तरश्रमताहिक As in the past, 80 percent of the candidates successful in passing exams and entering the civil service this year are Bahuns. Twenty percent of the positions are occupied by other castes. Altogether a variety of civil service posts totalling 7,339 were advertised for the fiscal year 2001/02. So far. 309 people have been recommended for appointment having passed the exams. Altogether, 6,678 men and 651 women had applied for the posts. Of the 50 033 candidates initially screened only 106 were really capable. The Baburam Sapkota, spokesman of the Civil Service Commission, says that

that the branch head rectify the note

Baneswor convention list]. There are many signatures of people who are recorded as having attended both the meetings, but many don't match. (The paper lists them all).

Group of Six Budhabar, 25 September

27 SEPTEMBER - 3 OCTOBER 2002 NEPALI TIMES

60 percent of the people who enter

the services are mediocre, and the rest

are very capable. This year quite a few

people from western Nepal applied.

and altogether 781 people from the

western region entered government

service after passing the exams. The

breakdown of the others who have

passed the exam and entered the

service is as follows: 576 people

from the eastern region, 521 from

the central region, 161 from the

mid-western region and 91 from

for fiscal 2001/02 have yet to take

place. One hundred and twelve

women will sit for the exam. The

Ministry of Women, Children, and

Social Welfare is organising special

coaching classes in order to help more

women enter the services, and more

than 35 women are attending these

free coaching classes. Bahuns don't

dominate only the final exams of the

civil services: during the pre-test for

officer-level posts, Bahuns accounted

percent of the total, dalits 0.8 percent,

and the rest comprised the remaining

2.9 percent. In number terms this is

Newars, 14 dalits and 62 others. The

of 12.812 candidates filled forms for

the officer level nosts: 11 962 sat for

रामग्रहिकरिमार्थ

theore-test and only 2.133 candi-

134 fakes

20 September

Kedar Subedi in Birnarsha.

1669 Bahuns 321 Chettris 61

for 78.24 percent, Chhetris totalled

14.86 nement. Newars were 2.89

The exams for officer-level posts

Six major political parties that are concerned about the present situation of the country are going to initiate actions to address the present situation of the country. The six parties submitted a memorandum to the government expressing their distrust and suspicion of the government's reluctance [to move on important matters] and

irresponsibility This joint action of the six parties, which were all represented in the dissolved House of Representa-tives, was initiated by the CPN-UML about three weeks ago. After a meeting, the parties decided to jointly submit the memorandum to the prime minister. The parties are hopeful that their action will create pressure within the government to create a positive environment and eliminate any doubts regarding the November elections. The parties final outcome is yet to be seen. A total have alleged that the government is being indecisive about holding the elections, and has not initiated a discussion with other political parties

The parties have also alleged that the government's attitude to the Manist problems is irresponsible and dubious. They have appealed for considered and intent deliberations to handle the issues thrown up by the insurrency. It is expected that the joint action will belo give direction to the derailed government, which has basically acted tenacious and obstinate. The parties have alleged that the attitude of the governmen has created confusion and disorientation among the people.

These were the conclusions reached at a meeting held at the residence of former prime minister and Rastriya Prajatantra Party leader Surya Bahadur Thapa on 23 September to demand that the government be more decisive about pressing issues and initiate actions to ensure security.

The parties have also agreed to form a coordination committee, on which will sit Subash Nemwang of the CPN-UML. Krishna Sitaula of Nepali Congress, Kamal Thapa of the RPP. Raiendra Mahato of the Sadbhawana Party, Nav Raj Subedi of the United People's Front, and Sunil Praiapati of the Nepal Peasant-Workers' Party

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SHANKAR LAMICHHANE

onsidered one of Nepal's foremost essayists of all times, Shankar Lamichhane wrote with a lyrical, musical tempo, unrestrained by the ponderous language that often mars the essays of his elders, peers or followers. He died an untimely death at the age of 48, but had stopped writing before that, discouraged nymous accusation of plagiarism, an accusation he accepted, but which is still deliberated over by critics. That Lamichhane's fresh, playful style greatly enriched Nepali literature is, however, indisputable. The essay below, translated from his collection Abstract Chintan: Pyaz, shows off his light touch in dealing with both intimate and metaphysical subjects

GOD'S WORK

"What work does your father do, dear?"

"He does god's work." My five-year-old daughter gives a simple answer to the question her teacher puts to her. Those who don't have any knowledge about my personal life or who don't know me through my writings would immediately envision a priest. My daughter has seen, in truth, a variety of statues of many gods in my shop. How could she know the vast difference between doing god's work and selling statues of the gods?

Childhood is astonishing: our feelings at that age are as pure as flowing water. Age and our experiences block this flow. I remember, at my daughter's age I took my mother's money from the storage box, and poured it all into the offering plate at the singing of devotional hymns. How could it be that everyone would always put money in the offering plate, warm their hands on the sacred flame and place their hands on their eyes; but I would never get permission to offer money, or find a chance to? Am I alone not a person? I'm going to take all the money in my mother's box and pour it onto the offering plate....

hymns was just as piercing as my voice became later on at home, as I received a beating. And probably, an even more piercing wail echoed in my mother's heart for a long period, at least until the bills and coins I had poured

onto the offering plate were recouped. Today, isn't the ages-ago faith that I displayed towards god recouped by my occupation of living off of the two-paisa profit earned from god's statues? Now that I have crossed my mother's age at that time I can try to

feel her seriousness or upset at the matter. She was a schoolteacher who had lost a husband and was suffering from tuberculosis. From the money she earned by teaching at a middle school she bought food, clothes, curatives and medicines for herself and her son, and when all these assets that she had saved from all exigencies were offered away all at once. I What a hune problem presented itself before her! At a time when an invitation to her own death came with each cough, her heart must have pinched at anxiety about how her five year-old son would cross the vast ocean of being. (In the same way that I sometimes feel a

If and exists at all, he must have suffered more at my mother's pain than rejoiced at my offering; that is, if god is touched by such things as pain and suffering.

I know, in my daughter's words lies the truth as she knows it And truth, Daughter, is what you are capable of knowing.

The first time my mother did not allow me to eat from her plate I was very hurt. The first time my mother made a separate bed for me I cried and cried. Today I know how much goodwill and affection those acts contained; would I be alive now if not for them?

Another thing, Daughter: the truth is something that keeps developing, that keeps changing. (Somewhere I've read that though each snowflake has a hexagonal shape, none of their designs have ever been the same until today). Even though the truth is the same each time, it is separate. When I offered him money, god was formless to me. Today, each time I sell a statue, god takes on a form Before selling him, I buy him. I try to discover which period his style belongs to. I measure his beauty. I describe him. And I weigh him in the profits received. For me. Buddha does not remain just Buddha the Buddha who started a religion that said that there was no God and who was himself transformed into a god, who created the five panchasheela perfections and who got trapped in shilla stones. I recognize Buddha only in the form of the inch-and-a-half Buddha and the nine-inch Buddha and the sixteen-inch Buddha and the earth-touching Buddha and the bronze Buddha and the crowned Buddha. I recognize Buddha only in the buying price of fourteen and selling price of twenty. There is no falsehood, now, in what I am claiming.

I don't know what kind of truth it will be, the truth that you will discover twenty, twenty-five years from now, when I will be finished and you will reach the age I am now. You may may not think back to your own life's events when your child does anything, just as I suddenly remember my life's events. You may may not remember your father now and then, the way that I remember my mother. But this much is certain-a part of me will live in you even after my end, just as my ancestors are asleep in me, and I sometimes nudge them awake, and they sometimes nudge me awake.... I remember when my mother's diary got into my hands, ten or twelve years after her death. Each sentence and each word in it awoke with a start. and carrying the memento of my mother's ailments and pains from years ago, they came to shelter inside me. And probably they snawned in me the same intensity that she had suffered. I cannot remember today whether there was, was not any new style or technique or artistry in her writing, but there was one quality that I remember till today-there was an intensity of experience in it. She did not write the diary for others, and so there was no unnecessary description. Neither had she written it for me, because there was no advice. (Why she wrote it I cannot understand. It could be that the diary was a complaint about the injustice she had home, made out to a formless future. If that is the case, it is a grand, successful literary composition. Otherwise what is the value of literature?)

I burned that diary. There was no better reader for it than I, and I was afraid that it would be denigrated at the hands of others. Sometimes I think that I should not have burned the diary. That

matter is as though...let's say it sometimes comes to mind all of a sudden; what if I had never come to Kathmandu from Kashi? There are many possibilities in the thing called 'what if'. What if I didn't write? My feelings would certainly not die; but their expression would not become pointed. And I probably wouldn't measure many things that I have done or that others have done. Life would be a wholesale market, and small, delicate events would not appear before my eyes, suddenly taking on meaning. I would take out a balance sheet of successes and failures and my life would be

different in each fiscal year. It's just that none of this happened

It's just that I didn't (or couldn't) do that. Today even nonsensical things touch me. Even questions placed to others, and answers given my others, touch me.

Because I get touched so easily. I feel hopeful that at least I experience tremors here and there. Somewhere there is a heartbeat , and perhaps this being is 'god's work' that has remained dead in ne? The heartheat of true desire towards life. The answer to this will be given by the future, perhaps...

The sudden explosion of silence amid the singing of devotional

lugging buckets of water. The boys had to all do their share of house duties, and he had to fill all



making money or politicking, mummies engrossed in the social circuit

kamij to wear after school, while they had to make do with the blue

number..." Those roll numbers, they never leave you.

from older girls who were big sister, mother, protector, arbitrators to always had a smile on her face is now a stockbroker. The intelligent allrounders, the shy quiet ones, all weaving their laughter and successes into the pattern of my own life.

by someone you taught long ago. All decent youngsters now, doing well for themselves, and keeping the torch alive. •



EXHIBITION

 Seasons of the Kunwiniku Paintings from West Arnhem Land. Australia. Until 3 October, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, 11AM-6PM, 411122. Australian Embassy Kathmandu, Siddhartha Art Gallery and Baber Mahal Revisited.

 Three women artists Paintings by Erina Tamrakar, Pramila Bairacharva and Sunila Bayracharva, until 9 October, Lazimpat Gallery Café. 429590

 Symphony of Colours Paintings by Madan Chitrakar. Until 28 September, 11AM-6PM, Nepal Art Council, Babar Mahal, 227866

 Lazimpat Poetry and Prose Group For writers, readers and listeners, 5.30 PM, October 4, Lazimpat Gallery Café. 429590

Ni hao ma? Practice spoken Chinese with other volunteers, beginners welcome. Chinese Language Conversation Table at Himalayan Java Coffee House, Thamel, 3 October, 6PM. For details ring Trailokya Aryal 437624.

SEMINAR

* ELD interactive seminars Professional writing for development staff/ report writing 26–29 September, 9.30 AM-4.30 PM, Rs 9,000 (standard), Rs 6,750 (concessionary). Presentation skills and public speaking, 5–7 October, 10AM-4PM, Rs 5,000/Rs 4,000. Developing project proposals, 27–31 October, 10AM-4PM, Rs 9,000/Rs 6,750. ELD 541 613

* 1974 AD live at Jatra restaurant & bar. 27 September, 6PM on. Tickets, Rs 500 with welcome drink and dinner 211010 after 6PM

- Prism live Musical night with food at Hotel Shahenshah International, Dhanasi, 28 September, 7PM on.
- Jazz at Patan Cadenza and friends play fusion jazz, and launch their CD Celebrating 100 Years of Jazz. Rs 600, 4 October, 6.30 PM, Patan Museum. cadanzadaj@hotmail.com.
 The Jazz Commission with Vidhea Fridays, 7PM on at Fusion, the bar at Dwarka's Hotel.
- Happy Hour 6.30 PM 7.30 PM, buy one get one free. 479488

 Ladies night at The Rox Bar Wednesdays. Women get a drink on the house, and after 8PM Teesta band plays. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234

 Meter of Malts Single malt tastings, 12 varieties, the Piano Lounge, Hotel Yak & Yeti, Rs 999 248999

- Momo Festival Momo eating and making competitions, 18 varieties of momos, door prizes live music. Bakery Café members Rs 300 for adults, Rs 150 for children under 4 1/5 ft, non-members Rs 350 and Rs 200. Bakery Café, Teku, 12 noon-4PM, 5PM-9PM, 28 September.
- Lunch or brunch Nepali set meal at Rs 325, also a la carte, The Tea House Inn, Nagarkot. Taste of Beijing Roast duck and other Chinese meat, fish and vegetarian delicacies.
- Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant, Birendra International Convention Centre. 468589 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
- Weekend lunch with swimming Rs 700 for adults, Rs 500 for children, Dwarika's Hotel. 479488
- Special weekend lunch at Bukhara, vegetarian at Rs 350 plus tax and non-vegetarian at Rs 450 plus tax. Hotel Soaltee Crowne Plaza. 27399 Autumn menu and Priti Bhoj Stupa View Vegetarian Restaurant, Boudha. 480262
- ♦ Wood fired pizzas at the new Roadhouse Café. Completely redesigned with separate bar seating and coffee bar. The Roadhouse Café, Thamel.

- 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, on the edge of the Shivapuri National Park, Rs 1.850 per person with dinner and breakfast, Rs 925 per child 5-14 years, Shivapuri Heights Cottage. info@escape2nepal.com
- The Great Godavari Getaway Special weekend packages including room with breakfast and dinner 25 percent discount on health club facilities. Godavari Village Resort, 560675.

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



2 CHILDREN'S UCATION

OUR NATION



Late season low pressure systems over the Bay of Bengal still dominate the weather over eastern India and the combined irculation from these are giving the southwest monsoon second wind. The more-than-average precipitation has compensated for the deficit in June. Though they are normally supposed to suck the clouds from this region and transfer then to southeast Asia, this time westerlies from the Arabian Sea deflected the winds and filled the gap. The satellite image shows this low pressure system over the Himalaya clearly. Strong possibility of localised rains till the weekend, after that we should have fine Dasain-like weather with morning mist. oler afternoon breeze and short bursts of isolated night rain

KATHMANDU VALLEY











KUN WIND KU

Rs 6.000 This retrospective presents 140 works representing over 25 years of Powell as a draughtsman of vernacular architecture, meticulous ethnographic illustrator, imaginative documentarist, and visionary of the real. Examining his oeuvre are eight essays by specialists in art and architecture, social anthropology and ethnography, Tibetan, Islamic, Indian and Nepali

> Diplomacy Henry Kissinger Touchstone, New York, 1994 Rs 1,000 special price

Moving from a sweeping overview of history to blow-by-blow accounts of his nenotiations with world leaders, Henry Kissinger describes how the art of diplomacy has created the world in which we live, and how America's approach to foreign affairs has always differed vastly from that of other nations. Especially interesting are the sections on the idea of 'Western unity', détente, and diplomacy as geopolitics.



Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in

a Fragmented World

Oxford University Press, New Delhi. 2002

Rs 760 This HDR examines political participation as a dimension of human development. In developing countries, democracy's strategic importance to security and stability puts political participation high on the development agenda, though the links between democratic governance and social and economic development are not automatic. The report also calls for more democratic principles in global institutions and negotiations.

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

For sale Dining table and six chairs, deep-freeze refrigerator, flexicoir mattress because leaving the country. Contact Paula at 530297

Contact www.kopilaclinic.com

The Tea House Inn Introducing the Tea House Combo Rs 700 nett per person on twin-sharing basis. Package for Nepalis and expats includes room, breakfast, dinner (Nepali food), free facilities, swimming, and Jacuzzi, For reservations: 410432, 414432, 680048.

Beautiful land for your dream project ! Bird breeding? Flower/Fruit Cultivation? Ayurvedic Clinic? Meditation Center? Terraced land, 2 1/4 Ropani, next to a wild running brook! Absolutely breathtaking location. Only 20 minute drive from Kathmandu city to this treasure property! Serious buyers, Please call : Niraj 981024067 Email:

House for rent in Jawalakhel centrally located, spacious old Rana bungalow (9386.61sq.ft) with big garden, ample parking space. Total land area- 30690.23 sq.ft. Suitable for offices. Serious enquiries: Contact S. Rana between 7- 8:30 am and 5:30-8 pm Tel: 521128/ House for rent in Thamel Four bedrooms each with attached bath, eat-in kitchen, living room, large terrace, Rs 15,000. Tel:9810-21981,9692-3272

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

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

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

Visit Ground Zero Fine wines, designer candles, cards. exclusive Nepali paper products, silver jewellery, wooder items, perfumes and more. Darbar Marg, opposite Hotel

Lazimpat Book Club: We choose a novel and meet one evening a week for discussion and conversation. Join us

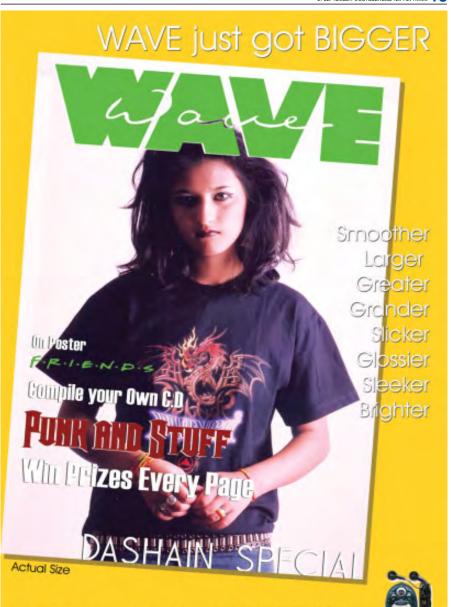
For insertions ring NT Marketing at 543333-36.

A thriller, Road is about Arvind (Vivek Oberoi) and Laxmi (Antra Mali), lovers who flee their relationship. On their way escaping, they come across Babu (Manoj Bajpai), who asks for a lift. What happens next catches the viewer Road turns out to be about just these three, but about four principal characters, Arvind, Laxmi, Babu and the Road. Produced by Ramgopal Varma, Road is directed by Rajat Mukherjee, who also directed Varma's Fardeen-Urmila-Sonali starrer Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya. Sandesh Shandilya's music compliments the script beautifully.









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Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Article 127



omeone who has been keeping careful count has just drawn my attention to the fact that there have been 126 articles in this space in the past two years. I don't know how that happened, it wasn't intentional. But what it means is that this could actually be Article 127.

It is therefore incumbent upon yours sincerely to mark this milestone and not to waste this week's column beating around the burning bush indulging in the usual idle banter, frivolous chitchat, witty repartees, innuendos about the Ministry of Interior Decoration, and allegedly humorous asides about the posterior body parts of those currently holding high office.

No, today we shall tackle deadly serious national issues so that we can roll up our loins and gird our sleeves to remove all obstacles that stand before us in the task of nation-building. This is so that we can doubly redouble our efforts to once more devote ourselves to a political process that suits the Nepali mud. So that there can once more be four-directional development towards Asian Standards and the declaring of Nepal a Zone of Peace. And so that, just like in the good old days, we can exhort Nepalis to move their hands and not their tongues under the

active guidance of Radio Nepal and the Sports Council.

Many of us have fond memories of those years when there was iron discipline and obedience throughout the land, the Jayanagar-Janakpur train ran on time, all toothnaste was still strictly non-yea, the Japanese had not yet installed solar-powered red lights so traffic actually flowed on Putali Sadak, and we still had sixday weeks.

Some of you will find it hard to remember those days because as a matter of fact and for all intents and purposes your birth may not actually taken place yet, but corruption then was carefully centralised and was not as all-pervasive as it is today. In fact, so much gold passed through Nepal in transit from Hong Kong to Haryana then, that the time is still remembered

nostalgically as The Golden Age of Nepal. This is why, when the runway got damaged this week and Nepal was turned into a temporary no-fly zone, some of us rejoiced because we took it as a sign that there would soon be a regime change here as well But, alas, no such luck. Saddam is still on the saddle, and here a jumbo cabinet still rules.

It is now too late for more talk, we need action. Your excellencies, dishonoured ministers, underground and semi-overground leaders, the insoluble speaker of the dissolved house. locked up tax officials, friends and foes, gentlemen and the lady at the back who is getting ready to aim a rotten tomato in the general direction of the podium.

It is my pleasure to offer you some more unsolic-ited advice during yet another interaction programme on "The Present Situation and How to Get Out of It" The way we get out of this is to follow emergency procedures: get up slowly without anyone noticing, walk calmly up the aisle towards the doors marked "Exit" of which there are two in the front and two at the back. Don't panic. And when you are outside, run like hell. Thank you for your attention, and see you all outside.

V ou can recognise a good Darjeeling by its colour, its fragrance, and flavour. It looks like fine scotch whisky," says Raaj Waiba slurping a mouthful of Darjeeling First Flush and rolling it around his tongue noisily and then swallowing. since this is just a cuppa, not a tea tasting

Raaj gave up a tea planter's life four years ago and moved to Kathmandu to set up Tea World in Thamel, but still adheres to the lessons he learnt in his sixteen years on plantations in Assam and Darjeeling. The Manufacture of Tea, a manual he's had since he started in tea, remains his bible. "It has everything a planter needs to know, like the exact number of nails a tea case needs," says Raaj. "You can get reprimanded, even fired, if

you get that wrong." Raai, whose father was also a planter, is today happy to be a

retailer, wholesaler and exporter of premium Nepali and Indian teas. First Flush, Kanyam, Ilam, organic, Assam, green tea, and his own blends line the shop. Customers can be very particular. "They'll ask for tea from a specific garden in Darieeling," says Raai, who blends

his own tea to suit his moods. When he's not at the shop or guiding clients through a tasting, Raaj helps the 14 gardens in the Himalayan Orthodox Tea Planters Association (HOTPA) conduct workshops for small growers. Hotels like the Hyatt and the Radisson engage Raaj to train their staff to blend and recognise teas, and also prepare for them tea cocktails and tea menus. Raaj believes tea is the next

big thing for Nepal. With the right infrastructure and government support, he says, Nepal could be growing excellent tea comparable to Darjeeling, within fifteen years-



as long as Nepali businessmen requires consistent and committed care, patience, and money." •







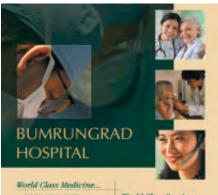
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