

Who will blink first in this tussle between the palace and the political parties?

find common cause.

The king poached Lokendra Bahadur Chand from the centre-right RPP and Badri

Sadbhavana Party for the interim cabinet, and

both parties are expected to go over to the

king's side sooner or later. By bringing in a

pro-madhesi Mandal and janajati leader Gore

Bahadur Khanangi, the king may have tried to

coopt them, but this move is fraught with the

Ten days after the nine-member interim

government was formed, the cabinet has met

Prasad Mandal from the tarai-based

dangers of communalism

ANALYSIS BY RAJENDRA DAHAL for the formation of an interim government under Article 128 of the constitution. in which verything is on hold. The political parties are trying to remain united, while it would be an equal partner. The political the palace tries to woo them away for a parties are so caught up in ensuring their own existence, they have no time to think about cabinet expansion. Distrust on both sides is high: the king wants to rescue Nepal from the nation, people, democracy, constitution, what he sees as a bunch of bundlers, senior or elections. Unless the emergency is political leaders see the danger of a return to the reinstated, or there is a crackdown on press days of absolute monarchy. freedom (a proposal in the first cabinet Who will blink first? The fractious meeting last week to this effect was reportedly rejected), it is unlikely the political parties will

political parties have forged unprecedented unity to oppose the king's move, but they are still torn by mistrust. The Koirala Congress, for instance, has not allowed the Deuba Congress to participate in the all-party meetings, saying it is the only Congress. Koirala wants parliament to be reinstated, since it would mean his party would probably reunite, and he'd call the shots again. The leftist Nepal Workers' and Peasants' Party and the United People's Front are with the Congress on this because they would get their seats back.

But the UML, which would not benefit from reinstatement, is sticking to its demand only twice. To get going, it needs clarity on its



DISUNITY IN DIVERSITY: An all-male gathering of six parliamentary parties on V ednesdav, clockwise from foreground. National People's Fro ila Mani Pokhrel (in white cap), Arnik Sherchan, Čhitra Bahadur KC, Pari Thapa. Nepal Wórkers' Peasants' Party. Narayan Man Bijukchhe, haityaraj Shakya. Nepali Congress: Ramsharan Mahat, Krishna Sitaula, Govinda Raj Joshi, Arjun Narsingh KC, girija Koirala, Sushil Koirala, hakra Bastola: UML: Subhas Nerrwang, Ishwar Pokhrel, Madhav Kurrar Nepal, Bharat Mohan Adhikari, K P Oli, Yubaraj Karki. RPP-Prakad handra Lohani, Surya Bahadur Thapa, Rabindra Nath Sharma. Sadbhavana Party: Hridesh Tripathy.

terms of reference in trying to fulfil the king's polls. That India waited ten days to officially greet the prime minister is taken as a sign that New Delhi had misgivings. Indian Informamandate: ensuring peace and security, streamlining bureaucracy, controlling corruption Minister Sushma Swaraj underlined her tion, delivering services, and preparing for elections. There are questions about who is country's support Wednesday for a constitureally in charge. Chand. who's been in this tional monarchy and multiparty democracy. post three times before, is called a "non-starter" King Gyanendra is keeping his cards close prime minister. There are already jokes about to his chest. Is the palace conducting behind-"OK-endra Bahadur Chand". the-scenes bargaining with the Magists? Will Suddenly, no one is talking about

they agree on a constituent assembly in elections. The political parties seem secretly exchange for berths for Maoist representatives relieved at their postponement, and the interim in the interim cabinet? The king's cabinet government has passed the buck to the parties. appointees have been remarkably soft on the Only the donors and India still seem keen on Maoists, never using the "t" word, address-

The villagers' support keeps me going...

ing them in honorific Nepali, and saving that the insurgency needs a political solution If there are secret contacts, we can

expect an escalation of violence near the Maoists' 11-13 November strike as the rebels try to improve their bargaining position. The military would like to exert more pressure on Maoist strongholds, but there are no signs of the promised rifles, helicopters and transport aircraft from abroad Does the king really have a trump card, or not? Either way, we'll know by December

Do you approve of King Gyanendra's decision of

to you think the new council of ministers is up to the ask ahead?



eekly Internet Poll # 57. To vote go to: www.nepailtimes.com . Should the political parties join the interim



KUNDA DIXIT Major Mohan Khatri had a bright future in the Royal Nepal Army. But he found military life too confining, its hierarchy rigid, and many of its methods dubious. So, after a two-year officer's training at the US military academy in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and another three years with the Nepai contingent of UN peackeepers in southern Lebanon, Major Khatri took early retirement to work on his dream project: a tourist lodge in the It took him over a year to find the right place; a south-facing slope on a ridge at

2,800 m on the Jiri highway with a great view of the Jugal Himal range to the north, and scented pine forests all around. He took a bank loan and becan construction of the rustic cabins.

The resort was completed in 1997, and was a popular stopover for many trekkers taking the Jiri route to Lukla. When the Khimti hydroelectric project was started, the lodge became the preferred R&R site for Norwegian and Finnish engineers working on construction. Being from the cavalry, the major loved to ride and take care of horses, and for good luck called his Indae Horseshoe Resort

But Mohan Khatri's luck ran out on the night of 24 October when a group of armed Maoists came up to the hotel while he was having dinner dragged him outside, shot him, and slashed him with khukuris. His body lay in the undergrowth on a slope below the hotel till the afternoon of the next day, before the army arrived from Barabise. Reporters who visited Mude three days after the event said employee

were still too shocked to speak. Sali I ama worked at the hotel, and her face showed a mixture of terror and sadness. When Mude villagers come running up in a croup to see who the reporters were, her face went pale with fear.

The villagers are devastated. The 45-year-old major was a benefactor: not only did the hotel provide employment, but he had helped renovate three schools in the area and given 35 girl students scholarships. He was working on an ambitious project to establish a well-equipped health post with a maternity ward which was going to be inaugurated after Tihar. The villagers can't think who will complete the hospital and help the schools

An ex-army major who tried to stay clear of both the Maoists and the military is brutally murdered.

Khatri was aware of the dangers, and Maoists came around to force him to pay a "revolutionary tax". He was careful to steer a neutral path between the Maoists and plainclothes army patrols who roamed the mountains. He didn't get involved in politics, and thought that his charity work and his popularity with the villagers would protect him. After killing him, the attackers set two hotel vans on fire. These were vehicles Khatri

had used many times as ambulances to ferry sick villagers to hospital in Kathmandu. Caretaker Tilak Shrestha says that after killing the major, the attackers ransacked the rooms of the resort, looking for weapons. They found it

hard to believe that there were none. Shrestha was repeatedly threat-ened, but they finally concluded that the major didn't keep guns. There they took all the money from the cash register, a tape recorder and also some cassettes. The major's wife, Krishna Kamal, was in the kitchen when her husband was attacked.

her husband was attacxed. Man Bahadu Lama sold Khatri the land for the hotel. He says he had warned the major that he may be in danger because of his army connection. But Khatri tol him: "Man Bahadu, don't worry about me. Take care of yoursell, be safe." Villagers suspected local Maoists could have blamed the major for passing information to the army that led to the raid earlier this year on a Maoist hideout on Sailung, two days away from Mude, in which a dozen guerrillas were killed.

Major Khatri (right) with his wife and daughter in Mude. If om Mude, in which a dozen guermass were water of the was killed, Mohan In an email to a find a few months before he was killed, Mohan Khatri appeared to be aware that things were getting dangerous. He wrote: "In the kuna kapchas of our country where the majority of the neglected, exploited and oppressed villagers are living, there is no lessening of support for the maobadis, there is no government, and there is no alternative for the people. They have nothing to lose. Keeping aside the morality and the methods of the maobadis, they seem to offer the only hope. I am keeping myself busy with the construction of our rural health centre...the



I hat will it take for the elected national leaders of our six parliamentary parties to finally grasp that they had their chance, they had 12 years to show they could do it, and

they goofed. Not once, but repeatedly, They failed the people who voted for them, they failed the nation, and they failed their own grassroots cadre who were laying the foundations of democracy across the country. In contrast, the village leaders from these parties were mostly honest and accountable. They are the ones who are presently being brutally slaughtered by the hundreds for their political beliefs

Their bosses here in Kathmandu lost track long ago of what it is was they were supposed to be fighting for. And after more than a decade of abuse, they still need to invoke "democracy" so that they can get back to plundering the country. Or is this hollow bravado just to try to save their own skins while the CIAA cracks down?

Right through Dasain and this week, they have been splitting hairs about the constitutionality of King Gyanendra's action. So inert are they to the people's sentiments that it still hasn't sunk in that most

STATE OF THE STATE

Nepalis have given up on them. UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal gave a speech in Dharan or Tuesday in which he said the Nepali people had lived through the Rana regime and the Panchavat, and they would reject a sham democracy. Umm, was he speaking of the last twelve years? And when we hear top leaders of both factions of the Nepali Congress talk of "defending democracy" there is a collective urge to throw up Here is a country that is teetering on the edge, and all they can think of is to try and position themselves to be the incumbent when next elections are held. Here we are about to be run over by a militant group intent on overthrowing parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy, and we can't unite against that common threat.

Is that because they can now blame someone else for their shortcomings, and use the king as a lightning rod to deflect criticism away from their own failures? Leave this pointless debate on Article 128 to the lawyers, gentlemen, just use your political common sense. To be sure, the king's gambit is a risky one. If he had expected the

Common sense in **JNCOMMON TIMES**

> prime minister to resign when he told him to, and the political parties to fall in line, then he miscalculated. And right there is a timely reminder for his advisers: this is not 1960, nor is it 1980. Don't even think about it.

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The constitutional monarchy as a symbol of our nationhood must remain above the fray. Only then can it bring errant parties into line like it is doing now. A rift between these two forces will only benefit those who don't believe in either. The monarch needs the mechanism of political parties to go to the people, he must not try to do it alone.

Some of the King Gyanendra's appointees to the interim cabinet may lack a certain oomph, but he definitely did not miscalculate the national mood. The mood is for peace, stability and development, And that can only come about through a dramatic move towards radical reform in the social, economic and cultural spheres. The current crisis is a result of the inability of the political parties and the Panchavat before that to deliver these reforms.

Once we recognise this failure and neglect, we act to correct them so that the system can muster the capacity to heal itself.

by CK LAI



both India and Nepal.

to Megawati Sukarnoputri for the

sole reason for the delay in getting a

Bali blast

Can an executive king also be a constitutional monarch?

SUGA (Mahottari District)-Officially the district headquarters of Mahottari is a town, but it retains all the characteristics of a village, including a hyperactive bush telegraph.

Nothing can happen in Jaleshwar without everybody in the outskirts coming to know of it the very next morning. In the middle of Dasain bolidays, the officiating Indian envoy in Kathmandu was here, and the village was already buzzing with the news. People speculated about the intended nurnose of his visit

The only appointment the senior diplomat seem to have had was to hand over some books to a private school According to local papers, Mr Ashok Kumar said that his three-day visit to Janakpur and Jaleshwar was purely personal. There is no reason to doubt this.

even more acute these days as the roads in Bihar are in ruins, while much of Mahottari and Dhanusha on our side have no roads at all. Even after fifty years of planned development, residents of western Mahottari have to travel through India to reach

The transport problem has become

the Janakapur intelligentsia.

since a pilorimage to Sita's birthplace is a their own district headquarters. Most of part of every devout Hindu's itinerary. the vehicles plying on the dilapidated Indian diplomats, in particular, have Bhittamod-Sursand Road in Bihar always delighted in the warm hospitality of display distinctive red Nepali plates with a town that considers itself the cultural Devnagari numerals capital of Mithila, a transborder culture Meanwhile, if the Parikrama Sadak

that has linguistic links in both Nepal and and Hulaki Road were built, the trend Bihar. People of this region have to rely on would perhaps reverse. No one in their each other's physical infrastructure so much right mind would like to travel on Bibari roads if they can help it. The local unit that roads on both sides of the international border repeatedly cropped up during informal talks that the diplomat had with

bureaucratic procrastinators, the delay of the Sadbhavana Party in Janakapur told the visiting diplomat that the condition of Indian roads are of as much

economic interest to Biharis as they are to Nepalis. However, whether New Delhi bureaucrats care any more about the welfare of Biharis is an altogether different story. Anaemia at the periphery while the centre suffers from high blood pressure is the development reality in circles was that New Delhi had been holding out for some concessions before Still, I had a nagging suspicion: did sending what should have been a routine the Indian envoy's holiday here have message. But the doctrine of reciprocity in anything to do with the time that Atal dealing with neighbouring countries-Behari Vaipavee took in sending his regardless of the history of proximity in al congratulatory messages to the king's aspects of life—is too deeply ingrained in appointee, Lokendra Bahadur Chanda the minds of South Block diplomats. For those who know South Asia's Not that recognising Lokendra

Bahadur by neighbouring governments could have been perfectly routine. After matters all that much. His cabinet is all, it took our own Shital Niwas nearly composed of royal appointees, and it's two weeks to draft a condolence message merely an extension of the executive arm of the king without any locus standi under the 1990 constitution. Even It's difficult to believe, though, that though it wasn't said so in so many a late dispatch from Lainchaur was the words, the king temporarily suspended the constitution for all practical purdiplomatic message that is considered an poses as soon as he assumed executive official high-five from big brother. The powers. Can an executive king also be a

ilence from New Delhi constitutional monarch? That question is had become particularly now academic. In the resulting constitutional void glaring because of the speed with which the foreign governments have no option Chinese congratulated other than dealing with appointees of the Minister-in-Chief Chand. king, whoever they may be. It is this The cynical speculastark reality that must have emerged tion this triggered in our when the American and Chinese ambas conspiracy-ridden sadors had an audience with the king on 4 October

In all probability, New Delhi too was directly briefed at the highest levels prior to the dismissal of Sher Bahadur Deuba. The reason king chose not see the officiating Indian envoy was perhaps because the designated ambassador hadn't vet arrived. King Gyanendra is said to be a stickler for protocol, and had there been an accredite Indian ambassador it's quite unlikely that the king wouldn't have seen him. The rumour that Indians were neeved

at being ignored and were merely showing their displeasure by withholding the routine diplomatic message doesn't look to be too convincing. Ashok Kumar wasn't in Janakour to sulk

So, why the delay? Was there some geopolitical give-and-take before the cautiously-worded message to Chand came? We will know sooner or later, just like we knew sooner or later about Kalapani, Mahakali, or the new draft friendship treaty.

Lintil then, it's a halmy autumn here in tarai, worthy of weekend breaks for more diplomats from Kathmandu. Ideal time to visit: Tihar (3-6 November) and the Mithila festival of Chhath (9-10 November) celebrated on both sides of the border.

SELF-DESTRUCTING protest the royal move. Why? King G's decision is a positive People are fed up of corrupt one to take Nepal out of the dark politicians. And they know that if ("King G does it", NT Online) as the same thieves come back to any well-wisher of Nepal power, they will be betraved again nows. What Nepal's politicians like in the past. The king has promised to don't know, however, is that the people are so fed up with them emain a constitutional monarch. that the time will soon come He knows that the people want when they will all be rounded peace and security more than up and tried in a true "people's anything else so that political court". I am a true-hearted stability will bring economic democrat, but I think the king's progress. He had no choice, and time to argue about legality ntentions mean more than the empty promises of our so-called Either way, the constitution was "democrats". King Gvanendra is in trouble a well-meaning monarch, Nepali Now is the time again for politicians are not. The king has political parties to show their commitment to the people and bring the genuine support of the

people, the politicians only wish the country back to normal. They have to yow that they will not play Jack Prasai, Cape Town with the norms of the constitution and norms of democracy Basu Shrestha Coming from an ex-Maoist Arlington, USA commander, Puskar Gautam may know what he is talking about in "Fight to the finish" (#115). But if · Your editorial "The king and us" (#115) is one of the most

his quotes from Chairman Mao are accurate, then the mentor of balanced analyses I have yet Nepal's "Maoists" contradicted seen in the Nepali press about His himself by first saving "that the Majesty's 4 October take over of decisive factor in any war is executive powers. It is easy to be public support, not weapons black and white about this decision. To say: it was an and soldiers" (fifth paragraph from the bottom) and then "Mao undemocratic move if you are a Zedong said that the people do democrat or to say that it was not exist without the army 100 percent correct, if you are (second last paragraph). It's just this kind of muddle-headedness But the reality lies somewhere in between. His Maiesty had no that is making the comrades take the country on a path of choice, as you point out. He had to save the country, and his throne. self-destruction

Colonel BB Rai, Hong Kong The politicians had messed things up with their corruption and When King Gyanendra took disunity, and this was endangering over the executive power for the nation. sometime and fired an "incom-However, where the royalists

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petent" prime minister, most
                                  are wrong is to think that absolute
politicians and affiliated people
                                   monarchy is the answer. We tried
were shocked. But on the other
                                   it for thirty years and it didn't usher
hand those people who have
                                  in development. Everything was
been dragged to vote several
                                  so centralised (even corruption)
times during 12 years, those
                                   that nothing moved. The king was
who had seen confrontation
                                  surrounded by sycophants, the
between parties and politicians
                                  press was strictly controlled.
fighting for power and chairs
                                   pressure started building up, and
those who had seen prime
                                   by 1990 it got bad enough for the
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lid to come off. ministers who dissolved cabinet like a dollhouse, those who had No, the answer to our polity lies in finding the right balance to make democracy work better. The seen corruption at all levels, and those who have been victim of terrorism and tired of seeing the politicians are crying themselves mess-they were celebrating hoarse saving the king's move is not democractic. But neither were no matter who said what. The situation was so bad they for 12 years. In fact, they that people preferred the safety made a mockery of democracy by and security of the Panchayat

using the system as an excuse to system. Political parties should nder the country like never realise that they can't blame before. anyone but themselves. They should also realise that this is a smack on their face not doing their job properly. Deuba may

have been the last "incompe-

tent" prime minister, but he was

only following the example of

his incompetent predecessors

The neonle came out on the

streets to throw out the Panchayat, and yet they didn

authorities about visa practice of Nepal ("If we want tourists, scrap visa fees", #113). But the logic of scrapping visa fees to boost tourism may not help much. It is just a popular local perspective and may not be instrumental to boost the number of tourists. have never met a tourist who

VISA FFFS

plans their holiday after checking the degree of visa fees. The real solution of the problem lies in the simplification of visa process and kind of visa, as Yogendra Shakya correctly states in the article. An instant recipe for the problem would be: a) to simplify the visa application procedure at the LINDER MY HAT airport, as well as b) redefine the Loved Kunda Dixit's "Recently kinds of visa by just single, double and multiple entry visa, independ-

ent to the frequency of visit. We know what needs to be done, we need to just do it. site for idol thieves Ram Pratap Thapa www.godrobbers.gov. The fact President, German-Nepal

Maybe Dixit meant "gov.np"? Or TRAFFIC BLUES Thanks to Andrew Bunbury in

"Driven to distraction" (#115) for being so bold to write about completely chaotic driving rules in Kathmandu. At one time. I was motivated to

develop a computer game simulating driving around the streets of mandu and marketing it with Sony or Microsoft 1 dronned the idea, but if somebody is interested I can provide some technical assistance to mathematically simulate a bull sitting in the middle lane and its effect on traffic. Or help simulate a bus driver talking to his fellow comrade on the opposite side, completely ignoring the fact that traffic is backing up behind. Driving around Ring Road would be Level 1 and driving in New Road would be Level 10. The game will also allow selecting your paper. References can be different vehicles: three-wheeler taken from my employer in The rickshaw motorhike microbus It Sinking Nepal daily will also have so called "God" mode, where you can drive

LETTERS

Democracy is too precious to be left in the hands of these crooks, the king needs to rescue it, reinstate it and install the checks and balances so that multiparty democracy begins to produce the results that will pull the run from under the feet of the Maoists. And that is what this interim government should be immediately trying to do. And instead of sulking, the political parties should extend the king all the help they can.

S Lamichane, Kathmandu around Kathmandu without any

chance of being caught by traffic Congratulations for drawing once police and score by number of again the attention of concerned edestrians run over and vehicles hit. The traffic police can use this computer game as part of a compulsory exam for all new drivers and provide the driver's license based on the score of the game. This computer game, I'm sure, would sell better than Quake or Doom. If Nepali Times doesn't stop provoking me with articles like these, I'll drop my PhD and concentrate on developing this computer game. Rajat Rajbhandari

Interdisciplinary Program in Transportation New Jersey Institute of Technology, USA

declassified ads" (#115). Some one should alert Lee Kuan Yew to the item: "Country For Rent". I was also intrigued by the web

that the URL ends only in "gov" Friendship Association implies that it is a US website. Coloane

> maybe we should wait for a new domain name: "god.np". S Peters, Kathmandu





iMisunderstood poetî.

by email



CORRECTION In "Who's Next" (From the Nepali Press, #115), Jit Bahadur Ariel should have been identified as belonging to the Nepal Intellectual's Council.



"CHANCE OF GETTING HIT

BY A CAR IS GREATER

THAN BEING BLOWN

UP BY A BOMB"

I am a budget traveller who likes taking pictures,

getting good deals, and avoiding too many other

tourists. In my experience, visiting troubled lands

means more vacancies in hotels and better deals

The downside is the inconvenience such as

strikes that limit transportation in the city and

tions by air.

often the impossibility of getting to distant loca-

The following is not a political comment. But it

is what happened. I have been in Cambodia and

strikes. In both case it was armed representatives

violence". There, even the most violent Muslim and

Hindu factions could care less about me. I might

as well have been part of the scenery. Cops and

soldiers were sometimes a mild headache (curi-

ously not in Srinagar though).

Madagascar during factional fighting/general

of the state who extorted me, not any terrorists,

Also in Indian metropolises after "communal

they did.

Now to implement it....



HEMLATA RAI ersistent advocacy efforts by women's reproductive rights and health activists have finally paid off. The first hard-won results of

4 NATION

their intense lobbying came this March, when parliament approved the 11th Amendment to the Muluki Ain, which for the first time in Nepal legalised abortion, if conditionally. Last month, the Bill finally became an

HERE AND THERE

Act after receiving the royal seal. But legalising abortion in Forum for Women, Law and some situations is not an end in Development (FWLD). Shrestha itself. Public health workers say and others fear that this lack of

that the hard part begins nowknowledge means that women implementing the law effectively. will continue to be victimised. Unsafe abortion is identified as a An FWLD study report made major killer of women of public earlier this year is reproductive age in Nepaldamming about the unbending attitude of the court judges all studies say that as many as six over Nepal towards women women die everyday due to abortion-related complications. facing abortion charges. The "Knowledge travels very study, which covers the period slowly here. Even court judges don't know, at the moment, that percent of women facing abortion is legal in certain situations." says Sabin Shrestha. In 1997 one in five women in an advocate associated with Nepal's jails is incarcerated on

Research on Environment Health and Population (CREHPA), 93 percent of urban medical practitioners surveyed believed that legalising abortion from 1997-1999, found that 68 would reduce unsafe abortionrelated maternal morbidity and abortion charges were convicted mortality. But even strong medical opinion didn't prevent the government machinery from the charge of abortion.

slowing down alarmingly over Reproductive rights activists the changing of this Bill into worry in private that the law. Traditionally, a bill gets

aovernment doesn't seem

interested in actually making the

new regulations effective. In a

2000 survey by the Centre for

The new law on abortion has many gaps, and the government doesn't seem too keen on making it work fast.

immediate approval from the under trial As with other palace following approval from crimes, women already con parliament. But the amendment victed of abortion can only be to the Civil Code that legalised relieved by a royal pardon on abortion had to wait six months. the recommendation of the to get the royal approval. And in cabinet. Those under trial can that time, virtually nothing was done to educate the general public or even the bodies that would be responsible for enforcing the legislation. The new law does nothing

for women currently in custody on abortion charges. "The present law fails to decriminalise those already in legal custody." says Shrestha. The law is completely silent about releasing those already convicted, and

Nepal's new abortion law might have gaps, but its basic provisions are considered by reproductive health and women's rights activists to be more liberal than those in other South Asian countries. Abortion s now legal under the following conditions: Up to 12 weeks for any woman

Up to 12 weeks of gestation if the pregnancy results from rape or

· At any time during pregnancy, with the recommendation of an authorised medical practitioner, if the life of the mother were at risk, if her physical or mental health were at risk or if the foetus was deformed. (The law does not specify what degree of deformity would make abortion permissible

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.



of Krishna Prasad Sapkota, former chairman of Ryale

DC, Kavre, on 16 September. Sapkota was beheaded near his home by

In Kushadevi village, along a rutted track just outside Panauti, what

should be a prosperous community huddles in fear and anticipation. A local

chairman Krishna Prasad Sapkota of the UML a few months aback. He was

one of those few, one of the last probably, who stood up to oppose Maoist

influence in his village. He was beheaded at midnight during the last Negal

bandh. Now his village waits for the next visit by those demanding money

official talks volubly and anonymously about the death of Ryale VDC

carrying his head in a plastic bag, as the rest of the body is borne on a

talk to strangers about Maoists. The most expansive response to our

queries was a finger swirled in the air, meaning "they're all around".

ists on the night of 15 September. The photo shows a mourner, at left

t may be self-evident to many, even all too obvious. But it can't be overemphasised. There's Kathmandu, and then there's Nepal. A dangerous and deep divide between capital and country is growing wider by the day, and into the gap flow the Maoists and the unmet aspirations of their constituency, the rural people.

We can argue for hours about whether they actually support the Maoists or not. But one glaring, indisputable hard reality must be faced: the people of the countryside are not actively opposing the rebels, whether or not they back them

On a recent trip to Mude, to look into the tragic death of Mohan Khatri (casualties of this "people's war" always seem more tragic when they're known to you) we stopped many times to take the local temperature. Arbitrary, inaccurate, hopelessly shallow, our straw poll was all of these and more, and yet I have no doubts about the sense of hopelessness and passivity that oozed from every teashop, every bus stand, every chautari.

In Mude, the people express sorrow over the death of a kind and active citizen. Mohan Khatri mattered to that town. Yet ask people why they believe he was murdered, and they mutter that he was doing the wrong thing by helping the army train its officer recruits. A few people hide behind their hands and condemn the Maoists who murdered Khatri, but no one thinks that anything can be done about it.

They laugh when you mention the police, they look mystified when questioned about the army's intentions, they have no idea if there are other brave souls who might resume Mohan Khatri's good works. As for the authorities in Kathmandu, "Government, what government," wheezed an old man, speaking around his cigarette, "there hasn't been any development, any government here for years.

Similar scenes and encounters abounded in other places. Tinpiple in Kavre, under the eye of a shiny new training complex for Nepali UN peacekeepers, at least had a functioning VDC office. But no one wanted to

There is Kathmandu, and then there is the rest of Nepal.

or recruits and families quietly migrate to Kathmandu and poverty. The unreality begins at Bhaktapur and worsens as you drive past Thimi and Gathinagar, finally reaching Tinkune and dear old Kathmandu. Waiwai and cola signs bloom like weeds, a mini-property boom sees paddy terraces fall to brick houses and shons. The roads are choked with vehicles the air is foul. The smell is of money being spent frantically before either official or unofficial tax collectors come calling. Signs on government buildings boast of lavish and largely meaningless programs jointly funded with international agencies. The frantic bustle eclipses fear, the city ignores the tightening steel band that even now seems to be squeezing the edges of the Valley of Unreality.

In Kathmandu, a prime minister rightly calls for peace talks, and gamely promises elections and relief to the people. In the countryside, those who've long lost faith in the capital city's ability to solve their problems awaitpassively-the next instalment of their wretched fate. They've given up trying to influence their futures, unless forced to. The rift widens, and nature hates a vacuum, especially when it's ignored by those who have the means but not the will to fill it.

And I don't just mean the politicians, I mean everyone in this city. Why help the people when there's black money to spend, intrigue to enjoy, a looming threat to deny

All this is from a quick trip up the Arniko Highway and the road to Jiri. Imagine what it's like along the rutted road to Libang, the track through Jajarkot, the trading trails of Pyuthan, Surkhet and Rukum.

NATION

lack family support and access to social rehabilitation facilities. The other glaring omission in the new law is that while it technically legalises abortion, it does not actually make provisions for improving access to safe abortions. The new law

fixes 12 weeks as the upper time limit for a woman to have a legal abortion, but often that's just not enough time for a rural woman who has to first "But it's illegal. It's acrime " make a tough choice, nearly always with no counselling o professional advice, and then take time out to travel else-

where, funds permitting, to true, where did she hear such a thing? Both looked at me. have the procedure. "The proportion of women approaching unqualified practitioners and outflow to India for abortion is not likely to drop immediately, " says Anand Tamang, director of CREHPA.

In order to make safe abortion services more easily available, the new law allows trained health workers at health post levels to perform abortions A 12-week time period is fixed as the safest period within which to have an abortion, and the technique is relatively simple. Activists like

Tamang are satisfied with this provision, but caution that if needs to be revised in about the operation. five years to the WHO standard of 20 weeks. The overall improvement in health facilities, says Tamang, will likely allow for the change.

cies. A CREHPA survey shows

reported dealing with clients

for whom contraception had

failed and nearly three-fourth

reported receiving clients with

The law was also put into

place before the Ministry of

Health could draft a new

abortion policy. One of the

most critical issues that will be

addressed in the draft policy,

consultations for which will

begin next month, is pricing

One impact of the legalisation

of abortion is expected to be a

drop in the cost of the proce-

dure Refore legalisation an

abortion in the first trimester

used to cost Rs 7000 to Rs

10.000 The CREHPA 2000

nercent of urban-based medical

practitioners expected the cost

legalised, while 38 thought it

would "only to some extent"

Monitoring abortion

Medical practitioners fear that

Nepal will see a spurt of sex-

selective abortion. According

percent of the surveyed doctors

said sex selective abortion will

increase "to a large extent".

Mandala House

Interests Automatic

tal all balls, additing (C.M. and - 10 M pr Birls (A.S.D. prior C.M. pr. 3. Balances)

to the CREHPA survey, 36

practices will be another

difficult legal challenge.

survey found that the 52.5

to drop if abortion were

that almost 43 percent of

private medical outlets

unwanted pregnancies.

The majority of women in urban areas seeking abortion services are those with unwanted and mistimed pregnan

Abortive attempt DOMESTIC BRIEFS

Legalising it does not ensure accessibility, or affordability of safe abortion.

ARUNA UPRETI small, shy woman comes into our clinic in farwestern Nepal. "What is your problem?" I ask her. "I am pregnant, but..." she breaks off. I igure she wants to know whether she is pregnant or death. not. "No, she says, "I want you to help me to get rid of this." The health worker sitting next to me is shocked:

The patient looks puzzled: isn't it true that the government has passed a new law now making abortion legal? The health worker says that's not

I asked the patient how she new abortion was not illegal anymore. "I heard it on the radio," she replied. The patient knew, but this health worker in far western Nenal hadn't vet heard that narliament had indeed passed the law. At that time two months ago, it still needed the formal approval of the king. Most of us health activists think that our work is

done when we lobby to change the laws. We think that by addressing the legal aspects of the problem. somehow it will be solved. Alas, as with everything else in this country: it's not the law that is the problem but its implementation.

And in this case, it is that even health workers don't know when the law has been channed. What is the value of all our lobbying and activism in Kathmandu if doctors and health workers haven't heard of it yet? The other issue is that even though abortion may be legal, most health posts like the one I was in do not have the proper facilities for carrying out The patient looked sad and worried, and slowly left

the clinic. She probably went to a quack down the road, which is the reason why so many pregnant women die in this country because of unsafe abortions, and why the law needs to be passed. We in Kathmandu think that if we know some

thing, the whole country knows it as well. That is a

Godavari

was only the first step. reproductive rights activist.)

More than 30 runners from 8 countries and 5 Nepalis will do a high-altitude race from Annapurna Base Camp to Mt Everest Base Camp starting new rever to ide off the starting next week to kick off the commemorations of the 50th anniver sary of the ascent of the world's highest mountain. wrong impression. We now know that even within The runners will race through six major Himalayan passes, including Thorung La, Larkya La, Lauribinayak, Chugyma La and Kathmandu, and even among professionals knowledge does not travel. And in many cases this lack of knowledge makes the difference between life and

A few weeks ago I was on Channel Nepal to discuss the new law on abortion. When we were asked the question, one of the panelists said with a straight face on camera: "According to the law a woman can have abortion only after her husband gives her permission." was quite astonished by his ignorance, and I asked that this section of the tape be expunged because it was patently wrong.

Nenal is a nond example of a country where persistent advocacy efforts by women's reproductive rights activists and strong support by research findings have significantly influenced the government to reforming the abortion law. The challenge now is to disseminate accurate information among health workers, lawyers, police as well as activists and cadre of political parties.

The medical profession is as much in the dark as any one else about the exact provisions of the new law. One male medical student recently asked me: "Don't you think that it would be inappropriate to give legal rights to women on the issue of abortion?" My respon was that the rights had already been granted. The priority now was to make sure that the services are available in the district hospital

From field experience so far of the medical sector, it will not be easy for the government to implement this law. We may soon see that private hospitals will start providing abortions at high cost, government hospitals in cities will also have the service, but a vast majority of rural areas will be left out. Legalising abortion does not ensure accessibility, nor affordability. Passing the law

(Dr Aruna Uprety is a women's health and

descend down to the Khumbu Glacier via Gokyo and Kala Pattar. All the high passes are more than 5.000 metres altitude. The Himal Race is billed as the "ultimate trail" by its organiser, Himalaya Racers Association and Mandala Trekking. The runners will first trek to Annapurna Base Camp on 31 October, from where they will begin running and finish up at Everest Base Camp in the third

week of November. Himalaya Racers and Mandala have in the past organised marathons, including the Annapurna Mandala Trail. (For further information: www.mandalatrek.com)

Jvoti Duwadi is back

The Nepali who has made public installation art his forte has returned once more from the United States to his motherland for a series of exhibitions on his recurring theme of peace.

After a highly successful exhibition at Hanuman Dhoka in 2001. Duwadi will kick off his shows this year with a public art installation called "Remembering Peace" at Rani Pokhari 26-30 October 2002. He then goes on to Pharping to

work on a unique Peace Grove concept 2-9 wember The Raninokhari installa-

tion uses art to express the Nepali people's aspiration for peace. As a metaphor for



The saplings will form a Peace Grove around Rani Pokhari, and on 2 November other saplings will be taken to Pharping for another Peace Grove forest reserve which will be maintained by Sarki and Kami women from the Seshnarayan Village Community.

Baburam's guru's school bombed

Maoists have continued their attacks on schools across the country by bombing the school in Kailali run by the high school teacher of the leader, Baburam Bhattarai. A dozen or so armed Maoists entered the school ground on the night of 16 October in Tikapur, threatened the guards, ransacked the offices and blew up the main building after wiring it up with explosives.

The non-profit school was run by T Varughese, a south Indian teacher who had spent eight years at the Luitel School in Gorkha where Baburam Bhattarai was his student in the 1960s. Also in the same class as Baburam

was the health minister in the interim cabinet and nour neurosurgeon Upendra Devkota, After leaving Gorkha. Varughese had spent the nast 25 years building and running three schools in

Nepal's remote western Kailali district which focussed on education for underprivileged children.

Varughese was in the United States when the attack happened and the 500 students were on Dasain holiday. Sources in Kailali said the school had received several extortion threats in the recent past and was one of the last-remaining non-government schools still open in the far-western district.

The school that was bombed was named after Khadga Bahadur Singh, who launched the Tikapur Development Project. The school was expanding fast, and a new wing had been added. Varughese was also planning to add a 10+2 section to meet the demand for students who would otherwise have to go to India or Kathmandu for further studies. These plans will now be shelved, it is learnt.

Varunhese came to Tikanur in 1973 and first set up a high school which was inaugurated by King Birendra and was later called Birendra Vidya Mandir and still has 1,000 students as well as a dormitory for out-of-town students

Rumours in the air

Friends and well-wishers are concerned again about Subash Gurung, a Nepali national who pleaded guilty to the post 9/11 US federal offence of attempting to board an aircraft with a dangerous weapon. After working hard to see that Subash, who was cleared of any supposed terrorist connections when a US judge proclaimed at the sentencing that he had no evil intentions, they have been worried about rumours that the Nepali authorities plan to take Subash into custody once he arrives back in Nepal from Minnesota.

Apparently, though, they're just rumours. When asked, the Home Ministry, media outlets, and the Nepal Police told Nepali Times that they knew nothing about the supposed plans. Sentencing guidelines in the US would normally have called for a five-month sentence for a first-time offender with no prior record. Farlier, the court also ordered psychiatric treatment for Subash, which, his friends say, helped him greatly

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Annapurna to Everest Race

have their cases withdrawn by the court, again following a cabinet recommendation The women serving time aren't really in a position to demand that their situation be reviewed. A study by the USbased Centre for Reproductive Law and Policy with FWLD

found that a majority of women on trial or in prison for abortion had no legal representation and 60 percent of them never even

even about women currently went to school. These women What the law says

SOMEWHERE IN NEPAL

and his allies characterised our

elected government and rebels

hent on subverting democracy

Deeper down, though, the

dispute had economic roots

exacerbated by Belgium's regional divide. The multi-

been awarded to Fabrique

Nationale Herstal

million-euro arms contract has

headquartered near Liege in the

Walloon area. French-speaking Belgians accused their Flemish

colleagues of trying to sabotage

How foreign investors view

the fragile Walloon economy.

Nenal's two giant neighbours

could clarify our understanding

of the economics of our politics

In the past 10 years, India has

attracted an estimated \$30

hillion in foreign investment

that argument to hold, though

confident that, by 2012, India would be where China is today

question: What helped China

overtake the United States to

reach the top of AT Kearney's

Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index (Nepali Times

Robust economic growth? Entry

into the World Trade Organisa

tion? Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Olympics? All three.

But before all that, a relatively

stable political environment,

according to foreign investors.

quaint attractions in the world's

fastest-growing market for both

education and a free press don't

investment climate. This should

worry Nepal's politicians more

than our economists. ♦

necessarily create a congenial

inhound and outbound travel.)

A plethora of parties, a

strong legal system, English

(Translation: Tibet and

. Tiananmen Square are ius

#115, The World Paper)?

you'd have to be reasonably

Are you? If not, here's the next

conflict as one between an

The economics of politics

he week Nepalis were lef without a government brought news of the biggest foreign investment in the country. Australia's Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation announced it would begin constructing the \$860 million West Seti hydro-electric project in 2004 and start running it four years later.

The company has been working on the 750 MW project in the far western development region since 1996. So we shouldn't read too much into the fact that a prime minister representing the western extreme of the country has been succeeded by someone from the same region. (Actually, this is the second time Lokendra Bahadur Chand has succeeded Sher Bahadur Deuba in nearly six

The timing of Snowy Mountain's announcement is propitious for pondering the money-politics link from a different perspective Chand's hands are full. Worse. they are tied by perceptions of illegality at home and lack of enthusiasm abroad. His room for manoeuvre in the mortified mainstream may be severely circumscribed. The Maoists freshly certified as one of the wealthiest rehel movements in Asia, might continue to see greater advantage in keeping their war machine running Commercial considerations

desperation for change. Reeling from industrial insecurity and can confer political legitimacy. An unrest. prominent entremenurs



Disa bai, Kathanada, Negal Bai, 105 a.20008, 20008 Analasia. 2014 (2018)

seems dead against reviving the

politics that existed before 10.45

PM on 4 October. The business

group to welcome the palace's

intervention. If you followed the

pronouncements of key captains

months, you probably sensed their

as well

Gaden Tenuce

of commerce over the past few

community was the first organised

Double Lunch Delights Buy one, get one free !

Shap into the factor formers for excellent factor () or the from around the seniol international Raffer Lands for \$1.705/ not per perter. Here thanges daily For remainstance, cart 17 \$2000 or \$1522



began warning politicians not to count on their patronage in the next elections One industrialist threatened to publish explosive diaries that party" hardly matters. would rattle the political estab lishment. His threat, repeated over several newspaper interviews carried clear traces of revulsion with how leading politicians had become successful merchants His refrain: For people trying

to make a living off the forces of demand and supply, the character of the government of the day "oligarchic, partyless or multi-Similar sentiments were buried in the Belgian government's decision to go ahead with its contract to deliver 5,500 automatic rifles to Nepal despite our political convulsions. The controversy, which peaked when Deuba was forced to camp in

Brussels on his last foreign trip as premier, was over whether Nepal is in a state of civil war. Several Belgian politicians, including Magda Aelvoet, the deputy premier who later quit the government, argued that the arms sale violated both Relgian law and a European Union code of conduct that prohibits weapons shipments to governments involved in warfare or civil strife Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt

split evenly between direct and institutional investment in equity markets. China has raised over \$300 billion in foreian direct investment alone. India attracts foreign investment of \$30 per capita compared to China's \$497 With 150 million subscribers. China has the world's largest cell phone market, compared to India's six million. There are a million Internet connections in India as against 30 million in China. (And we thought everybody was listening in to everyhody else un north) You could insist that China began liberalising its economy a full decade before India did. For





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ECONOMY

BIZ NE

More traffic jams

The total number of vehicles registered in Kathmandu Valley and surrounding areas increased by nearly 16 percent in the past year, according to the Department of Transportation. At this rate, the number of vehicles on the streets of Kathmandu will double in the next five years. Motorcycles increased by over 20 percent, and two-wheelers now make up nearly 70 percent of all vehicles in the capital.

There are about 50,000 trucks, cars, jeeps and vans in the capital and nearly 136,000 motorcycles. The government registered 369 new diesel mini buses, but is still refusing to allow a prototype electric bus. This means more traffic jams, and more polluted air.

LIC getting into reinsurance

The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India first came to Nepal in 2001, but is now considering setting up a reinsurance company and a mutual fund here. LIC wants to get together with General Insurance Corporation and also set up the first housing finance company in Nepal, according to media reports in India. Nepal could become the first overseas venture for LIC Mutual Fund and LIC Housing Finance for which it is partnering with Nepal's Vishal group. It also plants to expand its investments into Banglades, Bhutuan and

Calcutta holiday traffic hit Despite assurances that indian tourists entering Nepal are no longer required to carry passports or voter ID cards, the message doesn't seem to have reached Calcutta.

And this severely affected the flow of Indian tourists to Nepal during the Puja holidays last week, according to travel agents in Calcutta. Bengali families with children were finding it difficult to arrange the documents, and this adversely affected their travel plans, according to Dilip Sengupta of Kundu Travels. Together with fears of political instability, Nepal-bound holiday traffic was down 70 percent from last year. Royal Nepali Consul-general in Calcurat, Ghanashyam Lamsal, told The Times of India that the document requirements had been imposed "with mutual consent" between India and Nepal.

Pressure cooker sales plummet The manufacture and sale of pressure cookers has dropped dramatically in the past year since the Maoists started using them for explosives and the security forces restricted their availability in the marketolace. Pressure cooker factories in Birgani, Butwal and

Biratnagar have started closing down. Two factories in Birgani that used to produce 360 cookers a day and employed 70 workers have closed down. Birendra Kumar Jaiswal of United Industries says he stands to loose millions in investment

Many downstream industries that supplied raw materials to the cooker factories are also going out of business. The only place where cookers can still be sold is in Kathmandu, everywhere else there are restrictions. In the absence of pressure cookers, fuel consumption has gone up,

NEPAL IN THE FOREIGN PRESS

IAN BARTHOLOMEW epal has had a rough year with massive N flooding and an upsurge in violence by Maoist insurgents. So as the trekking season, which runs roughly from late Septem ber through to early December, opens, businesses, which rely heavily on the surge of tourist traffic during this time, face bleak prospects as cautious travellers find safer destinations

But it's an ill wind that brings no good to anyone, and for those undeterred by reports of the kingdom's seemingly endless political difficulties, it is a time when they can avoid the crowds, even along some of the most popular trekking routes. "It's an opportunity to have the mountains to yourself." said a lone Australian trekker met on the Annapurna Circuit late last month. The circuit is often disparagingly labelled "The Coca-Cola Trail" because of the

along the way. Passing through the police checkpoint outside the town of Chame late on a wet, blusterv afternoon, only three other trekkers had passed that day according to the police log

which the bored troopers were more than willing to show us. "Normally at this time (late September], we can expect up to 300 people to stay overnight in Chame," said the proprietor of the Sangetse Hotel, where our group of three were the only quests. The Maoist troubles have done little to affect the area around Annapurna, but taking

after two days of icy showers, that this only applied when the day had been sunny. fifth day of our trek, after a blustery day with inly intermittent sun, there was a general rush for the showers and smug condolences afterwards in the dining hall for those who had missed out on the very limited supplies of warm water. The camaraderie of the trail is also a large part of with them, each tourist and the guide gave Annapurna Circuit's appeal. Sitting down over



A interim government in Nepal, the Beed has been

bombarded with questions: about

the future of the Nepali economy

the festive season has perhaps

an optimist. So here's my sugges

tion: why aren't we asking what

provides, instead of looking at it

opportunities this situation

from the traditional Nepali

system is often held to be the

isn't necessary evidently that

economies only flourish under a

participatory democratic political

system. Look at Singapore and

China, or the complexity of the

Indian economy. Strong political

will can override the limitations of

any system. A political system by

If it's true that elections aren't

ossible before November 2003,

let's just put up with the interim

reparing for our future which,

overnment and get on with

ny old name is still about

povernance.

Do we really need a planning and training fund can be created by commission? Perhaps a single ministry the government to take care of government servants who are let or can take care of finance. local develop-Pension money outflow would go ment, planning, implementation and

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down, and perhaps a lot more space would be available for remaining

employees to function efficiently,

emoluments. Maybe we'll finally

urban areas close at 4PM in the

mean fewer ministers, too, A

local government, the key to

development and empowerment

reorganised and GDP must be examined in light of total revenue

and no income tax, or through

expanded economic activity that

before, but this provides a good

opportunity to pull everything together. There is an opportunity

or administrative and other

collection. Increased revenue may

come from higher land revenue taxes

erges out of conducive tax laws

The Beed has discussed all this

unicameral 125-member House

realise how weird it is that offices in

winter. Fewer parliamentarians will

should dovetail with the division of

Revenue collection needs to be

possibly through a substantial

performance-based increase in

control. Eminent Nepali scholars have and developments in general. But dealt with all these matters-Dr turned the Beed temporarily into Harka Gurung on district divisions, Madhukar Rana on the integration of ministries, Dipak Gyawali on restricting the possibilities of making politics a life-long profes sion. Nepali academia comprises perspective of failure and disaster. people who can hold their own even While an efficient democratic outside lecture halls. If the interim government recognises them, and the foundation of a good economy, it donor community can fund welladvised, if radical ideas, this phase will be worth it.

The prescriptions for the economy are clear: improve revenue. reduce costs, decentralise decisionmaking and punish the corrupt. Governance, foreign investment and a conducive business environment will follow automatically. It's vital to reduce the cost of government, and continuously monitor corruption.

One way to begin doing this is legitimising campaign finance and demanding transparency. We need at most 15 decentral ised financially autonomous regions

in the country. Parallel to this, the central government needs to be reduced drastically to 10 ministries, and departments within ministries need to be slashed. A donorsupported enterprise development

reforms. The interim government can set the stage for democratic institutions, including the political parties, to contribute better after the next elections. ♦ (Readers can post their views to

arthabeed@vahoo.com)

away, this is probably one of the best times to visit the Himalayan kingdom. town of the same name where the real people lived. The Jagat we had passed through was

largely for tourist consumption. Many of the locals we met along the trail vere there solely to cater to the needs of trekkers. A baker in Manang, who managed to produce a chocolate brownie to die for, said that apart from the trekking season, he lived in Kathmandu. Asked how far it was to Yak Kharka, the next

major stop along the trail, he shrugged. "I have never been there." he said. "Getting to Manang is quite difficult enough." Along the path of the artificial trekking world, some of nature's greatest wonders lie, sometimes distant among the clouds, sometime

pressing up against you, their massive proportions terrifying and beautiful. The high point of the trail, in every sense, is the crossing of Thorung La at 5,400 m. From Manang (3,540 m), it normally takes two days of climbing to reach the staging point at orung Phedi (4,450 m)

At this altitude, there is the danger of acute altitude sickness, which if ignored can prove fatal, and even as we clambered up a long high traverse around one of the innumerable landslides caused by this year's heavy

nonsoon rains, we met one group retreating from the Thorung Phedi suffering from severe headaches and nausea. At Manang, we had visited a lama, called

the 100 Rupee Lama, who specialised in giving blessings to those heading for the pass. This did not lessen our reliance on painkillers as we tried to settle down to sleep in the thin atmosphere. which contained only 60 percent of the oxyger

Around 20 trekkers would cross the pass the next day, but spread along the interminably rising trail, a black line of wet rock and ice cutting amidst moraine and drifts of snow, it was easy to feel completely alone the only sound your own laboured breathing, the creak of your harness and the occasional rattle of rock displaced by a heavy footfall From the pass, the long descent to

Muktinath, 1,600 m below, brings you out of the wild and back to the relative ease of the teahouse circuit. At Muktinath we stayed at the Hotel Bob Marley, which seemed too incongruous to bypass in one of the region's holiest sites on the very edge of the Tibetan plateau. Here we were invited into a Tibetan nunnery, and on the outskirts, watched the arrival of pilorims who visit the Muktinath temple complex that has structures sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists

After the high pass and the closest approach to the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas, you descend into the valley of the Kali Gandaki River, which boasts the deepest river oorge in the world and some outstanding white water rafting on its lower reaches

The Annapurna Circuit is only a small slice of the enormous diversity that Nepal has to offer. Even the presence of the Manists seem to offer more of a thrill to most tourists rather than a real threat. That the violence and political instability are very real seems readily hidden behind the offer of magnificent scenery and the sense of adventure. It's rather like the town of Jagat. The facade is more than adequate, and the harsh reality of poverty and dirt all but invisible unless you take a wrong turn. ♦



Solar-heated hot water is one of the great luxuries after a long day on the trail, but we soon realised the bus out from Kathmandu to the trailhead at Besisahar, around a seven-hour bus ride away, the interminable police and army checkpoints were a constant reminder of kinodom's political malaise. Tourists were generally treated with courtesy by the sometimes dangerously undisciplined troops and even the Manists. according to Tilak Magar, a trekking firm operator in Kathmandu, generally only request "donations" from trekkers "Last time we met

one way or the other, will eventually come to pass. Do we really need a bicameral legislative system or can we do with fewer lawmakers. Do we need the multitude of ministries and 75 districts that bloat administrative and government costs? TAIPEI IN TIMES Finding your own Nepal



innumerable cups of hot milk tea and

hearing about other people's adventures at the end of the day before turning in for an early night easily swept away the weariness o a day on the trail.

The realisation that this existence of trekking, camaraderie and sleep had an Annapurna Circuit, such dangers seem far away, increasingly tenuous connection with Nepali as trekkers hike from one comfortable teahouse to existence was brought forcefully to mind when taking a wrong turn out of the small town of been opened to tourists, the windowless insect-Jagat, where we had slept at a new, characterless

lodge whose only advantage was that it was clean, and given the competition for the small number of trekkers, ridiculously cheap at just

Rs 30 for a triple room. We had set off early, and soon found ourselves fighting for breath as we fought our Arriving early in Pisang in the company of a couple of Australians and one Frenchman on the the ridge we stopped to rest after about an hour of exhausting climbing. A young boy dressed

in rags watched us curiously, then in halting English, explained that if we were heading to Manang, a major stop three-days further up the trail, then we were going the wrong way. So where were we heading? Something.or. other vailable at sea level Jagat, he said, then added: "Dirty Jagat." A



the next. In the 20 years since the circuit has

infested mud huts with wooden bunks have

become much more amenable to urban tastes.

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Balkrishna Sama's hypothetical painting of all nine Rana prime ministers.

KUNDA DIXIT ove them or hate them, but you can't ignore them. The lenacy of Rana rule remains everywhere: from the imposing façade of Singha Darbar the presence of Ranas at the top echelons of modern Nepal's business, army and police, and the Rana family tree, which is interwoven with the present members of the Shah dynasty. All this makes for fascinating history that has been documented in research papers. academic treatises, a best-selling novel, a Nepali movie, and recent Rana nostalgia in architecture But surprisingly no one has

until now, attempted to put together a coffee table book on the history, culture, lifestyle and even cuisine of the Ranas-written by the Ranas themselves. Enter Princess Juni of the former Indian princely state of Sarela visiting Kathmandu two years ago for a Worldwide Fund for Nature conference. "She said how come there is no book on the Ranas," recalls Gautam Rana of Baber Mahal Revisted Gautam already had a well-developed interest in his clan's heritage-when he returned to Nepal after completing a management degree in Germany in 1979 he was dismayed to see Kathmandu Valley ranidly losing what old charm it still had left In 1998, he began reconstructing the stables and cowsheds of his ancestral palace to develop an upmarket shopping complex of boutiques, art galleries and restaurants called Baher Mahal Revisited. "When she said that, I thought let's do it. But where was the money?" explains Gautam. A largeformat hard cover illustrated encyclopaedia of the Ranas was going to cost a packet. Luckily, in stepped the Swiss banking group Credit Suisse, which was interested in backing the project because the proceeds from the sales were going to help the conservation of Kathmandu Valley's unique urban heritage. With Credit Suisse bankrolling the printing in Europe. Gautam raised money from other illustrious Ranas who were going to be co-authors: Prabhakar Rana of the Soaltee Group and RPP politician, Pashupati Rana. *Pretty soon, I realised I may have bitten off more than I could chew," admits Gautam, who hired help for the editing design and

photography from India's APCA

group, but was himself responsible for the research and coordinating the contents. The result is a well crafted work that is like a time capsule taking readers back to the extravagance, intrigue, hopes and achievements of those 104 years. The authors have tried not to gloss over the raw ambition, greed and, yes, lust that drove the power struggles in the extended Rana clan. But the overall impression is still a somewhat sanitised retrospective of those years. Even the decadence comes across as photogenic. Gautam isn't defensive about that he says: "Some Ranas of my generation feel very apolo-

guilty about. We have an eclectic and cultured past, and that should inspire us to help build the country today and conserve our heritage." Despite being an "inside story" by members of the clan vilified in post-1950 history books, the history chapters in The Ranas of Nepal are an objective and credible assessment of the period. Coauthor Prabhakar Rana, greatgrandson of Joodha Shumshere. actually lived in Singha Darbar until the age of 11. Pashupati Rana, grandson of the last Rana nrimeminister Mohun Shumshere, was present as a boy of

Gyanendra in 1950. Both have contributed chapters on history architecture, and lifestyle. Besides the research. Gautam helped track down rare photos, paintings and artefacts from private collections and also wrote the chapter on Rana iewellery The book's lavish visuals with early sepia photographs, period portraits from private collections bring this history alive. The illustrations are intelligently grafted into the text (edited by Brinda Datta and Dubby Bhagat), as are the contemporary photographs by Indian photojournalist Prashant Panijar



For further details and tissues contact, 6 Kadambini Enterprises (PvI.) Ltd. Event Monogement Group. Tel: 250 976



beginning: with the royal rivalries Bhandarkhal. He sends the queen among the Rajput rulers of and king into exile, installs the Udaipur that drove one particular crown prince on the throne and family of courtiers to the makes himself prime minister. Himalaya, all the way up in Jumla. Thus, at age 29, Jung Bahadur From there they migrated eastward Kunwar launches the Rana century to Kaski and on to Gorkha. The

Kunwars helped King Prithvi Narayan in his conquests, and Bal Narsingh Kunwar was made governor of Jumla. But in the numes that followed the downfall of Bhimsen Thapa in 1840, Bal Narsingh's son Jung Bahadur emerged as a master manipulator who, through sheer charisma, craftiness and courage wormed his way upwards taking full advantage of the savage power struggles among the descendants of Prithvi Naravan Shah and their consorts Jung Bahadur is at the centre of this swirling tale of backstabbing, intrigue, conspiracies, alliances finding himself right in the middle of vicious infighting between a powerful queen and her paramour, the king, and the crown prince. At gunpoint, Jung is forced to shoot his own uncle, the prime minister, and is then caught up in



in 1845. He was also the first subcontinental roval to visit Britain and France, driven by a desire to bypass the obstructive diktats of Calcutta by dealing directly with London. Once there he received roval treatment. One gets the feeling reading these tales of massacres, assassinations and chronic infighting that contemporary Nepali rulers are just following in the footsteps of their ancestors-maybe they are

hardwired to be divisive and selfish. A paragraph from the book, describing the conspiracies of the royal court could very well have been written about today's Nepal: "He (Jung Bahadur) brought order to a Nepal on the brink of anarchy. Nobody can condone the means he used to achieve this end. However, it begs the question: could it have been achieved by any other means?" It was perhaps inevitable that when Jung died during a hunting trip in Chitwan in 1877, his brothers immediately started squabbling for power. Jung's brother. Dhir, installed lung's son Rana Udip Singh as successor

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SURYA

while he manoeuvred to take over. Suspecting a plot, he beheaded two dozen courtiers and managed to carve out a place for himself and his 17 sons in the succession. The clan was thus effectively split between the Juna Ranas and the Shumshere Ranas By 1885, matters reached a head again and Dhir had his six sons kill their uncle, Rana Udip Singh and remove all the descendants of lung Bahadur's other brothers from succession

Rana power transitions were messy affairs, and watching all this from the background was the British regent at Lazimpat. We see how British India tried to influence events in Kathmandu and this has familiar echoes today. When Bir Shumshere sidelined Jagat Jung and exiled him to India, the British refused for five months to recognise Bir as leader. And when lagat lung began preparations to overthrow Bir Shumshere from Indian soil, the British arrested him while he was planning to march into Nenal with his armed followers Sound familiar? Bir Shumshere built Nepal's

first hospital as well as the Darbar School, for which imported teachers from England. He was succeeded by the flashy Dev Shumshere who in turn wa replaced by the shrewd and astute Chandra Shumshere, whose 37year reign was marked by uncharacteristic stability and development. He established Nenal's first college streamlined administration, built suspension bridges all over the country. installed Nepal's first hydropower plant in 1911 (from domestic coffers without foreign aid) and named the light powered by electricity generated by it after himself ("Chandra jyoti"). He sent architects to Europe and horticulturists to Japan for training. He also built a 1,400room palace for himself, which ended up being a contribution to the nation—it is now Singha Darbar. On the diplomatic front. Chandra Shumshere managed to convince the British to officially arree to Nenal's independent status and not them to put it in writing in the 1923 Anglo-Nepal Treaty of Friendship Chandra was succeeded by Rhim Shumshere, Joodha



Shumshere, Padma Shumshere jewellery traces the history of the and finally. Mohun Shumshere, Rana crown and how it evolved But time was running out, the and bulged with gems and end of Empire was near. Although diamonds in 104 years (only to be they tried to modernise Nenal sold to a Parisian jeweller in the with industrialisation, banking, mid 1950s). An error creeps in here-the bird of paradise plume is railways, urban water supply, and even a liberal constitution, it was wrongly identified as coming from too little too late. Mohun New Zealand; it is actually native Shumshere had to deal with to Panua New Guinea, Many of newly-independent India and these gems, precious stones and grapple with democracy-minded ornaments were brought into Nepalis whose demands sounded Nepal by Indian royalty fleeing uncannily similar to today's Mughal invasions. Other jewellery discourse: set up a constituent came from the Lucknow loot assembly and form an interim during the mutiny, of which the soldiers and officers got to keep The book also delves into the gold and silver while iewellery other massacres: that of tigers. went to the royal coffers. rhinos and other wildlife in There's more: Rana cuisine. hunting expeditions in honour of Rana lifestyle, Rana fashion, Rana visiting British royalty. There is a art, and short biographies of some dramatic picture of Joodha prominent living Ranas. The book Shumshere posing in front of pelts also has a useful abridged family of a hundred or so tigers. Good tree of most Ranas from Jung thing many Ranas have now Bahadur's father to Siddhartha moved away from hunting Rana, Prabhakar's son, so readers towards nature conservation can navigate through the book's The rest of the book looks at confusing genealogy, and Rana architecture, and mentions untangle the complex web of unsung Nepali engineers like Rana intermarriages with the Kishore Narsing and the legen-Shah dynasty. This hefty book with a hefty dary logial Sthapit, known more popularly as "Bhajuman" price tag will be available at Everest Book Shop, Baber Mahal However incongruous the wedding cake Rana palaces may Revisited from mid-November have looked when they were Proceeds of the sales will go to the built, the authors argue that the palaces "seem to have achieved

Kathmandu Valley Conservation Trust, which has renovated numerous temples, sattals and bahals in Kathmandu Valley The Ranas of Nepal by Prabhakar SJB Rana, Pashupati SJB Rana, Gautam SIR Rana First edition

Naef. Kister S.S. Editeur, Geneva

2002, 262 pp.

balconies The chapter on Rana

their own particular balance with

the environment" with their use

and the incorporation of Nepali

of local construction material

features such as courtyards,

verandahs, and south-facing

aovernment.





that we have come to expect of our

explosions happened early Saturday

morning, and only inched on to the

news in the US. Initial stories on the

recounting of what happened without

extensive analysis. By the end of the

weekend, the focus shifted to broader

considerations of its effect elsewhere in

the world, as it should have, but failed

to flesh out the story. The blast

pages of US Sunday newspapers,

received terse mention on the inside

bursting onto their front pages only

on Monday. In the meantime, stories

of the sniper shootings filled the news

hole, following what journalists call

"firefighting" or "parachute journal

broadcast news focused on a tight

pay too much attention? The

Even after the lessons of 11 September, the US media bungled the Bali blast.



violence, terror and atrocity. Over the past few months, warning signs proliferated: a colour-code alert was pushed up in September because of an expected rise in terrorism in Southeast Asia, seven different explosions rocked the region over the past three weeks, a heightened alert was in place at the US embassy in Jakarta a month ago, and several US embassies in Southeast Asia were closed Even after the explosions, the slight lag time between coverage of the blasts themselves and their contextualisation suggested a tempo-

lexico's machismo ma

ism". In the US. Bali just wasn't rary, if fleeting, lapse of judgement on important enough to lead the news the part of journalists who could and should have provided an immediate lournalism had not addressed Bali before last weekend's blast, context for the bombing. By Monday, curious given the post-11 September the skies over Bali darkened with

onica rummages frantically in her bag as we dine at a Mexico City

restaurant. She pulls out her cell phone and checks for messages.

becomes upset if he calls and I don't answer. He likes to know where I am " "You

As Monica explains sheepishly that Esteban is actually open-minded, it dawns

"Anything wrong?" Lask. "No," she smilles, "just my husband. He

on me that I've been hearing a lot of similar stories from female friends and

patients. The cell phone has become a new way for men to keep tabs on their

wives, calling them and pressuring them to come home as soon as possible.

university enrolment is evenly split between the sexes, and the average wage

comparable to that of industrialised nations. Women are increasingly aware of

Machismo has also mutated. It now relies more on psychological coercion and

control than on discrimination or physical constraints. In a sense, machismo has

In Mexico, women's time is not their own. When they go out, spend money, see

friends, they are still expected to render accounts. Fathers, brothers, boyfriends

and husbands feel entitled to a detailed explanation of their everyday activities-

but refuse to be questioned about their own. These double standards form a pillar

Women may be considered equal in many areas, but men remain more equal.

differential, whereby women earn about 70 percent of what men make, is

their rights, demanding equal treatment in the workplace and in politics.

gone underground. Deeply buried within our daily customs, it is all but

invisible-but ever present-among the educated classes.

Machismo might be out of fashion in today's Mexico, but control is definitely in

You rarely hear of men not allowing their wives to study, work, or go out

during the day. Almost 40 percent of working-age women hold jobs, school and

mean he likes to keep track of you," I say, and she laughs.

journalism's parachutes. A statement call for a "different kind of coverage" of



major international tourist destination and a Hindu island alongside the world's most populous Muslim nation-became the newest repositor

of the world's horror, with one tourist quoted as saying, "If Bali is no longe safe, there's no place that's safe.' By Tuesday the blasts were codified as "the beginning of a new campaign*, and the media ran stories about the impact of the attacks on

No parachutes

America. The high Australian death toll prompted CNN to label the event "Australia's Sept. 11", urging comparisons of a pre-blast context that had not sufficiently been made before the hombs exploded There is a limit to how much w

can expect of our journalists. But there are lessons to be learned about iournalism that require a different node of treatment than simple parachute entry and exit. These lessons call for different kinds of journalistic

by BARBIE ZELIZER

by President George W Bush and engagement with public events. Stories other officials positioned the Bali about warmongering against Iraq, waffling over whether Osama bin attacks as part of a so-called resurgence of al-Oaeda activities. That linkage brought with it a torrent of stories-all of which helped position the blasts against some larger context: Within hours, they were linked backward to the recent explosion aboard a French tanker in Yemen and attacks on American soldiers in Kuwait, and fast forwarded to next week's potential targeting of oil and gas installations in Indonesia 9/11. (New York Newsday)

Only after the White House connected the dots did the mainstream (Barbie Zelizerteaches LIS media report that al. Qaeda functionaries were said to be entrench ing in Indonesia, and tapes bearing book Journalism After threatening messages against the west September 11.) reemerged. Bali-long seen as both a

Laden is dead and the eradication of al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan deserve to be part, but not all, of what we know about the world. In a post-11 September era, it remains curious that the news we get and don't get often has less to do with Indonesia, Australia or Southeast Asia than with ourselves. And in that respect, too, little has changed since

communications at the University of Pennsylvania and co-edited the

UNdemocratic

NEVA - The United Nations and the principal multilateral institutions require profound reforms if they want to repair their imperfections, including their lack of democracy, says a group of nternational experts.

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ASIA

Without reform of the existing institutions and the creation of new ones "it is difficult to see how the international community can face the challenges of the first part of the 21st century," said Indian economist Deepak Nayyar, editor of the book Governing Globalisation: Issues and Institutions, a series of essays on the future of the multilateral system. The study proposes changes, in some cases radical reforms of the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO. The initiative is based on the conception that the changes in the world, particularly during the last decade, have eroded the UN's legitimacy, effectiveness and credibility. The book, which is the result of research conducted at the hehest of the United Nations University-WIDER Institute, states that as far as maintaining world peace-one of the UN's principal mandatesthe institution failed to meet the challenge of the 1990s. The authors say that the UN's moral authority has been "seriously undermined" by the fact that the forum's laws or principles are selectively enforced. ailored to "the interests of the rich and the powerful". (IPS)

Again, rights vs 'security' CANBERRA - In the wake of the bombing in Bali, Australian Prime Minister John Howard has alarmed human rights and opposition groups by announcing that he expects a review of anti-terrorism laws to be completed by early next week. Government sources have revealed that the Howard administration's priorities now include legislation that gives a designated government minister the power to unilaterally ban nisations deemed to be associated with terrorism. Constitutional lawyers and human rights groups are worried about the prospect of the further erosion of democratic rights in the name of 'anti-terrorism' legislation. Last Tuesday, special minister of state Eric Abetz reintroduced the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill into the Senate after it had been rred earlier in the year due to widespread opposition, including within the government's own ranks.

The provisions of the bill propose to allow life sentences to be posed on those directly or indirectly involved with "terrorist" organisations and allow "suspects" to be held without charge, incommunicado, and without access to a lawyer for potentially extended periods. A parliamentary committee of inquiry into the ASIO legislation dominated by government representatives-reported in June that the bill would "undermine key legal rights and erode the civil liberties that make Australia a leading democracy".

"Howard is being somewhat opportunistic in using this tragedy to try and revisit some of the worst aspects of the anti-terrorism legislation the Australian public clearly said 'no' to over the last year," said Damien Lawson, spokesman for the Federation of Community Legal Centres. "The nature of the threat that the Bali attacks have underscored will not be addressed by the sort of changes they are proposing. What needs to be addressed is the political and social underpinnings of the conflict in Indonesia and conflict globally and look at why there is so much support for radical Islamist organisations," he added, (JPS)

"I'll go'

PRAGUE - The IMF is ready to start a dialogue with the World Social Forum at its third conference in Porto Alegre in Brazil early next year, deputy managing director of the IMF Eduardo Aninat said Sunday. "If invited to Porto Alegre and given space to be heard, I'll go,"

Aninat said at the end of a two-day conference in Prague on lobalisation and development. The conference was organised joint by Forum 2000, the foundation led by Czech President Vaclav Havel and the Nippon Foundation. Delegates agreed on the creation of an independent international body that would undertake to arbitrate on debt issues, reduction of agricultural subsidies in the US, Europe and Japan, and on making trade rules transparent and fair. Apart from this the conference ended with the expected variety of harsh disagreements, with the IMF, the World Bank and business representatives on one side and civil society activists and scholars on the other in discussions on external debt, double standards in trade and finance uneven flow of information between North and South, and the social and environmental responsibility of corporations. Nobody claimed that corporations or the system of international trade and finance were playing fair with the developing world. But differences became apparent on where responsibilities lie and what needs to be done. (IPS)

Schizophrenic" UN

NEVA - The UN demonstrates a tendency towards "schizophrenia" in its approaches to agricultural reform and fighting world hunger, says Swiss academic Jean Ziegler, the global forum's special rapporteur on the right to food. Programmes aimed at agrarian reform, after more than two decades in near-oblivion, returned to the international community's agenda through the commitments made in the declaration signed in Rome at the 1996 World Food Summit. But the final declaration of the second summit on food, which took place this June, again in Rome, omitted the issue, even though two UN agencies back agrarian reform models as a means to improve food security: the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organi sation (FAO). In contrast, the World Bank promotes different models of agrarian reform, which place priority on the market and follow the rend set by what is known as the "Washington Consensus", said number of the UN's member states are, in practice, against the right to food, said Ziegler, commenting that they believe the market is the only power that should establish food prices. (JPS)



BANGKOK - If investigators confirm attack killed at least 182 people and the charges by the US and Indonesian injured more than 300 people governments that 12 October's Muslim lawyers have chided the carnage in Bali was the work of country's defence minister for blaming the al-Qaeda network for the attack Muslim militants, the 'Islam encourages violence' debate sparked by without citing evidence. The leader of the 11 September attacks is sure to Indonesia's largest Muslim organisaintensify and put pressure on tion, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), also moderate Muslims Sensing this cautioned against pointing figners at Islam for encouraging such acts of possibility, some of the leading voices championing moderate Islam in terror. "It (the Bali bombing) was an south-east Asia have been quick to act against humanity and no religion speak up and raise issues about can justify it. The authorities must these acts of terror and separating solve the case and bring the perpetrathem from Islam tors to justice, but must do so Condemning the car bomb attack according to facts, not analysis, Hasyim Muzadi of NU was quoted in Bali, Malavsian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said that terrorist as having said. attacks were "not a good way to fight Among those who have raged for any cause, as it was not planned for against Islam in the 'Islam encourages ultimate victory but to exact revence violence' or 'Islam equals terrorism' and retaliation," reported the Englishlanguage daily The Star. In Indonesia, where officials in

debate have seen people such as US television evangelist Jerry Falwell and Franklin Graham link Islam with the Bali are intensively questioning two forces of darkness". Falwell has said Indonesians in connection with the that the followers of the Prophet



ISLAMABAD - Over a year after the 'regime change' in Afghanistan, the nation building keenly undertaken there by the United States seems bogged down as new priorities take precedence over present policy.

The October election results in Pakistan complicate the American administration's Afghan strategy, given US concerns over the triumph of Islamist parties in two provinces bordering Afghanistan. These parties had campaigned against the LIS hombing of Afghanistan and onnose any American troop presence inside Pakistan. Other developments, like the upcoming American military action against Irag and unfulfilled promises of massive, much-needed foreign aid, could

complicate an already difficult situation inside Afohanistan The US-led 'war on terror' is already in a stalemate, given that Osama bin Laden, his chief lieutenant Dr Avman al Zawahiri who recently sent an audiotaned message of defiance to Qatar-based AI Jazeerah television, and former Taleban supremo. Mullah Omar, remain at large. In a 14 October interview. Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Dr Abdullah Abdullah expressed concern that "in the event of any attack on Iraq, the terrorists will try to destabilise Afghanistan". He did not mention the probable backlash among Afghanistan's Muslims. Last week. General Tommy Franks. head of the US Central Command, visited Pakistan and Afghanistan and made public statements to assur

Afghanistan on both counts, Addressing American troops at Bagram base outside Kabul, Franks said: "Any conflict in Iraq will not affect our mission in Afrihanistan " But irrespective of Frank's comments, the stated US mission in Afghanistan is vet to be accomplished. US Presiden George W Bush had wanted bin Laden 'dead or alive', and the money pledged to Afghanistan is simply not for the oming. A long-term US commitment, deemed crucial to stability in Afghanistan, is competing with Washington's obsession with Iraq, and possibly also North Korea. Officially, the State Department welcomed this month's elections in Pakistan. But Washington's officially unstated concerns were voiced by the conservative Washington Times newspaper, which is close to the Bush administration. Its 21 October editorial said: "The power that fundamental ists have gained in the election is without precedent in Pakistan, and will probably affect US efforts to ferret out al-Qaeda terrorists along the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

However, the main problem in Afghanistan is not any potential political fallout from the Pakistani polls but the fact



Blast fallout

by MARWAAN MACAN-MARKAR

At the same time, statements from

helping create space for moderates. For

instance the line of argument used by

Muslim cleric that intelligence officials

that Islam encourages violence. Baasyir

Abu Bakar Baasyir, an Indonesian

in the region have linked to planned

attacks, will not help deflect charges

told journalists at a press conference

that the Bali attack was the work of

States", to give the impression that

Islamic extremists are present in

for the attack, he added

foreigners, "most probably the United

Indonesia. The authorities will look to

accuse Muslims—including himself—

Arah News Abdul Oader Tash says a

hostile approach, which "presents

Islam as aggressive and antagonistic

towards the west." is not the way to do

"Our efforts will be wasted," he writes,

if Islam is seen as trying to destroy the

west and "build an Islamic civilisation

on its ruins". In the wake of attacks

like the Rali blasts south-east Asia's

convincing many that Islam does not

community and launching a debate

about what has gone wrong with the

way some Muslims interpret their

DUITDOSES. . (IPS)

The focus on Irag and Pakistan is drawing

attention away from Afghanistan's needs.

that the situation in the country has not stabilised nearly a year after the Taleban's

exit in November last year. American forces continue to be under attack, mostly through hit-and-run snipers or rockets, forcing, for example, the closure of Kabu

Testifying before the LIS Congress last week. CIA Director George Tenet

rehuild Afnhanistan

Afghanistan

Afnhanistan 🌢 (Ips

warned that the "al-Qaeda is reconstituting, the level of threat is

faith and use the religion for political

by MUSHAHID HUSSAIN

encourage violence, by looking into the

Muslims face the challenge of

In a commentary in last Tuesday's

some religious leaders accused of

holding extremist views are not

Time to talk

The Indonesia attacks have finally

Mohammad are "bent on destroying

the US media reported that some neo-

conservative writers and thinkers close

conservative strand of Islam it practises

that traces its roots to the 18th century,

to the administration of President

George W Bush were turning the

pressure on Saudi Arabia for the

Wahabism. They implied that

highlighted by the fact that the

Wahahism has an anti-LLIS streak

majority of the hijackers in the US

Wahabis, whose idea of an ideal

Islamic state was the Taleban's

Afnhanistan

attacks-and Osama bin Laden-were

But Muslim moderates in South-

east Asia have been at pains since 11

Islam of encouraging violence, by

faith as evidence that it is not so.

Sentember to counter those who accuse

offering the region's tolerant face of the

Indonesia, in fact, has been held up as

a prime example of Islam's moderate

face. It is the largest Muslim country

in the world, with 170.3 million out

of its 220 million people adherents of Islam. The Nahdlatul Ulama, with a

membership of 40 million Muslims,

take a moderate path. Yet in the eves of

many, this image has suffered due to

encourages the country's faithful to

the Bali blast, and will place this

region's Muslims in a further

airport to UN planes last week

predicament if investigators link

militant Muslims to the bloodshed.

all non-Muslims". In early August

pushed moderate Muslims to speak up.

JAKARTA – Many Indonesians are asking how the nation will cope with the economic fallout from the 12 October bomb blast in Bali, the hub of Indonesia's tourism industry, which last year attracted 1.35 million foreigners. Economists say confidence has been shaken in the short term, but some remain optimistic that despite initial reactions from the stock market and a decline in the value of the Indonesian currency, these trends should be temporary. A key gauge of international sentiment on Indonesia's economy will be a meeting in Yogjakarta of Indonesia's donors on 28-29 October. Hotel bookings continue to be cancelled, and one hotel in Bali

has already received 400 to 450 room cancellations since the blast killed nearly 200 people. "If there are no extraordinary measures to restore international confidence, tourism businesses here will totally collapse," said the governor of Bali, Edi Bharata. (IPS)

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ourton: Bachelors The course overs the principles of the tourism industry including Degree is Travel and cognitality and international

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invisions Board (LCCEB) is one of the larged dars of flactional Vocational Courses (HVQs) in the W aik over 200 years' experience of providing vocations around the world. The Certific stan and Di by the Board provide internationally retri-de of attainment which are held in high rep bodies. employers.

"Bile Audo Revisite and Bushine





.......

little about babies: women know little about chequebooks-because they aren't requires. Far from creating a healthy complementarity between the sexes, it perpetuates dependence on both sides and creates widespread inefficiency.

Part of the problem is the deep-seated assumption that women are meant to attend to men's needs. From the moment of their birth, men are surrounded by the constant care of women. Mothers aunts grandmothers sisters and later allow women to no out and work, and ensure that men continue to be namnered like oriental potentates, never lifting a finger in the home. Where wives and daughters now refuse to drop everything to prepare lunch for the man of the house, the maid takes up the slack

sphere. Pampered Mexican boys grow into men accustomed to being obeyed instantly, who feel entitled to special attention, refuse to penotiate with those whom they consider inferior, and reject any form of criticism. The men who dominate public life often fit this mould: they are demanding, impatient, intolerant, and self-centred. There is an inescapable contradiction between machismo and our supposed transition to democracy. As Monica sums it up with mock exasperation after our lunch, twice interrupted by her husband, "This machismo business doesn't make sense any more. How can we continue to be governed by men who have never set foot in a supermarket?"

(Project Syndicate)

of the recent bestseller El machismo invisible.)

reinforce profoundly traditional practices.

of today's machismo. Of course, it is far more evident in the privacy of the home chop vegetables, or clean the oven or toilet, because these tasks are considered unmanly This division of labour in all areas of life means that men and women remain surprisingly inept at certain tasks. We see educated men who don't know how to make a cup of coffee, and professional women who can't change a fuse. Men know

(Marina Castañeda is a nsvchotheranist in Mexico City and author

Mexican men use modern technology to

than in the workplace or in public. Surveys show that men are willing to belp out at home occasionally, but within rigidly defined parameters-they refuse to iron, sew. supposed to. Machismo creates people with only half the skills that modern life

girlfriends, wives, and daughters are expected to fulfil-even anticipate-a man's very desire. Mothers tell little girls to "attend" their brothers, while little boys are instructed to "watch over" their sisters. This non-stop pampering is aggravated by female domestic servants, from the high society governess to the part-time maid of a middle-class family. Servants are a bulwark of Mexican machismo. Though they

The implications of these attitudes and behaviours go beyond the domestic

Ziegler, Half of the UN system, the World Bank, the IMF and a large

"The government is answerable to whoever formed it."

Excerpts from an interview with Minister for Women and Social Welfare Gore Bahadur Khapangi in Nepal Samacharpatra, 20 October dates and when the

Although the constitution outlines the work, the duties and the rights of the council of ministers, the king has issued a five-point list of responsibilities. Donit you think this implies that the council does not exercise executive powers?

After he formed a new council of ministers, the king was responsible for issuing guidelines to it. He holds executive powers, but I don't think it is accurate to say that things have been done in a dictatorial fashion. If the five points were bad. then one could point that out. Those who want to oppose things will say anything. I heard someone saying on the FM that the ministers were in a hurry to get media coverage. Is the media distinct from the government and the people? People talk as they please

Would this present government have the right to sign any treaty or agreement?

Everyone knows that foreign affairs are looked after by the Foreign Ministry, which is part of the government. So it can easily do so. The subject falls within the five points. There's poquestion of the government not exercising that right.

What is the stand of this government on resolving the Maoist problem?

To put it briefly, the government and the Maoists have to talk. First, the government has to prepare guidelines (for talks), something the last government was unable to do. The government has to look for a strong mediator, it has to ask civil society for help. Everyone wants peace.

I feel that the individual also has a big role. For instance, let's ask whether the government would look at me and at yesterday's [former minister for Housing and Physical Planning] Chiranjbi Wagle differently. This will definitely make a difference. I'rn sure the Maoists will talk to a government which includes Gore Bahadur Khapangi on a different level—they will have to. Because Chiranjibi and Gore Bahadur came into government from different places.

Another thing: we needn't worry if the Maoists continue fighting. That's a given process and will not affect talks. Once the talks begin, the fighting will decrease. Tomorrow, when we sit down for talks, whether their ideas influence us, or our thoughts influence them, we will arrive at a solution. If we only talk about weapons, the peace process will be delayed. When you cut a tree, do the leaves, the branches and the roots dry up all at once? It may take a year for the branches to dry

Thereis a price on the heads of the Maoist leaders. Will the government retract that before it calls for talks?

The government remains the government. Only the leadership has changed. Our Rastriya Janamukti Party never recognised the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) as 'terrorists' Being a representative of the party, can I accept such a definition? There's no question of my stepping beyond the boundaries set by my party. I will put forward my ideas while I am in the government. If the definition of terrorists given by the former government will make it difficult to have talks, then we must think again. The Maoist party went silent after three efforts at talks. That's the direction our thoughts must take.

If the present governmentowhich, according to you, exercises executive powersoagrees with the Maoists to form a Constituent Assembly, will it be able to agree to a plebiscite without consulting the king?

I am not a student of constitutional law. I know that this government is not elected by the people, and that there is no parliament at present. The government is answerable to whoever has formed it. The government will consult with whoever formed it. But if you feel that something is 100 percent right, there's no need to make queries.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The Maoist policy is this: not to allow the UML to form a majority government: not to allow the formation of a communist government; to prevent the formation of a UML government in the name of their "great" revolutionary; to prevent the formation of a government that works for the people and towards progressive reforms. As a result, the main achievement of the Maoist revolution has been to hand over the people's sovereignty to the palace.

— KP Sharma Oli, standing committee member, CPN (UML) in Sanahu, 21 October.



Himal Khabarpatrika, 2 October-1 November

Mined land December 2001, 71 districts were affected. Of the seven SAARC nations Himalaya Times, 20 October only Bangladesh and Maldives have signed the Ottawa Convention which हिसालरा दाइर स prohibits the manufacture, use and

There has been a marked increase in the use of landmines in Nepal since transport of landmines targeting humans. A total of 135 nations have the Maoist insurgency began in Nepal. A recent report by the Campaign endorsed the convention. Against Landmines, Nepal says that the use of landmines targeting humans has doubled in recent years. In 2001, Not my fault Himalaya Times, 22 October 210 people were injured and 214 died in 424 incidents of landmine

explosions. In 2000, 84 were injured Former prime minister Sher Bahadur and 94 died. In 1999, 94 were Deuba recently disclosed that his: we are injured and 40 died, while in 1998. unprecedented action to dissolve parliament five months ago was due to 34 people were injured and 20 people killed in explosions palace pressure The people most affected.

especially since the peace talks fell apart nd the use of landmines started increasing have been innocent children, students and farmers. The government maintains that the Maoists ve been making landmines at home after acquiring equipment, detonators, ves and weapons from the People's War Group and the Manist Communist Centre, both in India.

In 2002 February, two children Surva Bahadur Thapa, leader of the died and six people were injured when Rastriva Praiatantra Party, asked Deuba landmines laid by police in Achham why he dissolved parliament, the went off. Another person was injured former prime minister replied that he in Rukum when a landmine laid by hadn't done so of his own volition. army personnel went off. The Deuba expressed sorrow over the roval government continues to deny the use of landmines by security forces, but the king to postpone elections. Purna Shova Chitrakar, coordinator

of the campaign against landmines assume executive powers was antisays it is highly probable that the democratic and undermined the security forces lay landmines around their camps. A landmine costs between Rs 25

to Rs 800 to make, and treatment of a person injured by one. Rs 10.000 to Rs 200,000. In the last two years, the Birendra Army Hospital has asked for Rs 9.3 million to treat people injured hy landmines. The government has so far allocated Rs 3.4 million.

A report released by the government records 2.456 incidents of landmine explosions between February 1996 and June 2000, which have killed 1.366 people. The use of landmines, which began in Rolpa, has spread to 37 districts by 2000. By

Weighing risks

Former prime minister and

president of the Nepali Congress

(Democratic) Deuba had invited

leaders of various political parties to a

luncheon at his residence on Monday.

The gathering turned into an all-party

meet where various political issues were

discussed. When KP Sharma Oli asked

Deuba whose pressure he had given in

to the former prime minister indicated

that he was forced by the palace. When

declaration that followed his request to

He said the kind's decision to

Excepts from analysis by Kapil Kafle, Nepal Samacharpatra

The main parliamentary parties are raising a hue and cry that "the king has made a mistake". But if the king can pull a rabbit out of the hat and resolve the Maoist crisis, this will silence the critics who have refused to help him.

Leaders like Girija Prasad Koirala, and countries such as India, where he has his second home, have not lent support to the Lokendra Bahadur Chand government. Knowingly or unknowingly, Koirala is helping those foreign entities who do not desire peace and stability in Nepal. The Indian papers are also writing editorials helping Koirala. And although Sher Bahadur Deuba may have physically split from the party, ideologically, he is still parroting Koirala's unhelpful line. And the Macists attach more importance to the power of the king than that of the political parties. It is

unlikely they will say: "We will stick with brothers Koirala and Deuba." It is not inconceivable that the Maoists who are a fighting a war against the Royal Nepal Army will begin negotiations with the Chand government, which was formed by the army's Supreme Commander.

The political leaders may be crying themselves hoarse calling the new government "unconstitutional", but the people aren't descending on to the streets. That is because of the commitment in the royal address to constitutional monarchy and multiparty democracy. It is also because press freedom and the freedom to protest are intact, in fact the press is now even freer because it can be critical of the king. The media has even stopped tagging "terrorist" every time it mentions the word, Maoist. The stock of political parties will

plummet further when the king figures out what it is that can bring the rebels to the negotiating table. It will be the king, with or without the support of the political parties. who will have to take this risky step. We know that the Maoists are not stupid, they will not talk unless they get something. It looks like the king will have to start thinking about a constituent assembly. Perhaps the next general elections

can also serve as an election for the constituent assembly. And as soon as that

happens and the king can announce a date for such elections, the rug will have been pulled out from under Koirala and Company and their reliance on Article 128 25-31 OCTOBER 2002 NEPALL TIMES

victory of the People's Movement of 1990. According to a leader present at the meeting, Deuba urged the seven parties represented there to unite against the king's decision, which he said undermined the agreement of the seven parties to ostnone elections

Deuba remained quiet when KE Sharma Oli asked why he didn't call an all-party meeting as soon as he got an indication that the king was to lieve him of office. He was also silent when Oli asked him why he had asked the king to postpone elections by a year when an all-party meeting had agreed to postpone the elections for six months. When Deuba asked the party leaders to release a joint statement against the king's undemocratic act in removin the prime minister. Sadbhavana Party leader Hriyadesh Tripathi, lanamorcha Nepal leader Ghanashyarn Sharma, and Nepal Majdoor Kisaan Party leader Narayan Man Bijukchhe all refused Janamorcha Nepal's secretary Sharma said the only way to safeguard the victory of 1990 was to hold elections for a constituent assembly to bring

जेपाल संस्थित गर

ew deputy prime minist

democratic path

the photograph was taken against her will. Karki's is the face of a victim-ised woman pleading, unmistakably, for some decency from her victimiser. This was a decency that Jana Aastha's editor, Kishore Shrestha, did not extend to her. the king and the Magists on a Shrestha's decision to run the photograph has reared ugly allega tions about the sordid underworld of journalism. Film artists claim that Shrestha had been using the photograph to extort the actress. According to them, the picture was taken a year and a half ago by a

SOCIETY

COMMENT

Nepali heroine?"

he front page of the 9 October issue of Jana Aastha, a left-

leaning vernacular weekly, carried a story headlined: A COLOURFUL EVENING IN FILM CITY. Written by Bishwamani

Subedi and Yadavprasad Pandey, it concerned the alleged prostitution,

sexual escapades and love affairs of those in the Nepali film industry.

through by many for its insider police and army gossip, but considered,

standards. But what was out of the ordinary, even for the sleaziest of vernaculars, was a photograph of a naked woman that accompanied

The actress in the photograph. Shrisha Karki, hung herself at her

home in Chabahil six days later in a case that shook the film industry

over Dasain. It is not hard to imagine the intense degradation the young

woman must have felt in her last days. What support would she have

vulnerability: in it, she stares up from a hunched-over position in bed,

her face contorted in fear, her body frozen in humiliation. It is obvious that

possibly received from a society obsessed with women's sexual

purity? Anyone who looks at her photograph can measure her

Sadly, this was not out of the ordinary for the paper, leafed

like many of the vernacular weeklies, to fall short of professional

the last story. Its caption sadistically read: "Do you recognise this

PUTTING THE MEDIA ON TRIAL

Film artists have formed a committee for this cause, and are als

Nepal Film Directors' Association has pressed complaints at the Nepal Press Council and the Federation of Nepalese Journalists, asking that

lobbying media organisations to hold its members accountable. The

action be taken against Shrestha. Acknowledging that Shrestha

can issue a warning, demand an apology, and work to revoke

deliberate over its response.

violated Karki's right to privacy and instigated her death, the Press Council's Chairperson Harihar Birahi has said that the Press Council

Shrestha's press identity card. The Federation has been meeting to

The office of Jana Aastha remained closed throughout the Dasain

holidays, and neither Shrestha nor the two authors of the article have

surfaced. In the meanwhile Biswamani Subedi has taken out a notice

has exposed, in the process, his own ignorance of privacy laws and journalistic ethics. The paper's assistant editor resigned after public

outcry over the incident mounted. Police at the Hanumandhoka district

Would this case have received such attention if Karki had not lost

her life for it? Most probably not. It is an open secret that most vernacu-

lar weeklies are backed by various political parties, or cliques within

Gautam clique of the CPN (UML). These patrons have never, till now.

had to question their own moral standing, and their commitment to

against this incident. There is plenty they could do to address the

videspread denigration of women in the media, and social double

typical response to Karki's death has been to blame the victim. An

example: while supporting Karki, the Centre for Human Rights and

was: "Actresses with bad morals are also polluting Nepali society."

that necks openly on the couches of Himalayan Java).

accomplished Nepali woman.

(Needless to say most activists and journalists are not of the breed

of women in the media after this incident. To return to the 9 October

issue of Jana Aastha: the only other story concerning women on the

front page was headlined: MANISHA'S LOVER IN A BRAWL. The story

reported a scuffle in the Everest Hotel's disco, where actress Manisha

Koirala's former boyfriend was supposedly ogling, while drunk, a show

of "young women in transparent clothing". In fact the former boyfriend

and his wife were having a guiet dinner elsewhere in the hotel. None

of which has anything to do with Koirala: Jana Aastha was simply

smearing her name in the mud, in a casual show of contempt for an

Such prevalent double standards pose a challenge to women's

politics or NGO projects to act on this case. After all, Shrisha Karki is

not on trial here. Nor is the film industry. Kishore Shrestha, Bishwamani

police are also on trial, to route out police complicity, if any, in this case,

The entire Nepali media faces a serious challenge at this time.

Aastha: "The press is very aware. I believe we will receive justice

stamping out corruption in the media will take serious effort. The Nepal

actively enforce more ethical standards in their member organisations

Media houses must aggressively flush out those among them who are

If such steps are taken, they may be the only meaning to be

salvaged from the death of a brutishly hounded and hunted-down

On news

stands next

week!

Press Council and the Federation of Nepalese Journalists must not only

because of the coverage the media has given this incident." But

penalise Jana Aastha in the strongest terms possible, they must

violating their profession's code of ethics.

young woman. ♦

Krishna Malla has been heartened by the media's support against Jana

rights activists, who are, let us hope, not too busy with their party

Subedi and Yadavorasad Pandev of Jana Aastha are on trial. The

And the sponsors of Jana Aastha are most definitely on trial.

Manju Thapa of Asmita has been quick to speak against the preying

Democratic Studies has also suggested that the film industry keep its activities respectable. Another response from a film industry journalist

Nepali women by backing such a substandard, anti-women rag.

them. The political patrons of Jana Aastha are said to be the Bam Dev

Strangely, despite the overt misogyny of Jana Aastha's treatment

of Karki, women's rights activists have been slow to organise dissent

standards in demanding sexual purity from women. One problematic but

office have said that the search for Shrestha is on.

claiming that Karki's suicide proved his story's allegations to be true; he



photographer and a policeman who has since retired, Uddav Bhandari, after inviting

with the help of a film director; it was their intention to blackmail her into prostitution. The actress filed a complaint immediately after the incident, but the police were slow to act on it. She went to meet the photographer, but could not retrieve the film. According to film artists. Bhandari gave the photograph to Shrestha, who used it to extort he even after her engagement. He ran the photograph in his paper after Karki refused to give in to his demands.

Krishna Malla of the Film Artists' Association says that the organisation is pursuing a variety of legal recourses. These avenues, however, are limited. The Film Artists' Association helped file a plea. with the police-while Karki was still alive-requesting that strong action be taken against Shrestha. But the maximum punishment for defamation is a Rs 5,000 fine and a sentence of two years. The public offence law against indecency carries a maximum punishment of Rs 10,000, a two-year sentence, and damages. According to public interest advocate Gopal Sivakoti Chintan, punishment for such crimes usually amounts to a fine of five or ten rupees, and limited jail time, if any. There are no laws in Nepal to punish those who instigate suicide. A bill on journalists' code of ethics, which bars the publication of photographs without permission, is stuck indefinitely in parliament. With the help of women's rights advocates Shanta Thapaliya and Sapana Pradhan Malla, Karki's family is now proceeding with murder charges against Shrestha, in a case that, according to Chintan, could set a new precedent for Nenal's murder law

In the November Himal THE HORROR OF IT ALL: CHILD DOMESTICS TRACKING THE NEXT WAVE OF SOUTH ASIAN MILITANCY • DEMOCRACY OR AMONGST US ANTI-DEMOCRACY IN NEPAL AND PAKISTAN? • AID AND ITS FFFECTS ON NEPAL • WORLD BANK AND IMF GAMES IN BANGLADESH • MENTAL AND THE HOLY SOCIAL HEALTH IN KASHMIR • SEIRA COWS AND TAMANG ON NUMAFUNG • KEEPING THE PEACE IN SRI LANKA • A VISIT TO THE 'UNHOLY' BANGLA HEARTLAND . DALITS OF INDIA PLUS MUCH MORE! To subscribe: Write to subscription@himalmedia.com or call 543-333

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by MANJUSHREE THAPA OPINION by RAJENDRA S KHADK



wo elderly people in a retirement home are discussing the food they ar served in this Woody Allen ioke. One says. "They feed us such awful tasteless food." The other agrees, and adds, "And such small portions. My extended family and clan members are exactly like that. In the days before weddings were catered, they used to conduct vigorous post-mortems of the food served. A typical post-reception dinner conversation would be as follow: Mum: "The meat dish, it was too salty and hot. And no meat chunks, just fa and gristle. Why bother inviting quests when you fear feeding them? And don't even get me started on the vegetables ... and did you notice that the socalled 'pulau' was nothing but plain rice colored with furmeric? Terrible, just terrible. Some people have no shame.

Dad: "Even so, I noticed you took three helpings. But I must say the 'laal mohan' was quite stale.

Mum (interrupting): "But its staleness didn't prevent you from devouring four of them. Don't ask me for Eno in the middle of the night...

Returning to Nepal after travels. I used to come home laden with gifts. Unfortunately, no one appreciated the presents. Younger brothers tossed out the t-shirts because they were made in China. (If I wanted a made in China t-shirt. I could buy it in Asan. Lexpected something else from Hong Kong.")

My aunts were equally rude about the saris, which were cotton

Expressions such as "French chiffon", "Japanese jaargette" and "Ranarasi silk" were tossed like Over the years, poisoned arrows at me. Even my I've learnt that beloved grandmother, who I hope has finally found peace and giving doesn't happiness, whose favorite grandchild I was, didn't spare me. "You necessarily know no one in our family ever make vou more wears anything but silk. And you come here with cheap cotton dhoti populár. for your aunts. And what kind of colour is this for me? Red! Am La young, blushing bride or what? Don't you know by now that I wear

nothing but pure white silk saris?" A blossoming, promising romance with a wealthy lass was instantly aborted when I proudly presented her with not one but six pairs of earrings (and matching necklaces), made of exotic, exquisite sea shells, that I had bought in a provincial Thai town. The guidebook informed me that buying such local craftwork sustained local artisans and their indigenous occupation. By presenting this gift, I was killing two birds with one stone-appeasing both my social consciousness and the social climber in me. Alas, it only killed the romance.

I must confess that I myself have been guilty of looking the gift horse in the mouth. At a precocious six, we had been visiting one crumbling relative after another for Dasain tika. When one uncle gave me a suka coin I was insulted and threw it away. My father slapped me and my mother asked an older relative to take me home immediately. But the others of my age thought it was cool.

Some years later, older and wiser I was at a classmate's birthday. This was in an era when perhaps one boy out of a thousand actually celebrated a fullscale, western-style birthday with candles on a cake. I had finally pried money out of my father to buy a birthday gift, which was like extracting a healthy tooth without anaesthesia: he firmly believed that receiving is better than giving and that such new-fangled, foreign practices as celebrating a birthday would soon undermine our pure culture. My gift was a box of Monaco biscuits wrapped in glossy green paper and a red ribbon stolen from my sister. However, all that stylish effort came to naught. The birthday cake was so small and my slice was so tiny that I decided not to give the present

Soon after an American official announced earlier this year that Nepal would receive \$20 million to battle our home-grown insurgents, I overheard a native deconstructionist sniff: "What! Just 20 million? From the richest nation to the poorest, only 20 million? Why don't they just give us peanuts?"

Wanted Research Assistants

A Professor and a Nepali PhD student from the University of Toronto are seeking two Research Assistants (one full-time and one part-time) for the duration of five months starting November 2002. Selected candi dates will assist in conducting research on microfinance sector.

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Application: Send C.V. and a two-page essay on "Development Challenges for Nepal" by November 8th. One supporting/creative ma terial that highlights special skills/experiences can also be included.

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ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITION AND AUCTION

- Imagine: Your photos will open my life 400 children from 45 countries, including 15 working and school-going children from Nepal display their work. Until 1 November, GTZ office, Neer Bhawan, Sanepa, 539129
- Raw Material: From the road in Asia Travel collage by Margi Scharff. Indigo Gallery. Naxal, 8AM-6PM daily, 413580

EVENTS

* The greenest patch Weekend lunches in the oldest and largest garden in Nagarkot at The Fort Resort, fort@mos.com.np. 226799

- Bodhicharyaavatara Lessons on Mahayana Buddhism, a guide to the Bodhisattava's way of life. In Nepali by Khenpo Vagindra Shila at the Akcheshore Mahavihar, Pulchowk. Saturdavs, 4PM-5PM. Free, open to all.
- Weekly dialogues on life and living and books and audiotapes at the Krishnamurti Study Center, Dhyankuti, Swoyambh. Saturdays1PM-6PM. 227704.

MUSIC

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

DRINK

- Ladies night at The Rox Bar Wednesdays, Women get a drink on the house, and after 8PM Teesta band plays. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234
- * Friday Indulgence Irish music from An Fainne, tasting with 12 Scottish single malt, Rs 999. The Piano Lounge, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999

- International Food Festival With children's activities and games for adults. Rs 50 for adults. Rs 25 for children under 4 ft. Proceeds go to the KMTNC zoo project. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 26 October 11AM-5PM 491234
- Chef special variable lunch at discounted rates at Dwarika's Hotel. 479488
- Indian Food Festival with chef Marut Sukka and until 30 October. Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999
- · Vegetarian specialties and clay oven pizza at Stupa View Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha. 480262

GETAWAYS

- Thank Goodness it's Friday Package for local residents, includes BBQ, overnight stay and breakfast. \$125 per couple, \$95 single, nett, Dwarika's Hotel. 479488
- * Trust your sixth sense Indulge the other five at The Old Inn, Bandipur, the ancient hilltop town near Dumre, Pokhara Highway. Contact Himalayan Encounters, Thamel, 417426
- Shivapuri Birdwatching, short hikes, writing, 20 minute drive, 10 minute walk from Kathmandu, two acres at 6,000 feet on the edge of the Shivapuri National Park. Rs 1,850 per person with dinner and breakfast, Rs 925 per child 5-14 years, Shivapuri Heights Cottage, info@escape2nepal.com
- The Great Godavari Getaway Special weekend packages including room with breakfast and dinner. 25 percent discount on health club facilities. Godavari Village Resort.
- Writing Retreat Full board package. Aesthetic living, innovative thinking, creative writing and nature at Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, 375280

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



Family Matters Robinton Mistry Faber and Faber, London, 2002 Rs 750

Mistry's eagerly anticipated third novel ones back to the author's vintage territory-Parsis in Mumabi, their fragmented families and tenuous communities. An old Parsi widower and patriarch is haunted by memories of the past. A broken ankle sets into motion a series of events-a great unravelling and a revelation of the family's lovelorn past-that leads to the narrative's final outcome

Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia Ahmed Rashid Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 2002 Rs 472 Rashid, who previously unravelled the Taleban regime in Afghanistan, now investigates the five Central Asian republics adjacent to Afghanistan that were part of the former Soviet Union.

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Based on groundbreaking research and numerous interviews, Jihad explains the roots of **INRO** fundamentalist rage in Central Asia, and suggests ways the threat can be neutralised through diplomatic and economic intervention

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CUI TURF

The Algebra of Infinite Justice Arundhati Roy Viking/Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 2001

R\$472 A collection of Arundhati Roy's political writings so far: The End of Imagination: The Greater Common Good; Power Politics; The Ladies Have Feelings, So; The Algebra of Infinite Justice; War is Peace. The essays are carefully researched and closely argued, and deal with big dams, India's detonation of its nuclear bomb, the downside of corporate globalisation, and the US government's 'war against terror'.

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

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12 attention, the trio were presented

enali artists are finding new outlets for their work Three young painters, Erina Tamrakar, Pramila Bajracharya and Sunila Bajracharya, are now also designing wine hottle labels Their artworks now grace bottles of Nepali-made wine of Canadian vintage. Impressed by their This is an honour for us, as well paintings at an exhibition in as a great promotional opportu-February at the NAFA Art nity," says Erina.

with a unique proposition: an exhibition at the newly-opened Kasthamandap Art Studio, which combines the aesthetic pleasures of an art gallery with sociable café culture. "The gallery was opened to help promote young artists. In the coming days we also hope to hold photography and design exhibitions," says Ellen, a partner in the studio. For Sunila and her



reach out to more people with their art, take it out of the sometimes sterile environs of highbrow galleries. "Artists sometimes think that showing their work in gallery cafés diminishes its value," says Sunila. But this kind of thing is comnonplace abroad, and we support the idea because the gallery is trying to promote the new generation of artists, enthusiasts

In addition, Erina conducts art classes for beginner's, as well as colloquia for more advanced enthusiasts. The show is on at the café

allery until 30 October, and displays 13 oil paintings, of which three are already sold. Erina's ties." works are mainly based on the everyday lives of women. Pramila displays landscapes, and Sunila focuses on semi-abstract faces. All three women studied fine arts at











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YAK & YET

Hannening at the Garden







NEPAL PASHMINA INDUSTRY



in the Valley, Kathmandu migh yet return to its historic avatar as a city of art that lives with the people, rather than remain the reserve of only th very wealthy, "It isn't as difficult to be an artist today as it used to be.

says Frina "Of

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Hogan Rufelds hought work by each of the three women. The artists assumed that their paintings would simply hang in a quiet corner of an expat residence. Imagine their surprise then when they were told that their paintings would be used to sell wine.





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he mass-murder of goats this Dasain, and their consumption, did not leave much time for our technocrats to get seriously down to the task of rebuilding the nation. But I am confident that by the

latter part of this decade they should be able to do so. Caught up in all the festivities, one important anniversary slipped by largely unnoticed. It was the 20th anniversary of the first ever use of an emoticon in an email message in 1982:

Nuclear scientist #1: Wakey, wakey you lazy #\$%&"! Orangutan :-) levels.

Nuclear scientist #2: Ha! Ha! Ha! Groovy! See what I mean? The heauty of the smiley emoticon was that you could hurl the worst insults ever invented, casting serious aspersions about your interlocutor's female ancestors, if any, and if you stuck a little smiley at the end, all would be forgiven.

The world has moved on, of course, And the primitive BBS of 20 years ago have given way to the internet, search engines, personalised sites, and chat rooms. I entered one of these chat rooms recently, and realised just how advanced the language of the internet has become as youngsters communicate with each other about matters of vital importance to the future of the world. Here is a short extract from one such chat room which is open 24 hours of every solar day: Enter LOVER BOY.

LOVER BOY: Hi guyz GEEK: I really think ratifying the Kyoto Protocol is the only way to prevent the unpredictable side-effects of climate change. GOONDA: Whadddiz? ur in wrong room, get out of

CHOR enters room. CHOR: That is like so totally uncool, man. LOVER BOY: Hi galz.

YAMRAJ enters room. YAMRAJ: Wutz kookin, guyz

LOVER BOY: asl? LOVER BOY: galz, PM me GOONDA: brb GOONDA leaves room CHOR: goonda's gone 2 loo PINKY: no, goonda gone 2 PM PINKY: mwahahahahaha LOVER BOY: hey Yamraj you guy or gal? YAMRAJ: lol GEEK: The only way to address the greenhouse effect is if America cuts carbon emissions by 5% of 1991

Under My Hat by Kunda Dixit

PINKY: ok g2g PINKY leaves room LOVER BOY: au reservoir, pinky c u later LOVER BOY: anyone still here of the female species GOONDA enters room GOONDA: am back yar YAMRAJ: ya i'm phemale LOVER BOY: lets go PM

Unfortunately, the vocabulary of our future stars is constricted by the limitations of the gwerty keyboard. We need to give expression to the vast array of emotions and hormones that flow through these chats, and here is where emoticons can play an important role. We also need to move beyond smiley to other emoticons more relevant to the times. Here is a sample:

Wild boar emerging through fog Baseball pitcher blowing bubble gum C|:3@) Mahatma Gandhi Hare Krishna devotee snoring (°, Hare Krishna devotee snorms @#\$%&(;-{ Railway porter at Howrah Station <B-{} Sher Bahadur upon learning that he just

4:-0 KP Bhattarai addressing press conference while chewing paan <[:-]== The new Minister of Women and Social

शोपा-शोपामा

विश्वास !

(:8-)

\$%g {:>=(

Welfare Ex-minister appearing at CIAA hearing Adolf Hitler on a bad hair day

B abita Lama may be small and fragile, but she moves mountains. Providing health care in her native Humla would intimidate anyone, but for Babita, it's just in a day's work. The nearest functioning hospital from Humla is on the Indian border, a two-week walk over rugged mountains. The child mortality rate here is 300-three times the national average. Babita decided very early on that she didn't want to be a famous doctor in the capital, she wanted to help the people in the village

where she was born. And it took a decade of focussed work that allowed her to fulfil her dream. When she started out with a one-room clinic in Humla's Turpa village, there was no shortage of patients; mostly

children with acute respiratory infections and gastric disorders. In 1994, she set up the Nepal Trust to manage community activities in Humla. Today, there are four Nepal Trust clinics which are run jointly with the district administration. School girls from grade eight to ten volunteer in the clinics and learn early basic health tips. But finding educated girls is difficult in Humla, so the

trust made a small compromise-in their Limi clinic, a five-day walk from Simikot, they also train school boys. "If I'd had somebody to guide

me, I would have studied public health," says this mother-of-two of her only regret. Babita is now looking forward to handing over her clinics to the volunteers she

trust's programme of expansion by a year. But she's not deterred. "All you need is a sense of purpose and commitment," she tells us, "The rest will follow." trabian ood Festiv



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