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Rocca vatra

High-profile western diplomacy in Nepal continues with the arriva late Thursday in Kathmandu of US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca. She will be here till Sunday, meet senior Nepali officials and consult US embassy staffers.

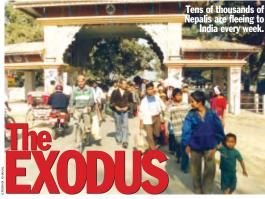
Rocca is the seniormost US official to visit Nepal after Colin Powell made a brief stopover in January. Last week, the British foreign secretary, Sir Michael Jay was in Nepal. The flurry of visits signify western worries about the current conflict in Nepal and its ramifications for regional security, officials told us. Rocca is also expected to discuss a proposed \$20 million military aid package for the

Pokhara iamboree

After its leader was nominated prime minister by the king, the centre-right Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) is going through a power struggle which will climax in Pokhara on Saturday with the election of a new party boss. Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand and veteran RPP leader Surya Bahadur Thapa are battling it out for influence. Of the three contenders, Prakash Chandra Lohani and Rabindra Nath Sharma are considered Thana lovalists. whereas Pashupati Shumsher Rana is close to Chand. Whoever wins, the RPP will keep its royalist tilt, "We can never criticise the monarch the way the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML are doing right now." Lohani told us. Thapa is a critic of the king's October Fourth move, while Chand has been trying to get his party's endorsement for his government.



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KARUNA THAPA in RUPEDIYA, INDIA hey come across the border by the thousands every day. Young, old, men and women fleeing the fighting in Nepal for safety and jobs in India. It is happening in most towns

along Nepal's 1,800 km frontier with

India, but the exodus is most visible here on the Indian side of the border from Nepalganj.

They emerge from under Nepal's welcome arch at the border, and head straight for the bus park or the railway station in Rupediya (see picture, above). From here they will travel to cities across India to friends and relatives. This is not new. Nepali hill farmers

have been migrating for decades after their harvests to find seasonal work in India. But what is different this year is the sheer volume of displaced people,

and the fact that they are not seasonal migrants-many are not going to return until Nepal returns to normal. It is obvious that added up, there is a massive humanitarian crisis brewing here.

The outflow of villagers from insurgency-hit mid-western districts has now reached a peak. Officials at the border police post at Nepalganj told us they counted more than 8,000 people passed through during the week 4-11 December, the highest weekly figure that they have ever recorded.

Those leaving Nepal range from three-month old children in the lap of mothers to 60-year-old villagers, Clad in torn jackets, dirty caps, slippers and jute sacks full of belongings, they have been travelling on foot and bus for days to reach this border. But here, their ordeal has just begun as they face an uncertain future in a foreign land.

"We left because it was getting more and more dangerous. The soldiers come and want to know about Maoists, and the Maoists come and punish us for talking to soldiers," says Tanka Shahi, 24, who has left his home village of Jamla in Jajarkot and is headed to India. He doesn't know where he is going, or what type of work he will get All he knows is that he wants to be somewhere safe.

continued \(\sum_p4-5

HEMLATA RAI

alf a million children from more than 4,000 schools in the capital are bearing the brunt of adult politics. And it is not just ordinary politics. It is the demonstration of raw and violent power: close down, or else we bomb your school.

It has become fairly clear by now that the indefinite valley-wide school strike that began on Monday is not so much about reforming education as furthering the Maoist revolution by bringing the disruptions and hardships to the capital. And the method used is terrorising children and parents, so that the schools are forced to close

To be sure, the education sector seriously needs reforms. Schools in Nepal reflect gross inequities in society: high levels of illiteracy, disparities between expensive private institutions and deprived government schools. So, education hreatens to perpetuate the rich-poor gap.
The Maoists are exploiting this disparity with their 13-point demand which

includes nationalisation of private schools, free education, admission for underprivileged, scrapping Sanskrit and the national anthem.

The government tried to defuse the strike ultimatum by meeting some of these demands with its own education reform package of 6 December, which the pro-Maoist All Nepal Free Student Union (Revolutionary) rejected. There is now a new non-education demand: lift the "terrorist" tag. The government says give up violence first.

"There is a possibility that the Maoists are using school closures as a tactic to

ensure young people entering their struggle," suggests rights activist Krishna Pahadi.



A recent Nepal country profile by the International Coalition to Stop the Use of Child A recent neeps country protine by the international coalision to stop the Use of Unite Soldiers showed that a third of Maoist millitants are underage children, many of them school drop-outs. The Macist leadership, from the very beginning of the "people's war", had identified students as the "reserve force" in a future "mass uprising".

The main worry for children, parents and teachers is what will happen to this year's

SLC exams, due next month. At a time when tenth-graders should be preparing for their tests, schools are closed, "This year, the SLC results will be even bleaker," cautions educationist Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya. Every year, at least six in every ten young Nepalis fail their high school exams, and only 17 percent of the students from government schools pass their SLC. Some rural government schools have a zero pass rate.

The private school association, PABSON says the idea should be to improve govern-ment schools, not punish the ones that have good results. But as the strike enters its second week, children are staying home or playing in the streets. Given the rigid positions on both sides, this "class war" is likely to drag on.



THE HIGH ROAD

he country is in a serious jam. Till a year ago, the only challenge was how to overcome the Maobadi. Now, layered on top is the unnecessary confusion of the direction of our democratic polity.

This helps no one else but the Maoists. After all, the insurgency has thrived

for the past six years mainly because of a chronic bickering between and within parties. That weakened the political parties, just as the royal massacre weakened the monarchy So, at a time when both should be leaning on each other for support we have the two on the verge of falling out. Only if the forces on the side of parliamentary democ-

Army and the "people's army" give way to negotiations.

The question is, who will take the initiative? We respectfully suggest that the initiative should come from His Maiesty. It is indeed true that the political parties are responsible in large measure for this mess, they are in disarray and lack credibility. The Maoists have killed and cowed down their cadre. But, only the political parties still have the nationwide reach and command to deliver peace and development.

But the UML and the two Nepali Congresses are rallied against the royal palace. They can make endless mischief for the royal government, After all, the interim cabinet is a mixed bag of ex-politicians, technocrats, and elements who are constantly speaking at cross-purposes and don't seem to be able to keep personal opinions to

A course correction is needed, and is best done before it is too late. Fither by design or due to lack of political energy, the challenge by the political parties of the king's move is still feeble. But it is only a matter of time. They will ultimately be nushed into a corner, and when that happens they may either take the high road of proposing a national government with full agreement as to its makeup, or (more likely) they may take the low road of street agitation. And that will only add to the people's woes, and end up helping the Maoists.

We can expect the cantankerous political parties to take the low road. But the monarchy must take the high road. His Majesty may want to use the authority that he undoubtedly commands to sit down with the political parties (not one-on-one, but all together) to discuss the way ahead. No more name-calling please, he can tell them, just

We all may be surprised at how easily the king and the parties can find a way out. And when that happens, the next step will be to untie the Maoist knot

STATE OF THE STATE

lex Gabbay's A Man Called Nomad was premiered at the opening ceremony of the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival last Thursday The film admitty explores the dilemma of Tibetan nomads caught between conflicting demands of herding yaks in diminishing pastures even while schooling their children in a small town.

The pathos of living with unfulfilled expectations shine through the film's haunting dialogue. "The rich have ambi-

tions. Poor have needs. So nobody is free.' The fetters of un-freedom are even stronger among the middle class-most of us are prisoners of our own aspirations. The urge to keep up with the Janardans is universal, and the predicament of an urban Nepali aren't much different from those of the nomads in the film.

basic health services. Middle class frustrations are mainly the The business of business is business, so result of "upscale emulation": the life we it's not at all surprising that it has neither aspire for keeps getting out of reach, leaving the time nor the inclination to cater to the us even more miserable once we win what needs of non-economic persons. Hasty we had hoped for. So we become the retreat of the government from service victims of our own perceptions, forgetting delivery was perhaps one of the main causes that wants aren't needs, and higher prices of wildfire insurgency in the mid-western do not always quarantee better quality. region of the country.

As long as the insurgents confined As long as the logic of the market was confined to the market place, those outside themselves to destroying public schools and it were largely immune to the disease of government hospitals in remote areas, the ever-spiralling aspirations. But free-market power elite of Kathmandu chose not to notice the chaos. Ex-prime ministers send their children to international schools, and even Nepali communists have no qualms sending their children to private schools, thus participating in the process of

early eighties.

institutionalising inequality. It's difficult to sustain such a skewed social structure where the excluded have an overwhelming majority. Ever since the government abjured its responsibility of providing free and compulsory basic moral authority of claiming their loyalty towards the state. A direct confrontation between the market and the Maoists was thus inevitable. That it took so long in coming is more of a reflection of the weak support base of the insurgents than of the capacity of the government in

preventing conflict Faced with the threats of an indefinite

Closing down schools is not about improving education, it is power politics at its worst.

fundamentalism has pushed the notion that forced closure, private enterprises of the social services need to be handed over to free-market in education have shut shop. the market to improve efficiency. So we, The Maoists must be gloating—they have too, introduced this divine wisdom of free succeeded exceedingly well in showing the

irrelevance of the government. School enterprise in education and health in the entrepreneurs have been hinting that they Results have been mixed. The market are willing to hold direct talks with the has given urban yuppies more and better insurgents at any time. A mutually accept schools for their male progenies, but all the rest still have to make do with government able settlement between the market and the militia can't be ruled out, for wherever schools. Fancy nursing homes compete there is a give and take, the market with each other at urban centres for invariably triumphs in the end. better market-share, but large areas in rural Nepal continue to be bereft of even

But who will compensate the students for the time that they have lost? Even government schools have been caught in the crossfire for no fault of their own. Wha does Durbar High School have to do with the commercialisation of education?

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The revolutionary students must realise that their current agitation is an exercise in futility. Politically, the action further alienates the middle-class by keeping schools closed. Socially, their agitation fails to address the need of institutionalising an egalitarian education system. Economicall it is sure to cause an even bigger exodus of rich Nepali kids to Indian cities

Ivan Illich. 76, the philosopher who questioned the institutionalisation of learning in his book "De-Schooling Society" died on 2 December, Not man seem to have noticed his passing. His ideas. however, seem to survive in a particularly perverse form in the minds of Nepali Maoists. The agitation has very little to do with education per se-it's power politics at its worst.

There is a need to ideologically fight To see this, it is necessary to touch on the root the commodification of education, but "decauses of the conflict. schooling" the entire society in the process While the conflict in Nepal has no doubt is too high a price to pay. Perhans the a political, ideological and even geopolitical dimension, its main root causes are social and Maoist leadership itself needs re-education in the land of the Great Helmsman to economic, related to frustrated expectations that realise that there can be no liberation came with the advent of democracy, related to without education. And maybe there abject poverty that persists for a large should also be a private screening of Alex percentage of the population, related to poo Gabbay's film for the benefit of our and inefficient delivery of social services in areas such as education and health, related to

A 5-point peace plan

Nobody knows whether formal peace negotiations will begin in the near future, but we need to be prepared already with peace-building measures.



A large percentage of the population of Repal, in particular Dalits and members of ethnic groups, feel that they are politically and economically excluded, unable to contribute to decisions that affect their lives and unable to benefit from the economic advancement of the nation. The most recent draft of the 10th Five – year plan says this more clearly and better than I could ever

formulateit The conflict is first and foremost a Nepali problem. Nepali actors will, therefore, have to find appropriate solutions and whatever assistance can be provided from the outside will have to be given in a strictly supporting role under the leadership of Nepali actors and with the

full agreement of all concerned A five-point multipronged approach

The resolution of conflict and overcoming of violence has to take place to a significant extent at the community level to address the root causes of conflict such as exclusion, discrimination and corruption. Over the years of my stay in Nepal, I have seen many examples of communities who were genuinely empowered. Good governance at the decentralized level can also go a long way in addressing the root cause of conflict, improving delivery of social services, overcoming poverty and creating hope for a better future

formal peace negotiations (Track I) will, of course, be needed. Hopefully they will begin soon. If and when nobody knows. In the meantime, much preparatory work can be

be before the negotiators. Experience from other multifaceted problem, like a comprehensive countries shows that informal consultations approach to good governance including involving relevant actors including political overcoming corruption and genuine decentral parties can be helpful in enhancing understandsation must be part of the long-term solution ng and narrowing differences. As a first step the Awareness creation and generating a culture of preparation of technical papers by Nepali peace at all levels of society through peace experts could be facilitated on key issues such as arches will be significant. grievances of the excluded and poor, good vernance, amendment of the constitution. neontiations will begin in the near future. Even egration of youth and comprehensive so, much can be done now to initiate a development packages that will have to be part

done, addressing key issues that will eventually

of a comprehensive peace agreement.

building their capacity and possibly providing

Statistically, a road accident is a

(Dr Henning Karcher is UNDP Resident Representative in Nepal, and the above comment is based on a statement be gave on the occasion of Human Rights Day 2002 in Kathmandu formal negotiations. Exposing negotiating teams from all sides to international experience

comprehensive peace process. ♦

opportunities for informal contacts could be

from different parts of the world illustrate

We have seen the report of the National

situation in Neval gives reason to serious

concern. Unless and until all sides make a firm

commitment and implement their commitmen

will be able to win the hearts and minds of the

can be no successful negotiations. Effective links

could be established between the observation of

numan rights and the building of confidence.

unimpeded access of food and medical supplies

o the needy, to strictly observe international

human rights and humanitarian principles as

enshrined in Article 3 of the Geneva Conven-

and confidence. Appropriate monitoring mechanisms need to be established in this

as part of a multidimensional solution to a

Nobody knows whether formal neso

tion could be a strong building block for trust

There are other elements that are important

An agreement by both sides to allow the

to fully respect human rights there can be no

solution to the present conflict. Also no side

people as long as they violate human rights.

Confidence building measures will be

Nepal to repeat these mistakes.

avaluable in moving forward. Case studies

typical mistakes and pitfalls experienced unde

similar circumstances. There is no need for

hagirath Yogi's quote of Saubhagya Shah's statement in the article "Peaceniks on varpath" (#119) may have been taken out of context like my own quote. That Shah "could agree with the petition] if [the petition ers] talked about overall US policy including the enormous military assistance to Israel every year" seemed rather disingenuous, First, the tragic legacy of US to Israel is the

the logic of military aid. Second. as I cannot speak for all the others who signed the petition. but I know that some of us have strongly opposed US military aid not only to Israel but to many other countries including Vietnam Colombia Central America, Mujahadeen in Afghanistan, and to Iraq prior to the Gulf War when the US was arming Iran to the teeth against Iran, in protest activities and our iournalism—including my

> letter you guoted from and in an article of mine adison IndyMedia.org) ast August Everything has a context. Referring to

Deuba's justification of his policy in terms of the war gainst terrorism mentioned by Yogi, the Afghan war and 9/11 were both aspects of US globa foreign policy aimed at getting control over dwindling reserve of oil and natural has reserves in the sunset years of the global

oil-based economy. Similarly, in Nepal, one should ask what legacy can motivate young people from the countryside to be so angry and cruel to their fellows for the promise offered by an ideology, such that they may be becoming the image of that they wish to overthrow? It is clear that people know that with the past, because state ments calling for intensified military activity are always combined with the oxymoronic

fied war must be combined with development in the countryside My question is, if this is the case, then why has 50 years of development led to this war? This whole project euphemisti cally called development, without principles or clear objectives. has largely been a war of metropolis against the countryside and of petroleum-based polities against solar-based societies combined with a

willingness to sacrifice people

acknowledgement that intensi-

(particularly villagers and women), communities, cultures knowledge, biodiversity, and the environment for benefits accruing largely to a relatively small portion of the urban population, largely outside of Nepal (e.g., as early as 1989 the Third World was handing over \$52 billion more in debt payments than it received in new

> Arms or no arms, Maoists or no Maoists, drastic, basic changes are going to have to be made in the direction of society in Nepal and in the lives of its citizens. And if it is any consolation, it is a situation that the rest of the world is going to have to follow as oil production peaks within the next five to twenty vears (per capita production has been declining since 1978) and the end comes to the oil-based

global civilisation, possibly as soon as 30 years from now. The question is in both cases whether we act now with the hard choices and build for the future, or will we remain mired in

continue to die in Nepal and, on a world scale, possibly in billions.

I agree with one of your correspondents that such change will come not just with reinstitution of local elections, as he argued for, but with a democracy that builds from the bottom, allowing real needs to direct society, rather than being legislated from the top according to compromises made between powerful special

Stephen Mikesell, by email

. The new council of ministers should read your editorial "What are we waiting for?" (#121). They should have the guts to say "no for invitations to chief-quest workshops, talkshops, seminars, book releases, prize-giving ceremonies, etc. There are plenty of other people with precious little to do who could do it instead of you... just don't go...don't create the demand. Currently the trend is to invite a high-up official, the

higher-up the better, to open

TV coverage. That has led to a culture of seminarism and workshopping where no one is really listening and no one really cares. The chief quest never stays around long enough, and neither does the press. So what you get in the evening news is lazy workshop journalism with speech excerpts. Enough of this. let's call a moratorium on inaugu

rations and speeches. Enough talk, let's see some action. Rupa Joshi, Tashken

SHRISHA KARKI

Finally, Pramod Mishra has struck home with his article "Patriarchy, female freedom and Shrisha Karki" (#122) on the tranic death of the film actres. So far, media reporting, including in your owr paper, has been more of a rant for Shrisha and/or against the editor, Kishore Shrestha, Mr Mishra is very much right when he says Nepali women (and men too) are caught between patriarchal tradition and consumerist moder

of deep dilemma that we cannot shed our traditional beliefs and values, and at the same time, we are attracted by modern ones. A nerson cannot be in two different case will definitely make so called Nepali gender specialists ponder female rights, freedom and ìNamaî, by email

nity. Our society itself is in a kind worlds at the same time. Shrisha's

very human being has a way granight to a life of dignity free from fear and want, and it is the duty of the state very human being has a God-given

to do all in its power to realise this right.

acknowledged as a limiting factor, and it is

obvious that not all needs can be satisfied at

aimed at supporting first of all those who suffer most from deprivation and violation of

Over the years the concept of human

rights was often distorted by political rhetoric.

Civil and political rights on the one hand and

economic and social rights on the other were

regarded not as two sides of the same coin, but

as competing visions for the world's future.

confrontational discussion to a wider recogni-

rights-civil, cultural, economic, political and

social-for all people. Access to basic education,

critical to human freedom as political and civil

So, what are the links between human

Nepal? Much of the work related to building

peace needs by its very nature to be confiden

tial. Public statements on issues of substance

during the negotiations last year. Nevertheles

process elements of a comprehensive multifac-

eted strategy can be outlined. These relate to work at the community level, preparatory steps

for formal negotiations, capacity building,

human rights, confidence building and good

development are two sides of the same coin.

Without peace there can be no development,

would say that without respect for human

and without development no peace. Similarly I

rights there can be no peace, and without peace

there can be no observation of human rights.

It is now generally accepted that peace and

can be counterproductive, as we have seen

vention and peace-building in

rights and peace, and what can we do for

health care, shelter and employment is as

We have now moved beyond that

tion that both sets of rights are inextricably

linked. The goal is to achieve all human.

Scarcity of resources has of course to be

once. What matters is a syst

their rights.

ROAD SAFETY

Thank you to CK Lal for "The road not taken" (#122), bringing muchneeded attention to the situation on Nepal's roads. Because my work in Nepal has largely been limited to northern Humla District (accessible only by foot or plane) in 8 years of on-off work and until this year have the opportunity to use Nepal's road system to a mountainous place. This year. went by car to Dunche in Langtang. To be honest, I hope it was the last time I travel in or out of Kathmandu by road.

stand the challenges faced by Nepal's leaders, but by the time got back to Kathmandu I was nfuriated on behalf of the average Negali citizen, who has no choice but to travel these roads. I cannot understand wh Why can't the government more attention is not paid to this install simple, inexpensive situation-especially when terrible technologies to address this

involving entire busloads of passengers, are reported nearly every week in Nepal's papersand those are only the reports that make it to the papers! In Western Nepal, many bus accidents occur which are never reported in the national news

media. Roads as narrow as the one we were on simply cannot expensive or unreasonable Nepal's major "development Nepal for addressing those major challenges, though the wisdom

bear-they cannot bear even average-sized automobiles passing each other at normal speeds, let alone the more commonly seen wide buses and

situation, such as the large mirrors one can see in other countries with dangerous roads, which allow drivers to see around corners and anticipate on-coming traffic? Providing for the safety of citizens on public thoroughfares in this way should be a duty felt by all of Nepal's elected or inherited leaders. This is not a particularly suggestion. Would an improvement like this help address any of lenges" in any direct way? No. But that's not the point. There is plenty of money and energy in

minded thinking that could give Nepal's citizenry the sense that their leaders not only think about their welfare, as is the moral obligation of any national leader but that they do something about it as well. With a populace so obviously disenchanted with its leadership, shifting thinking toward civic-mindedness would be a very positive development,

subsequent outcomes) may be

argued. The point is that

underlying an insistence on

improvements in road safety

conditions is the kind of civic-

· Considering myself an aspiring transportation professional. I completely agree with CK Lal's concern for the need of a paradigm shift for the safety in the transportation industry in Nepal. No matter how expensive a road you build with most sophisticated technology, road

function of countless number of independent and dependent variables. Accident events are a function of road design traffic volume, driver behaviour, weather condition, vehicle condition, laws and regulation etc. So even the provision of better design or better vehicle design will not guarantee complete safety. The challenge for us in Nepal is to find one of the variables that can be handled within the institutional and economic framework and focus on this variable to reduce the number of accidents and increase safety. A good way to start would be to perform a countrywide yearly safety study which would help us understand the safety factors involved and generate the kind bureaucrats and technocrats, of

how much the country is losing.

Using this study as a platform

numerous ideas can be gener

different levels, ideas for further

research and effective imple-

technological innovations, what

we need is an awareness about

mentation. We don't need

transportation safety. Raiat Raibhandar

The songs "Things Like This Seem to Happen" and "It Would be Easie to Die", attributed to Nati Kaji in Maniushree Thana's Negaliterature (#122), were authored respectively by Yadav Kharel and Tirtharaj

Tuladhar Nati Kaji composed hoth Sharad KC's 'Raiapur's mini-Rolpa (#122) was by Rameshwar Bohara. -Ed



DOMESTIC BRIEFS

against them, they say, Development award

Danger of Maoist spillover into India

Nepal's Maoist insurgency in Nepal is likely to spill over to India's northeast, warns the Washington-based think tank, Centre for Strategic International Studies (CSIS). It said in a report that instability in Nepal is already aggravating the security situation in India's northeast. CSIS says Nepal's security forces are unlikely to be able to defeat the Maoists, even with US military assistance, and the only sustainable solution lies in a negotiated settlement. "The prospect of a confrontation between the king and political parties while the Maoist insurgency continues is a dangerous one." said South Asia experts Mandavi Mehta and Nisala Rodrigo in their paper in the CSIS magazine, South Asia Monitor. The authors say US assistance is increasing from \$27.5 million in fiscal 2002 and the administration has requested over \$37 is incleasing from 22.7.3 minute and 2002 and the administration has requested over \$37 million for 2003. And for the first time, the US government allocated an additional \$12 million for military hardware. financing. Britain has extended 6.5 million pounds for the Royal Nepal Army. Mehta and Rodrigo argue that India has the most to lose from the Maoist threat in Nepal.

Maoist collusion with insurgents across the porous Indo-Nepal border, as well as the assistance they receive from India's large Nepali population, make it even more difficult to act effectively

Running away from home.





Satta Prakash Singh, who operates a private bus service in India out of Rupediya, told us: "I have had to double my fleet to accommodate the Nevalis." Singh's company used to operate eight buses from Rupediya to Delhi, Hardwar and Simla daily till a few months ago. "Now, we operate a total of 20 buses every day," he said. Ten three-wheelers used to ferry passengers from Nepalgani to Rupediva till last

year, now there are over 25. Go to Rupediya on any given day, and you can see hundreds of Nepalis boarding buses here. One

capacity of 70 passengers was carrying 100—all of them Nepalis the families who remain behind? This humanitarian crisis bound for Lucknow. As Nepali

also highlights the transboundary nature of the conflict in Nepal. So far, there have not been any reports of Nepalis being prevented from entering India, but officials here say that with the tight job market in India which is already full of its own internally displaced people and the possibility of more Nepali migrants moving down, Nepali hills sustain losing 16,000 the situation needs to be carefully monitored by both governments •

maintain terraces take care of





(From l to r) Lanka Bahadur Shahi and friends from Kalikot cross the border in a tanga en route to Haridwar, India, a group of over 50 villagers from Banke walk across, two villagers from Kalikot at amunaha police post with all their belongings in sacks, youths showing their travel documents to police o prove they are not Maoists, Nepali passengers wait for a bus to New Delhi at Rupediya. hue we can this week with a

nationals do not need a passport

or visa to travel to India and it is

much cheaper to travel by land

route across the border, India is

the destination of choice. As long

as the insurgency continues, it is

clear that this migration will not

stop, and perhaps it will even

The question is: can the

mostly-able bodied men every

month? Who will plant crops

intensify

Spirit to serve

Twenty years after the famous Shanta Bhawan Hospital, a converted royal palace, shifted south to new premises in Patan in 1982, and, accordingly changed its name, the hospital has more than doubled in size. Today, Patan Hospital, the foremost example of a community hospital in Nepal, has 300 beds, double the original number, annual outpatient visits of 330,000, admitted patients of 16,000 and 600 staff. It's built a new ward for children, has expanded its operating theatre, added a separate orthopedics unit, and has started the Patan Private Clinic, a new personalised service. Said Medical Director Dr. Mark Zimmerman on the 20th anniversary of the hospital, "Patan Hospital still retains much that is good from the old Shanta Bhawan Hospital-a mission to serve with skill and compassion all who come to us; a special place for the poor; and a Spirit that makes extraordinary things happen". Last year alone, the hospital gave out the equivalent of over \$100.000 in direct charity to the poor.

Nepal's National Human Development Report (NHDR) is one of the six winners selected by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for an award for human development. Besides Nepal, the other countries to receive the awards are

the Arab Region, Bolivia, Botswana, Chile and Indonesia, The UNDP also selected President Fernando Henrique Cordoso of

Brazil for the Mahbub ul Haq award for outstanding contribu-

ance. The report uses Nepal's tradition in social mobilisation

to explain how human development and good governance

could create a "virtuous cycle". UNDP said.

tion to human development. Nepal's NHDR, 2001 entitled

Excellence in Support of the Millennium Development Goals," focused on poverty reduction and good govern-

Future film festivals will need permits

The Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival is over but it has left authorities upticht. Three days after the festival of mountain films ended on 8 December, the government's Film Development Board has brought out a public notice which states that individuals or organisations who want to hold film festivals should, in keeping with Film Regulation 2057, get permission from the board and that films should be checked by a censor committee before public and commercial viewing. The notice comes in the wake of the screening of Jogimara ka Jyundaharu, one of the 53 films screened at the festival. In early 2002, 17 construction workers of Jogimara were killed by the army while building a runway in Kalikot district. They were branded terrorists by the state and their families did not get their dead bodies or any compensation. While some families have conducted the last rites of their loved ones, others still wait hoping their relatives will return.

New world disorder

Tanka is an SLC graduate,

and used to farm his family's

deteriorated after the army

terraces. This year, the situation

launched an operation, and he

left even without harvesting the

would have been looted by the

Maoists anyway, so there was no

point staying. Many of the Nepalis end up

as apple pickers in Simla, where

they have friends. Others find

kitchen help in restaurants, or

even rickshaw-pullers in cities of

north India. "In India they can

not just earn some money, but

explains Niraj Acharya, former

member of the Jajarkot district

development committee who has

they will also have security,"

work as construction crew.

winter crop. He thinks the harvest

f there's a bright side to the sense of crisis that is building around the world, I suppose it lies in the sense that something is crumbling, and something else is sing to take its place. The shards that lie on the ground around the edifice of late 20th century shibboleths, those are the fragments of certainty—the reinforcing steel of our societies. The mist, smoke and or dust devils that loom on frighteningly vague horizons around us, those are the uncertainties that are The United States has one great commodity that so many of us envy.

Confidence. Americans built the world's most economically successful society by taking risks and believing in themselves. For years, that's been unrawelling—not the society but the confidence. A plethora of books out in the US in recent years have shown how income inequality has never been more stark in the world's richest land, how the cycles of boom and bust have created vast gaps between the haves and never-will-haves, and how the social fabric and the hope that gives the country its tensile strength is weakening.

The post-11 September challenges filled America with false hopes. The

country responded to its devastating loss by temporarily pulling together against a my, personified, unfortunately, by Osama Bin Laden. However much President Bush and others said the war was against "terrorism", not a single man or his nefarious organisation, the people knew differently. It was Osama that killed thousands and wrecked a nation's self-image on that horrible day in New York, Washington DC, and Pennsylvania. It was that bearded fanatic with the sickly eyes and the insane passion who was to be "smoked out" and "brought to justice". He has not been. Nor have enough of his men. Americans are losing

patience. And hope. Saddam Hussein makes a poor substitute for Osama Bin Laden, however evil he may be in his own right. The war to dislodge him will begin sometime in early 2003, perhaps after Israelis vote in a general election on the 28 January. But this will be no Nintendo war against half-educated country boys like the Taliban. And the process and aftermath could push oil prices above \$80 a barrel; try planning a development process in a poor country with that in prospect. Note to the Nepali government: think about this carefully as you express—inevitable—

himself fled for the relative safety

Those leaving their villages

need letters from the authorities

to prove to Nepali and Indian

police that they are not Maoists.

But since most VDCs and police

posts don't exist, refugees have to travel to the district headquarters

of Dailekh Jaiarkot Rukum

Rolpa and Surkhet to queue up

Nepalganj who tries to connect

Nepali workers with Indian

employers, Indian contractors

hired a group of 66 of his workers

who said they had to pay a bribe

of Rs 1,800 to the local authori-

ties at Chhinchu VDC in Surkhet

district. When contacted, VDC

secretary of Chhinchu, Guman

Singh Neupane, said his office

did not charge any fees for issuing

Tilak Oli is a labour broker in

of Nepalganj.

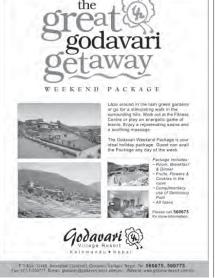
for their papers.

dispensation thrown up by circumstances. It's certainly nothing you can control.

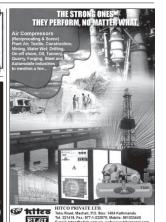
Another contributor to the pile of rubbish that lies at the base of our eroding rtainties is the health and well being of Western democracies, including Japan. In the early 1990s, the writer Francis Fukuyama (in)famously described the collapse of Soviet communism and international acceptance of free market mics "the end of history". Well, he got the "end" part right. Something did indeed end in 90s, and we're still caught in its death throes. It's the social contract that lies at the heart of democracy that's been fatally wounded. Paradoxically, this was done by the likes of Bill Clinton and Tony Blair and their easy embrace, from the left of the political spectrum, of big business, deregulation and the need to unravel social safety nets that carried costs but paid huse benefits. Barney Frank, editor of the iconoclastic American magazine, the Baffler, calls this "the triumph of market fundamentalism over-conomic democracy" What he means is now only money matters, and it's being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. If you don't have it, you don't matter. Not even organisations calling themselves "Labour" parties or "Democrats" care about you. Not when there's a stonking great cheque coming from Nike, Shell or General Motors. That's why one of us vote anymore. That's why US presidents get elected with less than a

As for that bright side, well, there's a new world a-comin'. And if I read the Mullahs nor, for that matter, very many of those in-between. But by the gods, it's a place to start and we'd all better get ready for change. Pass me that shovel. I've got some shattered certainties to clean up.









clearance papers. Our investiga

raised money from the 66

tion showed that lower level staff

at the local police post had indeed

villagers to provide them the letter

of safe passage. Incidents like this

make many villagers glad to be

leaving a land where there is no

justice anymore, and where they

ment and the rebels

human tragedy of the mid-

urhan boom in Nepalganj.

are exploited by both the govern-

Paradoxically, the unfolding

western districts has resulted in an

Roadside lodges and restaurants

are doing a roaring business, and

India have a lot of customers.

northern districts have moved

property and building houses on

Wealthier people from the

permanently here, buying

the outskirts of Nepalgani.

transport operators in Nepal and

hopping in and out of the

country, however, who knows

when neighbourhood vigilan-

tes, if not right-wing death

rural hinterland?

squads, will start roaming the

There's a more alarming

omen. The Maoist movement

plot of American author Paul

Nepal Maoist Strain" (http://

and its terrorist link are the

Ryder Ryan's "Kew, The

www.1stbooks.com). Mary

insurgency to begin political

a Novel

and societal change and to

avenge her husband's death

from a bomb blast. Rising in

the rebel ranks, she captures

Michael Donovan, a State

Department human rights

Kew is used as a courier to

deliver a newly developed

lethal anthrax strain to

annihilate the American

people. Sounds outrageous? So

From the Maoists' litera-

did Tom Clance's "Debt of

Honour" and "Executive

Order" before 9/11.

observer, but loses her heart.

As their romance is threatened,

by Paul Ryder Ryan

"Kew" Carewioins the

People's peace

Plenty, Terrorism? Hmm.

depends. When Comrade

Prachanda extended a peace

overture by pledging his forces

would no longer target political

attacks in Siraha, Udaypur and

rivals and infrastructure, you

were sort of prepared for the

The disgruntlement

been known for a while.

for a safe landing has been

aborted. The compulsions of

the cadres are clear. Prachanda

Bahuram Bhattarai

and Mahara may

form the govern-

Singha Durhar

ment, Circling the

security perimeter for

a rare view of them

isn't exactly the lads

The political

atmosphere wasn't

always so antagonistic

True, Sher Bahadur

Deuba sought power

on a pledge to open

Prachanda helped by

announcing he couldn't

contemplate speaking to

anyone else. Deuba freed key

Maoist figures from prison to

ensure they organised a strong

but disarmed party in time for

premier didn't know the

the 2004 general election. The

military wing was having such

blamed Prachanda for betrayal,

probably overwhelmed by the

Bhattarai dismisses reports

of contradictions between the

military and political wings of

a good time. When Deuba

the rebel chief, too, was

ruthless turn of events.

peace talks and

and lasses' idea of

among Maoist foot soldiers has

considering how every attempt

The imperatives for peace are pressing.

Kapilbastu.

playing political parties and

factions off against each

other has helped them mask their

own predicaments. We haven't

heard of large-scale purges or

secret trials in rebel ranks, but

there are telltale signs of turmoil.

For now, a deepening identity

The rebels may have lost

nternational recognition as the

nice of the voiceless. Western

om their own citizens not to

arm the Nepali state against its

nternational Movement and

eople. From the Revolutionary

CCOMPOSA, the Maoists have

epped into the World People's

Resistance Movement In other

words, they've become part of

the motley crew known as the

anti-globalisation campaign.

in Nepal would constitute a

"end of history" exegesis and

a generational shift in the

ovement's ideological core

expounding the urgency of

making the national anthem

more people friendly.

Manusi Yemi Bhattarai has been

Journalists from around the

ommunism. An assured Krishna

to tell the world that his men and

vomen are not terrorists by any

definition. The disgust and hate

the Maoists have for those who

circulate that canard, he main-

Bahadur Mahara goes on CNN

planet are still fascinated by the

nost successful communist

movement since the death of

Samuel Huntington's "clash of

civilisations" exposition. Marking

Some international experts are

postulating how a Maoist victory

challenge to Francis Fukuyama's

vernments are under pressure

nuch of their Robin Hood

nage, but they still eniov

risis is discernible.

ECONOMIC SENSE Economic slump

For the first time in the last two decades, Nepal's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has turned negative in the last fiscal year 2001-02, officials said. According to Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Nepal's GDP growth recorded a negative rate of 0.63 percent last year due mainly to negative performances of the manufacturing and tourism sectors. Earlier, preliminary estimates had projected Nepal's GDP to grow by 0.8 percent in the last fiscal year. In the year 2000-01, Nepal's GDP had grown by 4.83 percent. With escalating problems at home and abroad, domestic industries saw a decline of -10.79 percent in the fiscal year ending on July 15, 2002, "We see it as a temporary phenomenon and hope that things will improve as soon as there is improvement in the law and order situation," said SMN Subhani, director general at CBS. According to CBS, imports went down by 7.7 percent and exports declined by 14.6 percent in the last fiscal year. The fourism sector also registered a sharp decline. Nineteen years ago (1982/83), GDP growth rate was negative at -2.98 due to a decline in the agricultural sector.

FCONOMY BIZ NEW

Fair Trade Group (FTG) Nepal, a private company that promotes fair trade practices among small and medium enterprises last week organised an annual exhibition, "Fair Trade, Trade Fair" to showcase handicrafts and other products. Organisers said 2,000 people visited the fair at Tridevi temple in Thamel. total of 14 organisations took part in the event out of which 12 were the members of FTG. "We used to focus on expatriates in the past but this year our focus was on local consumers and the response was very encouraging," said Nina Shahi, program coordinator at FTG. FTG Nepal is a consortium of handicraft based fair trade NGOs who also lobby, advocate and offer skills and management training to small

Princess for a Day

Foreign trade decline

A 30-member Nepali business delegation is attending the sixth meeting of the Nepal-China Non-governmental Cooperation Forum in Guangzhou this week to discuss trade and investment. The delegation is led by Binod Bahadur Shrestha of FNCCI. The meeting takes place each year alternatively in Nepal and China and is aimed at extending bilateral trade and investment. Shrestha said Nepal will seek joint ventures in hydropower production, utilisation of human resources, processing of medicinal herbs and use of appropriate agricultural technology. Nepal presently has an annual trade deficit of \$150 million with China.

Kathmanduduring Dasain this year did not lead one to believe we are facing an economic downturn. Nepali consumerism prospers in all times—good and bad, but especially around festivals and marriage seasons. Things are a bit different in the consumeroriented United States. Wall Street plunges if consumers do not go to shopping malls and government economic policy hinges on how full a shopping cart is. This economic co-relation provides the Beed with endless fascination.

The American economy experienced only limited growth from 1975 to 1990, after which the graph started to soar. The budding technology industry made everyone suddenly rich, as there was money to burn. A nation that believes in deficit debt financing as a way out for a healthy economy transmitted the borrowing spree to consumers. Plastic money allowed people to buy without too much concern about future repayments.

This explosion of cash evapo rated when the Internet bubble burst and all the dot.coms became dot.gones. People who based their fortunes on company shares realised their papers were worth nothing. This directly affected the purchasing power of the consumer, which in turn affected the economy. The holiday season, from November through December, accounts for nearly 45 percent of total annual retail sales in the US and initial

eports this year are not good Rising unemployment rates fuelled by job cuts are converting a society of spenders into thrifty sivers. The Federal government and Wall Street need their citizens to be good consumers and buy more, but the ople are deciding not to do so. ooking at all this close up, the Beed forsees another downward sniral for the US economy during this season

Perhaps the US economy has reached saturation in most of the sectors. Shoe companies are trying to sell that second pair just as car companies advertise the need for second vehicle. The supply has far outstripped demand and just because manufacturing bases in China produce cheaper, does not mean people will buy more than what they want. The free market encourages competition, and more players means lowering prices to survive. Undercutting is become the strategy of the times. Everyone is lowering prices in the quest of volume but with a consumer slump

dogging the market, products simply don't fly off the shelves

economics directly to Nepal, except to draw parallels in the semiorganised consumer goods markets, especially food products. While a market-driven economy does propagate the survival of the fittest eality things are not as simple as that A market awash in instant noodles or tea may have no winners and plenty of sore losers, something the fragile Nepali economy can ill afford. To begin with, it doesn't help that a lack of laws and regulations make for a very uneven field. But there are lessons we can learn from the economic slowdown in a consumer oriented country like the consumer to spend more for the instant noodles will only strangle the

(Readers can post their views

Consumerism in time of Maoism

Nepali consumerism prospers through good times and bad



It is difficult to compare US

US One cannot rely on the economy to recover and a glut of

or comments at arthabeed@yahoo.com

Fair Trade, Trade Fair

Binita Shrestha was chosen "Fair & Lovely Princess for a Day" after a widely publicised promotional drive launched by Nepal Lever Limited. Shrestha is entitled to a one day shopping spree worth Rs100,000 with a chauffeur driven Mercedes Benz and dinner at a 5-star hotel. The company also gave 60 lucky winners

Nepal's total foreign trade in the first quarter of the current fiscal year (2002-03) has declined by over five percent. According to Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), total exports plummeted by 20.5 percent while the total imports registered a marginal growth of 1.8 percent. The trade deficit during the period widened by a further 25 percent to Rs16.28 billion, the NRB said. During the period, trade deficit with India rose by over 90 percent to Rs 6.4 billion while trade deficit with the third countries rose by 2.1 percent to Rs 9.88 billion. Officials say the disturbance in law and order and a low demand for Nepali products in the international market has lowered the country's foreign trade.

Nepali businessmen in Guangzhou

Nepal would try to improve air services and banking so it can atract more Chinese tourists, he said.

"Our top priority is restoring law and order."

President of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) Ravi Bhakta Shrestha, 48, was appointed Assistant Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation by King Gyanendra during the expansion of the Chand administration last month. He spoke to Nepali Times about his new job. Excerpts:

Nepali Times: So, how does it feel like to be on the other side? Ravi Bhakta Shrestha: I was the president of the FNCCI when His Majesty entrusted his confidence in me and assigned me this new responsibility. This is not exactly a role reversal, but I believe my background from the private sector will help me in discharging my duties in this ministry. In my past three weeks in office I have been studying the problems affecting the tourism sector, which is the economic backbone of the country. I have held consultations with those in the tourism sector. We have identified major problems and are discussing strategies to address them which will be short, medium and long-term in nature. We have already started implementing short-term measures.

What exactly are these measures?

Tourism in Nepal has not done well in the last few years. At the request of entrepreneurs, including the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN), we have recommended ministries like Finance, Labour and Water Resources re-schedule loans and taxes, give hotels the status of an industry and entitle them to similar benefits. The ministry has also directed Royal Nepal Airlines to improve its day-to-day performance, curb anomalies and come up with what they call a debt inventory. We are also thinking of developing Kathmandu as an international travel hub.

None of this is really new, is it?

Due to its geo-strategic location, Kathmandu can serve as a hub for international flights from Tibet, parts of China, northern states of India and other countries in the region. In order to attract transit tourists, our ministry has already recommended three-day duty free visas to transit passengers. After getting

suggestions from concerned ministries, we will take this proposal to the cabinet. They will come into force only after the cabinet decision. We are also considering requests to add international flights to Nepal and bring back reputed companies like Singapore and Lufthansa.

There has been some back-and-forth on the issue of privatising Royal Nepal Airlines. What is the final word on that? RNAC has a very important role to play in the development of tourism in Nepal. But the present status quo can't continue. So,

national flag carrier and make it effective, we are going to implement recommendations made by the Shankar Sharma committee. Out of the two options-to privatise or turn it into a public limited company-privatising the RNAC will take much longer. We are considering the second option. The final decision will be taken by the Council of Ministers.

You can do all this, but tourism is affected by political instability. How are your short-term measures going to help? Besides water resources, tourism offers great potential for the development of our country. With holy places like Lumbini and Pashupatinath, we can promote religious tourism. Similarly,

Nepal can also be promoted as a destination for sports tourism by selling sports like cricket, golf and elephant polo. Unlike in India, we have yet to develop the concept of domestic tourism. We already have infrastructure to attract tourists from all over the world. What we need now are effective strate gies and aggressive marketing.

We have seen sporadic incidences of violence in remote parts of the country magni-

ment has given top priority to restoring law and order in the country which won't be possible without support. We must not forget our country is passing through a very fluid and critical

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tains, gives them the power to fight on. Hours later, the rebels

his party as part of a "baseless, strike Jumla. Disgust and hate? preposterous and mischievous nisinformation campaign. "The party commands the gun," he asserts in his essays. R T C The politburo's frequent

LAZIMPAT GALLERY CAFE

failure to hold its fire after it said it would provides an objective basis to suggest friction between the political and military fronts.

The imperatives for peace are pressing. On the surface, Bam Dev Gautam's threats of retaliation may sound ridiculous, With international experts on insurgencies

ture, you get the impression that South Asia is being transformed into one of the most volatile storm centres of the world revolution. And that imperialists and expansionists are trying to snuff out Nepalis' legitimate struggle to end all wars from the face of the earth Between the lines, you can also feel the comrades' impatience for discarding the T-tag before the US State Department puts them on its roster of interna tional terrorist organisations.

recting Cards

the insurgency.

As a member of the cabinet, what is your response to critics who say you have not been able to hit the ground running? It is our job to prove that we are different (than the previous governments). The government is working hard to fulfil the five point mandate entrusted to it by His Majesty. All of us know that peace and stability is vital for the development of economy as well as tourism in the country. This government needs support from all sections of society, including the political parties, civil society and entrepreneurs to meet those objectives. The govern

mote Nepal as a safe and attractive destination on the basis that

not a single tourist has been harmed in the last seven years of

time. If the situation is not arrested in time, things could get worse. We urge everyone to cooperate

Building bridges Nepal is not divided by mountains but by its rivers. You can walk across mountains, but rivers can only be crossed on a bridge. Over the decades, bridge-building has been honed into a fine art, and large parts of Nepal are no longer remote.

Clockwise from left: Bayanghari Andhi Khola, Syangia district; Kuhepani Trail Bridge, Karmili River, Kalikot district; old wooden Kuhepani bridge being replaced by galvanised steel boards porters using a log crossings t Kunaloghar, Bajura district; villagers portering cables.





hen Swiss geologist Ton it Hagen was walking in Nepal 50 years ago, he would ask villagers what they wanted most: a school, a health post, or a road. The answer all over Nepal was the same: "We wanta bridge."

Things have changed a lot since then. But even toody, a bridge is still high on the priority list of many Negal villages. Hages nove in his report in 1959. The overwhelming with of the whole population is to have suspension bridges. The government would be well-advised to give this programme top priority. There is really no other development projec which, with so little money and in such a short time, would directly affects on many people."

The reason was not just accessibility. It opened up remote valleys and villages to the outside world, it made it easier for produce to go to market, it brought down the prices of commodities imported from outside and it became easier to take the sick to hospital.

Today, even though Nepal has a network of 13,500 km of highways there is still a need for bridges along the foot trails. The bridges have huge economic value and even though it may not be opparent in dollar-and-cent calculations, they are vital for trekking routes. And villagers have got so used to new suspension ridges built in Nepal over the past two decades, that they don't know what they have until it's gone. When the Maoists blew up three strategic suspension bridges across the Karnali in far-western Nepal, they cut off Humla and parts of Kalikot to food supplies rom the south. Villages that were three hours walking distance from each other are suddenly three days away again.

Today, suspension bridges scattered across the Nepali hills are the mainstay of rural transport. Swiss experts were invited after Hagen left and recommended that river-crossing facilities for isolated ommunities and settlements would lead to the country's economic development. In 1964, the overnment established the uspension Bridge Division (SBD) under the Ministry of Works and Transport, and eight years later Helvetas, the Swiss aid agency came up with technical and financial support. Later on, the US and Swiss governments and

Bridges in photographs

In 'the Forest Hangs a Bodge,' a Bim screened at the recently concluded Kothmandu International Mountain Film Eastivel, a community in north east India gets together to build a bridge. The film, which is an account of the construction of a bridge and an exocation of the tribal community that makes it possible, is also a reflection on the strength, as well as the fragility, of the idea of community.

idea of community.
"It's a great film and basically reflects similar efforts of communities in
the Nepai hills to build bridges," says Varja Roukena, who with her team has
organised a photographic enhibition decided to trail bridges built by communities around Nepal at the Patan Museum.
The exhibition is a celebration of the 1,051 bridges constructed so far, "Of
course, there are differences. Today, rudimentary materials like reach lave

The exhibition is a celebration of the 1,05 fordiges constructed so far. Of course, there are differences. Today, nuclimentary materials kier ared have been replaced by modern materials kies galvanised steel. But it is the community that decides where and when they want a bridge. "The exhibition, which is on it! 15 beemether, provides a close-up view of communities from east to west Nepal who have built bridges that will connect their village to other settlements, important markets and essential services.

About 100 photographs selected from more than two thousand pictures taken by on-site supervisors and workers are on display. They've been cleaned and edited to provide viewers with an insight into the process, the labour, and community spirit which goes into building bridges all around Nepal. The trail bridge project received a UN Best Practice Laureate in 2004.

1000 Community Bridges Photo Exitbition Patan Museum 10 am - 5 pm, up to 15 December For more information call: 527828, 521054



multilateral agencies like the Asian Development Bank also got involved. It was only at the beginning of

the sixties that construction of trail bridges became a development priority for Nepal. Since its establishment, the SBD had identified the need for a total of 862 bridged on the main trails of Nepal's mountain regions. Today, the SBD is called the Trail Bridge Division and a new bridge modeled after traditional designs from the Baglung area are being used because they optimise local skills and material and minimise impact or the environment. Among the innovations are long-lasting steel gratings to replace the wood. And even these gratings have been modified for smaller gaps so that

trapped in them.
They are suitable for the relatively short crossing connecting the numerous sertlements and are off the main strategic points. So far, more than 1,000 community bridges have been built in 52 hill districts around the country with a cumulative span of 70,000m.
These bridges, which are built

hooves of livestock do not get

with the participation of the local people, the VDCs and DDCs, have been instrumental in catalysing economic activities and resulting in changes in their localities," says Shiya Chandra Kantha of Helvetas.

Although some bridges have been blown up by the Maoists, the rebels have not touched most of them since they are so valuable to local people. Today, the biggest sethack has been the dissolution of elected village councils which means the local infrataire is lacking. A 1999 bridge impact study

found that following the construction of a suspension bridge at Sitka Ghat in Ramechhap, the sleepy, isolated settlement evolved into a market square that on average does Re 80 000 worth of business everyday. Four years after the bridge was built, land prices had shot up by a whopping 1,140 nercent. Most rural communities know the importance and advantage a simple suspension bridge can bring. The SBD receives requests for 100 to 200 new bridges a year, but the government can only take a quarter of those requests. An overwhelming 95 percent of the



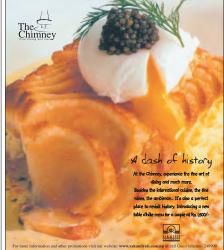
requests come from communities who desperately need short span bridges (under 120 metres) to ease communications. Community involvement ensures not only local labour, but also contribution of material from the

VDC or DDC and maintenance Strengthening communities economically is only one aspect of Nepal's bridge building success story. When the government started its accelerated bridge construction at important locations along major routes in the mid sixties the technology was fabricated in Scotland and constructed by a Scottish firm Pedestrian trail bridges benefitted a great deal from Swiss expertise. But today, bridge-building in Nepal has been completely indigenised. Nepali technicians are responsi ble for planning, location, social impact studies, design, construc-tion and suspension bridges and communities are being mobilised for their maintenance. As a result bridge technology is cheaper, and bridges can be located at more strategically appropriate locations to benefit maximum number of users.

Bridge-building is now an all-Nepali venture as the Swiss government, whose financial contribution had over the years come down from 100 percent to 37 percent, decentralises construction and maintenance of suspension bridges.

The Suspension Bridge Division was shifted to the Ministry of Local Development in 2000. Under the Local Governance Act, two thirds of the bridges are handed over to local vernments and commi Proposals coming from local groups that activate women and local communities are prioritised. Village groups identify the need for bridges provide locally available construction materials and take charge of routine maintenance The major maintenance is shared by the government and the development committees







AVAILABLE

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Prize: USS 2.50 all major credit grants secretarily specimens.



worship of things foreign".

The government's tools fo

enforcing these criteria are far mor

effective than most observers realise

imprisonment, technical denial of

cess to information, cooperation

from foreign investors who value the huge Chinese market and the overt

engineer was sentenced to two years in

prison for selling 30,000 Chinese e

mail addresses to an overseas-based

promotion of "healthy" Chinese

Websites. In 1998 a Shanghai

dissident newsletter.

Earlier this year, Victorian Supreme Court Justice Geoffrey Fames struck out British American Tobacco Australia Services (BATAS) defence and awarded McCabe her damage claims. Large numbers of documents about the health effects of tohacco, as well as backup copies of the documents on compact discs, were destroyed in 1998 following the dismissal of another unsuccessful case against BAT Australia.

The win makes it difficult for smokers to successfully sue BAT on the grounds that their legal defence has been compromised simply because of the destruction of documents. The outcome of the case was crucial for BAT. The legal case continues on hehalf of McCahe's estate (IPS)

Rx for the world

G - European Union (EU) trade commissioner Pascal Lamy is upbeat at the prospect of a World Trade Organisation (WTO) deal to ease access to cheap medicine for developing countries, despite the failure of technical talks in Geneva last week. On a three country trip to southern Africa he spoke of the EU's support for the medicines talks and in order to "inject dynamism" into the Doha trade round. These negotiations relate to the progress of the Doha Declaration, where changes to the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agree-ment made clear that healthcare took precedence over trade.

The 140-odd member states of the WTO must by the end of Dec 2002 give substance to the agreement by making the relevant changes to TRIPS. This would allow a greater number of developing countries to manufacture and/or import generic copies of patented drugs as well as issue compulsory licences on patented drugs, all of which have the function of lowering the prices of life-saving drugs. One of the issues hampering progress is attempts by countries with big pharmaceutical company to sub-categorise develop-ing countries by income, thereby medicines laws. (IPS)

Aiding famine

- The United States and international financial institutions are partly to blame for the famine in Africa because they push policies that fatten the coffers of multinational firms at the expense of local economies and poor people, says a new report from US-based Food First and the Institute for Food and Development Policy.

Countries in southern and eastern Africa are in the throes of an unfolding famine that threatens millions of people. Some Western officials have said that the famine is due to a convergence of multiple factors, some natural, such as drought and floods. But other observers, including some African officials and civil society activists, say "man-made" reasons, like government policy and programs promoted by international creditors are at fault.

The Food First report is among few that point a finger directly at US policies, arguing that as economic restructuring works to erode a country of its food sovereignty, it also aids US multinationals to pry open new markets for genetically modified food, which is largely banned in the EU and Japan.

Raj Patel, author of the report, believes food aid is product support for US farmers disguised by an "unimpeachable veneer



HANDSOME REWARD Anyone who finds this friendly and street-smart dog (named Baina) lost on 28 November from Pulchowk area wil







division of Europe that marred the

20th century, and provides a gateway

optimism, self-confidence and faith

recovered that optimism and faith.

The mayhem of the Second World

years of Communist dictatorship

in Central and Eastern Europe.

EU enlargement marks the beginning of a new era. It can give

Europe both the dynamism and the

Member states and candidate

countries are already discussing how

to organise the EU in the years ahead

It is important that we secure efficient

institutions and decision procedures.

This is necessary in order to develop

drive to create the foundation of a

new European consciousness.

War was followed by more than 40

Continent was characterised by

in the future. We never really

Before the First World War, our

to a common future.

EU enlargement is the greatest political task of our generation.

our internal market and economies. create new jobs, promote sustainable growth, and strengthen our competi iveness. It is a prerequisite for the EU to be able to play a strong and positive role internationally moting peace, sustainable velopment, free trade, and good

The discussions in Copenhagen will focus on three questions.

First, we will complete negotiations with up to ten countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and venia. This is a realistic ambition But all involved-both candidate countries and current member. states-must show the necessary flexibility in the final round of

The second question is how to continue the negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania. In Copenha gen we will make concrete decisions on how we may strengthen their preparations for membership. The nmission has presented a very reasonable proposal for how this can be done. I expect that we can find reach agreement on this basis.

The third question relates to Turkey, with which accession negotiations have not yet begun The expectations of the new Turkish government-and of the Turkish people-are high. At the same time, however, it is the assessment of the Commission that Turkey is still not yet ready to initiate accession negotiations. It must first fulfil the clear political criteria defined by the EU in Copenhager ten years ago. In Copenhagen this time around, we will make decisions on the next stage of Turkey's candidacy. We must find a balanced answer reflecting both the present situation and the potential for development in Turkey. As a candidate country, Turkey will, of course, be treated like all other

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important to send a clear signal to the Turkish people confirming their belief in the perspective of membership and a future based on Western and European values. Europe's leaders meet in Copenhagen this week to unite our continent in peaceful cooperation. What generations of Europeans have dreamt of is at lone last within reach. Leaders from both

candidate countries, and it will be

member states and candidate countries face a historic decision After ten years of preparation the time has come to make the final crucial decisions on enlargement. ♦ (© Project Syndicate

(Andors Foah Rasmusson is Prima Minister of Denmark.)

Russia's Islamic heritage

entity and today's conflicts

do not have religious or

sia's attempts to subdue the Chechen insurrection are but another bloody chapter in a two hundred-year 'colonial policy' that began with Russia's subjugation of Caucasian mountain peoples in a cruel war that lasted for thirty years. This war lingered and flared well into the early Soviet era and, in 1944, the entire Chechen population was forcibly

deported to Central Asia. Fifty years later, President Yeltsin resumed the war when Chechens made a new bid for independence. From a historic perspective, it is more appropriate to compare today's Chechen war with the other great wars of the era of decolonialisation than it is to view it as a "Clash of Civilisations" or a war on terror.

his work the FIT's 15 Heads of

candidate countries meet in Copenha-

gen We meet with a clear rack_to

We will finish a process that

began almost ten years ago at anothe

EU took the first step towards

negotiations with the first new

Member States.

integrating the new democracies of

Central and Eastern Europe into the

From "Copenhagen to Copenha

gen" is the motto of the Danish EU

Presidency. It is a vision of a unique

process, and of Denmark's ambition

political task of our generation. It marks the end of the tragedy of the

EU enlargement is the greatest

to accomplish this task.

EU. Now we are ready to conclude

Summit in Copenhagen. In 1993, the

decide on enlargement of the EU.

state from the current Member

States and the leaders of the 13

All the while, the fighting and ruined cities of Chechnya cast a shadow on the otherwise much more complex encounter of Russia with the Islamic world. The Chechens are only a raction of the 13 million Muslims who live in ussia-9 percent of the total population. While attempting to crush the Chechen rebellion, Russia has pursued a very different path in its elations with the Volga Tatars and Bashkirs. In the early 1990s, Yeltsin concluded bilateral screements with those republics, conceding ensive autonomy to Tatarstan and Bashkorrostan, Although restoration of central ised political power in the Kremlin has marked utin's presidency, Moscow and the two Muslim-dominated Russian republics still

adhere to the Yeltsin-era bargain. The ambivalent relationship between Russia nd its Muslims is deeply rooted in history. ussia conquered Muslim territories in the olga-Ural area, Caucasus and Central Asia, and brutally suppressed any esistance. After loyalty was secured, the government adopted a more tragmatic policy. Until the mid-19th century, sedentary Muslim elite were

opted into the imperial aristocracy, just as, in the 20th century, national mmunist elite were absorbed into the Soviet nomenklatura.

Indeed, Russia's contacts with the Muslim world go back thousands of exceptions, Russia's imperial government did not support Orthodox rangelism. Forced conversion was unknown.

After the Revolution, Soviet policy preserved the most important aspects of the old imperial approach. They tried to repress Islam as a religion—as they tried to repress all religions. But the Soviets encouraged

the development of nations based on ethnic identity and the ethnic identity of Soviet Muslims derived largely from their Islamic culture. In this sense, the Soviets helped keep

Overall, the history of Russian-Muslim relations contrast with most West European ernment policies. Whenever Russia (as in the irst half of the 18th century) or the Soviet Union (in the late 1920s and 1930s) combated Islam, its rulers pointed to the Western example.

Reverting to the imperial Russian tradition, Raris Veltsin saught realistic salutions for the Muslim republics that desired autonomy or, as Chechnya, independence. This tolerant posture gave way to war in Chechnya in 1994, but the mistice of 1996, which de facto recognised Chechnya's independence, gave rise to new ones of a better future. But after 11 September 001, Putin has tried to legitimise the war in Chechnya by alligning it to the war against

Both Russia and the West deem Islam the new enemy. What they fail to see is that Islam is not a homogenous entity and that today's conflicts do not have religious or civilising causes, but are rooted in political, social and conomic reasons.

The Putin government's focus on violence demonstrates that Russia hasn't learned from its long history of engagement with Islam. The Chechen War is not part of some Clash of Civilisations, but a retreat to a colonial policy that failed

(© Project Syndicate)

(Andreas Kappeler is Director of the Institute for East European History, University of Vienna and author of "The Russian Multi Ethnic Empire".

The Great (fire)Wall

much control over the nformation and images that now circulate through Chinese society. but it still is capable of preventing any serious challenger from using the

media to attack it. The government demands that Websites, television programs, and other media meet three general criteria: They must support, or at least not hinder, China's efforts to sustain order, unify with Taiwan, and secure international respect: . They must support, or at least not question, the Chinese Communist

government has jammed Voice of America broadcasts since June 1989 Party's monopoly on political power; and in the spring of 2001 began · They must oppose such "negative social phenomena as "spiritual

> in such a society, but don't necessarily explode. liberal democratic change in China seems to lie in a conflict between the risin middle class, rallying on both its own behalf and that of the poor, and the authoritarian state Journal ists, intellectuals, and chafe at government efforts

China's government has demonstrated amazing adeptness at controlling the Internet in the face of daunting technological challenges.

and Kazakh language broadcasts from India and Central Asia Recently engines; one day they might demand freedom of speech more generally. But Yahoo agreed to design a special search most members of the middle class Websites dealing with unacceptable subjects. Glitzy but vacuous seem content to exchange complacency for economic growth. grams is very effective to crowd out fighting for the global freedom of the Internet. One Chinese hacker group, ubversive content, especially when called "Hacktivismo", is developing a combined with nationalistic

propaganda. So far, Chinese and foreign technology called "Six-Four" (the date of the 1989 Tiananmen massacre) that will allow Chinese netizens to use the business people are not really clamouring for change. This suggests Internet to communicate without government observation. But these China may evolve into a society of conspicuous consumers who lack the echnologies won't be available soon psychic energy to reflect upon the and few people in China are likely to to use them. issues of freedom, equality, religion. and human rights. Problems fester

Those who assert that China is on the wrong side of history in its communication policies—and that the Internet means eventual democratisation—ought to temper their opti-mism. In China, history often takes a very long time. (OProject Syndicate)

> (Daniel C. Lynch is assistant professor of international relations at the University of Southern California and the author of "After the Propaganda State")

NEW DELHI - After brutal beatings and police detention, environmental activists have been promised free access to the pesticides factory in central Bhopal city, formerly owned by Union Carbide, which in 1984 was the scene of the world's worst ever industrial disaster. The promise was made by Digvijay Singh, chief minister of Madhya Pradesh who said permission would be given for carrying out soil tests and containment work on the site heavily contaminated with

Singh has instructed his officers to drop charges against activists of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (ICJB) who were violently stopped by police last month from "containing" some of the hazardous waste lying abandoned at the plant, now owned by US based Dow Chemicals. Joshi said the police brutality and the arrests of 56 activists, 13 of them foreign nationals, reeked of the government protecting the interests of Dow Chemicals rather than that of the hanless victims or the safety of ordinary neonle in Rhonal Various Indian governments appear to have colluded with Union Carbide in cover-up jobs. (IPS)

Inmate abuse

TOKYO - The deaths of two inmates and revelations of torture of prisoners have again brought to the fore the inhumane conditions and poor human rights record in Japanese prisons, concerns repeatedly raised by rights watchdogs and ignored by authorities. While the use of restraining leather belts with attached leather manacles, commonly used in Japanese correction cells, has decreased in some prisons, the Nagoya prison has recorded an increase in its use from 53 in 2001 to 148 so far this year.

Handcuffed prisoners often have to eat their meals and sleep without the devices being removed, treatment designed to ignore the humanity of the victim, says Koichi Kikuta, professor of law at Meiii University. Prisoners cannot subscribe to newspapers, can write only one letter a month to relatives, and all letters are subject to censor ship with deletions common. Japan has 189 prisons with 65,000 inmates, and prisons have 14.4 percent more inmates than they can handle. Former inmates who were tortured while in detention have begun to sue Japanese prisons. This despite the odds, as only about five cases out of an average of 70 cases filed annually, win. (IPS)

Peace in Aceh

JAKARTA - The latest peace accord signed between the Indonesian government and Acehnese rebels is not the first attempt at peace, but many Acehnese hope the pact will be the last. The agreement, signed in Geneva, consists of nine articles and heralds the end of a 26-yearold separatist conflict between Jakarta and this Indonesian province that has claimed over 10 000 Acehnese lives. The accord allows autonomy and elections in 2004 for a government, which would be allowed to keep up to 70 percent of the province's oil and gas

Jakarta, which had insisted that the Aceh conflict was a domestic one and rejected any foreign interference in it, for the first time allowed a foreign monitoring team in the province. The Free Aceh Movement separatist rebels, formally known by their Indonesian acronym GAM, has not shown their clear acceptance of the Jakartaproposed Special Autonomy Law as it goes against its stand for Aceh's independence from Indonesia. Representatives from 23 countries plus international financial institutions like World Bank and Asian Development Bank have pledged financial support for the

W MICHAEL QUINLAN Invasion alternatives

Saddam Hussein does not obey the Security Council resolution on his weapons of mass destruction? There is a chance that the Iraqi president will comply, but the Council promised "serious consequences" if he does not We know from experience that only military action will hurt Saddam.

The only military option put before us is to change the regime, that is, full-scale war. Starting a war is always a grave step, and the effects are never neatly calculable. In this instance five key areas of uncertainty and risk exist.

First, the fighting itself may not be the cakewalk that some assert. Churchill once wrote: "Never, never, never assume that any war will be smooth and easy. Brainwashed Iraqi forces, and a regime complicit at every level in Saddam's crimes, would be fighting to defend their homeland. This could mean street fighting in Baghdad, use of biological or chemical weapons, an attack to draw in Israel, numerous military and civilian deaths and the further destruction of a ravaged society.

Second Iraq is a diverse country distorted by over thirty years of Saddam's tyranny, and with no plausible and coherent alternative government in sight. How would it be run? According to the New York Times, Pentagon officials have said, "thousands of military specialists in civil affairs familiar with the linguistic and cultural differences within Iraq would probably be deployed hroughout the country." Where is this remarkable cohort to come from

Next, no government in the region loves Saddam, but all fear popular reaction to a third Western onslaught on an Islamic state, this time with much less clear justification than over Kuwait and in Afghanistan. Some hawks might welcome the describilisation of Saudi Arabia. Should anyone else?

The fourth dimension of risk is that an invasion could weaken the support of key governments for action against terrorists, and provoke further outrages. Fifth, the world economy is scarcely thriving. Would unrest in the main oil-producing region help or hinder prosperity? Explicit UN support for nvasion might ease some of these risks, but it would not remove them.

Three main reasons for acting against Saddam have been offered. We need no longer address the first—that he was behind the attacks of September 2001 on the US. The Bush Administration makes no claim to have adequate evidence of this. The second reason is that Saddam poses a grave security threat to the US and to his region. But he is weaker militarily now, he cannot hit the US directly, and he must know that fresh aggression would bring the house down

Saddam's option, to provide weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to terrorists, would be uncontrollable and dangerous for him. He heads a state, not a shadowy terrorist outfit. Deterrence can be brought to bear here.

The third reason is his defiance of the Security Council since 1991 cannot be allowed to stand. But is a full-scale invasion the only way, a necessary and proportionate way, to fulfil that aim? We ought to consider other options. not least because the Security Council, whose backing will be politically if not legally crucial, may never support invasion. It would be odd to uphold the Council's authority by means that failed to get its approval

The Council is more likely to accept an option of mounting a punitive



The sledgehammer of invasion could

easily cause far more harm than the ills it

ram of air strikes on suspected WMD sites, presidential compounds, the Republican Guard and other armed-force rarvers. This would weaken Saddam, and establish that defiance of the UN carries severe penalties. The Council could also declare that any fresh aggression, or any use, threat or transfer of WMD, would trigger Saddam's removal and his pursuit as an international criminal like Slobodan Milosevic.

Such a course would not please those who desire regime change, not disarmament or punishment. The US has skilfully carried the international community along with it so far. To throw that away would impose costs not confined to the present episode. The sledgehammer of invasion could easily cause far more harm than the ills it seeks to stamp out. Dealing with Saddam does not need, and is not worth, a full-scale war.

(OProject.

(Sir Michael Quinlan is a former British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Defence, has been Director of the Ditchley Foundation, and is Visiting Professor at King's College London.)



are as tall as the mountains

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



ship for the release of Gonal

Khambu, a minister of the

'Central People's Govern-

Maoist custody. They also

Maoist party structure. The

agitating party workers have

also founded an independent

Progressive Kirat Intellectual

Forum to pressurise the party

the Maoist leadership from its

openly expressed displeasure at

Kirati workers Farlier, they

meeting of the intellectual

forum, coordinated by Subhas

Bantawa, demanded recogni-

revolutionary campaign, the

their commitment and dedica-

tion towards the Maoist party

The meeting also warned any

action that might hurt Kirati

between the Maoists and the

Rebelling Kiratis claimed

that they were compelled to

Maoist leadership because they fear for the life of Khumbu. An

take such steps against the

influential Maoist central

committee member, Mohan

Baidva (alias Kiran) is trying to

sentiment could cause a rift

Khambuwan Movement, for

tion of Gopal Khambu's

This is the second blow to

leadership.

demand decision-making positions for Kiratis within the

ment" of the Maoist party and president of the Khambuwan

tional Front, currently in

Twisting the truth



Pradip Nepal, central working committee membe CPN-UML. in Jana Astha. 11 December

Within a single week 150,000 Nepalis expressed their support for policies adopted by the CPN-UML to oppose the regressive royal move. The newspapers, which had previously claimed that political parties could not mobilise people published 11 different reports on the mass mobilisation. Some newspapers "black out" the news because their claims have been refuted. The largest mass meeting was organised in Butwal where, according to official government tallies, nearly 60,000 people participated. More than 25,000 people turned up for the meetings in Pokhara.

I should have been happy, but I wasn't. On my return after the radio therapy sessions I had written in the last 32 years the state had only tortured me. This time it helped me and I should return the favour. I don't need to be grateful for my cure. I need to pay the country back before I leave this world. But a news item by the RSS last week made me change my mind again. Perhaps I would've been happier if I had died of my disease. Dr. Devkota can you give me the gift of

Earlier, when I predicted the defamation of the political leaders would begin, my friends scolded me for being too suspicious. They expected a degree of decency from the government. Unfortunately I was right. The state owned news agency RSS, referring to an old report, tried to tarnish the image of pro-multiparty leaders for spending more than Rs 10 million on medical expenditures. The RSS generally ignores reports released by the Public Accounts Committee, but this time it cited an old report to raise the issue. It is obvious that it is an attempt to damage

the image of political leaders so that the general people overlook what's happening within the

The ones without character will be unaffected, and those with strong characters are never assassinated by the press. When Shrisha Karki committed suicide, Kishor Shrestha was lambasted for his actions. Politicians may not commit suicide, but the RSS news was not less painful in any way. Even Kishor Shrestha had not twisted the truth so severely. The RSS perspective makes it look like Man Mohan Adhikari had extracted Rs 450,000 to pay a printing press for publishing election campaign leaflets. What can be a bigger journalistic crime than the deliberate obstruction of truth and the fudging of facts?

It could have been lauded if RSS had dared to write that a person who is a minister in the present "clean" government had his campaign leaflet hills reimbursed from the medical fund provided to parliamentarians. But by twisting the truth it has blackened the face of the Nepal Press Council and the Federation of Nepalese Journalists. I am not sure whether the council, federation and other media organisations that bashed Kishor would be able to even touch the RSS. It remains to be seen if the quardians of morality who compelled Kishor to publicly apologise will be able to order the RSS to do the same.

Nepal has a precept and tradition of financially supporting the medical treatment of those who contribute to the country. The late Man Mohan Adhikari and KP Oli were both offered these benefits, as mentioned in the PAC report, after a serious helicopter accident. The RSS report made it look like the political leaders had grafted the money out of the national coffer. It was just a case of our country paying respect to these personalities for their contributions.

I state here that these series of attempts to defame the pro-multiparty leaders will continue because it is not merely journalism but, in fact, is politics.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We are preparing for the battle of Mahabharata. We are warming up. Once this decisive battle starts, truth will prevail and the people will be the ultimate victors.

> - Bamdev Gautam, standing committee member of the CPN (UML), addressing an interaction program in Kathmandu.



Sheepskin: Democracy

Robin Sayami in Himal Khabarpatrika, 2-15 December

Past lessons

industrialist Mohan Gopal Khetan Dristi. 10 December



"Businessmen like us should not talk much or get involved in politics. We are waiting to see if the ernment will hold talks with the Maoists and the outcome. Historically we know that Kins

Tribhuvan had also promised to hold elections for a constituent assembly. Many of us now realise the constituent assembly was part of an Indian grand design to turn Nepal into another Sikkim. Sending King Tribhuvan back to Kathmandu and making Matrika Prasad Koirala Nepal's premier was also part of that design, King Tribhuyan later came to know about such manoeuvring, backtracked from the osition and appointed the rebellious KI Singh as prime minister. We must look into such past issues seriously while talking about the nation, nationality and democracy

Regarding the allegations of former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, I still doubt his credentials. The king could reappoint Deuba as prime minister and include the Maoist leader Baburam Bhattarai and others in his government. If such a situation arose, parties like the Nepali Congress and the UML will be sidelined, especially if that government decided to opt for an interim constitution or hold elections for a constituent assembly."

Chalphal, 8 December

rules haven't been enforced.

It's soon going to be mandatory for pillion riders to

wear helmets and for drivers to wear seat helts. The

lley Traffic Police Office hasn't stated the exact

date when the rule will be implemented but they are

preparing drivers to adjust to this rule. The Vehicle

and Transport Act 2049 provides for safety measures for vehicle drivers and pillion riders but so far the

Experts feel it's time to implement these laws

Valley Traffic Control Police office held a discussion

program last week highlighting the need for helmets and safety belts. This would see a decrease in

accident data collected by the Valley Traffic Police

conducted among 185 motorcyclists at Bir Hospital

with the increase in the number of vehicles and

deteriorating road conditions. The Kathmandu

fatalities especially in two wheeler accidents

Motorcylists, pillion riders, and pedestrians were

likely to get hurt on an equal ratio according to

Office over the past six months and a survey

Skimming off

Chandra Kishore Iha in "Asa/ Shashan" (Good Governance) Deshanter, 8 December

Irregularities in public works ındertaken by the Birganj municipality is nothing new but the scale of regularities in the construction of the children's park at Laxmanapa has eclipsed all past scandals. The municipality has already paid the contractor for the park, Adarsha Nirman Company, a whopping Rs 6.5 million out of the total bill of Rs 8.92 million. The actual cost of filling the land at current market price would not be more than Rs 3.6 million.

The municipality has made payments to the tune of Rs 13.70 per cubic feet of land-fill, but ontractors in the Birganj municipality area charge a maximum of only Rs 6 per cubic feet for the same job 'This is open corruption," said Ram Raiva Yadav, a local journalist. Chief of the Planning Division of the Birganj municipality, Prakash Man Singh Amatya, also admitted that the payment made was much higher than the actual work done

In a resolution adopted by A local resident, Yogendra Sahani, filed a complaint at the the meeting, the Kiratis have Commission for Investigation of cautioned that failure to recognise their contribution Abuse of Authority (CIAA) against the then Mayor of Birganj municimay jeopardise the very existence of the Maoist party. pality, Bimal Shrivastay, and other senior officials. The CIAA asked the The resolution says that the then Chief District Officer of Parsa Maoist leadership should respect the revolutionary spirit (Birganj is the headquarters of Parsa district), Narayan Gopal Malego, to of the Kiratis as potentially investigate the case. Malego, able to lead the whole nation wever, did not take any initiative towards liberation. The document signed by Subhas to bring the culprit to book Now Abdul Rais Khan, who succeeded Bantawa appeals to the Maoist Malego, has committed to look into leadership to find a solution of the issue. The Birganj locals will the Maoist-Khambu debate have to wait for their new park till through dialogue, patience and the matter is resolved and the new orbearance.

CDO takes concrete action. **Pro-Kirati**

Sanghu, 9 December The party workers representing the Kirati community have issued an ultimatum to the Maoist leader

Easy, riders! 19.4 percent and 48.4 percent, Fatalities among drivers was 33.3 percent, the same among pillion riders was 32.4 percent, and 33.4 percent for strians. The survey also indicated that 40 percent of the drivers, 18.9 percent of the pillion riders, and 40.6 percent of pedestrians suffered broken limbs during accidents. The Kathmandu Valley Traffic Police Office, however, maintains that while motorcyclists are likely to suffer 80 percent

> injuries in an accident, their passengers will suffer 100 percent injuries.
>
> The question is why did it take a decade to implement an act that was made 10 years ago? The need is greater today, say traffic officials, owing to a greater number of vehicles and the deteriorating condition of roads. On 28 November, the National Transport Security Committee meeting chaired by the Minister for Labour and Transport passed the proposal. However, traffic experts feel it will take time before we see results because transport entrepreneurs will need time to fit their vehicles with safety belts. The sale of motorbike helmets is



Back at Sundarijal >23

HISTORY AND CULTURE

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"The king has no alternative but compromise"



There is a strange sense of déjà vu as we read these pages from BP's diary

where he tries to analyse his predicament and the options before King Birendra in 1977. Some of the issues of parliamentary democracy and monarchy could be mistaken for the debate 25 years later following King Gyanendra's October Fourth



move to take over executive power. The only difference is that BP was fighting for freedom and justice, whereas the clamour for democracy by his political successors today carry a hollow tone.

21 February, 1977

Today's Rising Nepal carried the news of confirmation by the Supreme Court of death sentences passed by one man tribunal. What is intriguing is that BK Mishra was also involved in the statement of Capt Yagya Bahadur Thapa. This news says that Captain has made the statement before the trial court that by a joint direction of Girija, GM and BK, he was made the leader of the group that went to capture Okhaldhunga and set up a parallel govt there. I can under

stand GM and GP but why BK? What is the purpose of the govt in getting this statement from Capt Thapa? BK has recently been given amnesty and had only less than 2 months ago come to Kathmandu to test the validity of the amnesty. He has been pardoned—does amnesty granted to him extend to this case also in which he has been involved? GM thinks that he has been implicated in this case just to affront India. He thought when BK was amnestized that it was a part of the appeasement policy towards India. I am a little worried by the news. At least it complicates the situation in which the chances of a dialogue between the king and us would appear less clear if anything, GM remains firm in his conviction that the king has no alternative to a compromise with us. He is equally firm that his relation with India is deteriorating, and there is no chance of the differences with India being

composed. Why I am not so cock sure? Lam in tolerably good mood. The black moods that Lused to be subjected to I am free from-although my health is not that good. I get headaches, which is a new symptom with me never suffered from headache, lack of sound sleep. I now know what headache means. But now I get constant headache and buzzing noise in my head. I think I have lost some weight also. I hope it is nothing serious. The tensions involved in the initial period of adjustment to the life of a total segregated incarceration may be the main factor for the loss of

weight.
I didn't write anything today. Brooded over an article on the importance of party politics in Nepal which I propose to write. Jotted down some points for the article. Since a few days I am in a mood of writing, but lack of any books, particularly reference books and congenial and helpful company like that of Shailaia who can assist me in any work is impeding my enthusiasm. Lam conscious of the poor quality of my writing. This is because there are no reference books. need general books also. They titillate my imagination and prove provocative—a kind of useful dialogue is started. I need in intelligent assistant also, it also provokes my thinking ability. My political writing particularly is some kind of statement of my conviction or defence of my stand. It is again in the nature of

a dialogue. I also very much need Shailaja today in this mood of mind when I am itching for writing. She understands me and has her own mind too

22 February, 1977

Sometimes I am assailed with doubts as to the correctness of our present line in pursuance of which we returned to Nepal without any assurance from the opposite side of a positive response to our line. I remember Sushila's advice not to return to Nepal in such uncertain, in her mind, negative attitudes on the part of the king. She never thought that the king would respond to our gesture in the same spirit of nationalism in which we have made it. With Mahendra, according to her such a gesture would have perhaps produced some good results, but with the present king nobody could be sure of anything. In such a situation, the decision of ours to return to Nepal were fraught with extensive danger. Moreover, according to her reasoning, the king would feel greatly relieved to have us at his disposal and would be happy to promptly throw us behind bars and be done with a problem. The fight for democracy would suffer once we were removed from the position from where we could actively quide the movement. She was fully convinced that our imprisonment would be the end of the struggle for democracy in Nepal. She has very sound instinct. I don't know if her instinct in the present case of ours is also sound. Of course, I did not accept her argument. As a matter of fact I didn't even consider it seriously. Today I remember her admonition and doubts assail me. In two previous occasions also I didn't accept her advice-1. When I became Home Minister in spite of her advice to me against it. 2. At the time of my being PM she again advised me not to go in for that office. Her idea of the role that fitted me was of a Gandhi, who exercised influence without being in the seat of power. According to her this denial on my part would enhance my standing with the people and educate my colleagues and political workers on the idea that there was a better way of serving people than through the occupation of seats of power. The unseemly rush for power would be curbed by my grand gesture, etc etc. I don't know if it would have been better so far as I am. concerned if I had acted on Sushila's advice, whether my effectiveness as a political leader would have been greater or whether it would have been reduced to nullity. I am however inclined to think that on those two occasions in the past her advice was not sound if only from a purely success point of view. The two important offices that I occupied did add up to my personality and political prestige. The present direction of ours is irrevocable. Do dear Sushila, even you should wish now that I have taken a correct decision.

The marriage of Ram Kumar's son-Part I

Winner of the British Council Short Story Competition (18-35 category).

ım Kumar was a second-class officer in The National Bank of Nepal. Married for thirty-five years to the same devoted woman Nepal. Married for thirty-tive years to the same stack of ledger files, he could be best described as normal. With gaunt features, thick horn rimmed spectacles and a toothbrush moustache. Ram looked as if he was born to be a bank clerk. Now at the age of fifty-five, with just three more rears before retirement, he had only one more obligation to fulfill—get his ung son married. Maya Devi. Ram's better half was a small and stout woman. Physically

they made a strange couple, like an unmatched pair of shoes. His swarthy, sony features against her sagging, milky countenance. However, when they ere married, appearance was insignificant. Keeping with Hindu tradiions, they had seen each other only a few days before their marriage had been arranged. Now after years of solidarity, you could say their union was an old gray institution, slowly weathering but never falling. Ram did not remember the last time he physically displayed love to his wife. Only emories remained, like work out black and white pictures

Maya Devi was uneducated and before she had learned to play as a child, she was taught to submit herself to fate. The fate of being born a girl child. It was carefully instilled in her that all girls grew old before they grew up She was married when she was a nubile twelve-year-old and had looked up to her nineteen-year-old husband as a father figure, an impression that left an indelible mark in her mind. In the course of her life, her ole purpose had been to bear children for her husband and look after them. Day in and day out. It seemed that in their married life, she had een everything to Ram, from a faithful servant to a caring nurse—except



usty suburb of the town. The peeled off vainting on the facade nouse and like every other house clustered in their neighbourhood, a tall antennae roof, telling the world hey owned a TV set. Raiesh was the oungest and the only

on among the five

passionate wife.

They lived with

heir son Rajesh, in a

ne storied house in a

children A woung man of nineteen, he had ins finished college. He was frail and docile and had lived a life cowering in his ather's shadow. Every decision in his life was taken by his father, right om the kind of clothes he would wear to the college he went to, which

e obliged without questioning In college he had taken a fancy to some of the girls in his class but the ourage to go and speak to them was always thwarted by his father's oming shadow that stuck to him like his own. On the last day of college Rita, the girl famous for her loose hair and looser remarks confided in him rolling her eyes in a particular way.

"You know Rajesh, had it not been for that pencil moustache of yours u and I could have been a hit item.'

She made her remarks and vanished, but it fluttered the wings of taiesh's heart and for the first time in his life, without his father's consen e shaved, and walked around like a blushing peeled potato.

Now, as a graduate in science, Rajesh was at the threshold of a career. His father, who had always dreamt of his son becoming an engineer, had used all his resources, spoken to all friends and relatives to put in a word or two at various sectors of His Majesty's Government Finally a neighbour who knew people in high places agreed to put in his

"Look Ram ji, I will have to stoop down to a lot of officers; ventually your son should not let my name be tarnished." The

eighbour's word came down as a stern warning. And so after months of groping around, Rajesh finally landed up with a job, as a sub-overseer for a road construction project, under His Majesty's Government, in the western region of Nepal. Ram himself accented the offer with folded hands. With pride in heart and trepidation in his eyes, he sent his son off, on a rickety bus, to work in one of the most rural parts of the country.

Rajesh's work consisted of going to the fields all day, carrying maps and running around to the engineers' orders. He stayed at the staff colony, a cluster of white single storied houses with tin roofs, the only prosperous township in the impoverished lands of the village. Each employee was given a room with an attached bathroom. The rooms were sparsely furnished with a bed, and a creaky steel cupboard, which was like an old woman treasuring secrets of everybody who occupied the room. (To be continued in Issue #124).



In the December Himal

Diasporiac dispositions: Fashioning the NRI The 'Madrasi' of Malaysia: Being 'Indian' in Southeast Asia Exposing the saffron brigade's fundraising scam Starvation amidst surplus: The business of hunger Ved Mehta's tempest of self-revelation

Sashaying through structural adjustment: The ugly business of beauty Hindutya indoctrination: Growing into their knickers Nenal's bloody November Tibetan cadres today: Collaborators or patriots?

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FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS Snow and other adventures: "Poems in Frames" by Mark Wyatt at Lazimpat

- Gallery Café, Lazimpat, Cubism by Surendra, paintings by Shova and ceramic sculptures by Cecile Houdret at Park Gallery, till 25 December. Park Gallery, Patan. 522307
 Woodturning in Kathmandu by Dan Hogan, and Unspoken Words: new
- Tibetan Calligraphy by Dhumakhang at Indigo Gallery, Kathmandu. 8AM-6PM till 14 January. 413580



EVENTS

- Meditation for the lazy and the inspired with Wayne Amtzis. 5.30-6.30PM on 13 December Free entry, Live classical vocal music by Sunita Mishra and Indira Maharian. 5-6PM on 15 December. Rs 100. Both at Everest Book Shop, Baber Mahal Revisited. everest@vianet.com.np. 253337
- Shukrabar Classical Music at Patan Museum on Friday, 13 December, 5PM onwards Tickets
- Summit Christmas Bazaar Textiles, wood carvings, ceramics and barbeque. 4-9PM, 13 December, Free entry, Summit Hotel, 521810
- Hyatt Winter Tennis Championships from 16-21 December, all categories. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 491234 Teaching and Tara Initiation by Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. 4PM on 14 December (minimum)
- donation Rs.500). Himalayan Buddhist Meditation Centre, Kamaladi, Ganesthan. email:hbmc@mos.com.np. 221875
- "Licence to Thrill" Premiere Party at 1905 with Chef Thomas Kilrov at 1905. Kantipath. Rs 2000 for the movie at Jai Nepal Cinema followed by drinks, dinner and dance. Tickets at Kilroy (414448), 1905 (225272) and Jai Nepal (442220)
- Religious peace rally organised by the Religion and Peace Academy Nepal (RAPAN) begins at 2PM from Bhadrakali on 14 December. 415213

- Carlsberg Rock Yatra 1974 AD in concert, 4 PM onwards on 14 December at Dasrath Stadium.
- Tickets at Nanglo Bakery Café and Blue Bird Departmental Stores. 529726

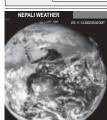
 Jatra ma JAZZ Standard jazz tunes by Friends of Music. 6.30 PM onwards on 15 December.
- Live music by Catch 22, Friday nights at the 40,000 ½ ft Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant, Thamel.

- The Coffee Shop. Hotel de l'Annapurna introduces a fine range of world class coffees from
- Paddy Foley's Irish Pub A wide range of drinks and food. Live music on Wednesday, Thursday
- Friday Indulgence Taste 12 Scottish single malts for Rs 999 at the Piano Lounge, Hotel Yak and

- Multi Cuisine at Nanglo's Deli, relocated to Durbar Marg, 224707
- Wood fired pizzas, cocktails and coffee at the Roadhouse Café, Thamel Christmas hampers and special pastries at The Lounge, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu from 21 December 491234
- * Taste of Beijing Roast duck and other Chinese meat, fish and vegetarian delicacies. Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant, Birendra International Convention Centre. 468589
- Tukche Thakali Kitchen Buckwheat, barley, bean, and dried meat specialties. Also brunch with porridge and pancakes, all raw material from Tukche village. Durbar Marg.

- Bardia Bonkers Freshwater dolphins, giant tigers, elephants, safaris, rafting, evening cocktails, traditional food. junglebasecamp@yahoo.com.
- Birdwatching, short hikes, writing 30 minutes from Kathmandu at Shivapuri National Park.
 Rs 1.850 per person with dinner and breakfast. Rs 925 per child 5-14 years Shivapuri Heights Cottage, www.escape2nepal.com. Email: steve@escape2nepal.com
- * Tea House Combo Room, breakfast, Nepali thali dinner, swimming, jacuzzi. Rs 700 per head on twin sharing for Nepalis and expats. Tea House Inn. Nagarkot. 410432
- . Writing Retreat Full board package. Aesthetic living, innovative thinking, creative writing and nature at Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, 375280
- Christmas and New Year Packages at Dwarika's Hotel. 479488

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



This satellite image taken on Wednesday afternoon shows a westerly front over Pakistan being smeared by the jetstream. The Himalayan range is keeping the worst of the cold at bay, but this front is threatening some precipitation into western Nepal, which needs the rain badly. But the front lacks strength and moisture to drive on towards Kathmandu. By the time they arrive here they will have been wrung out by the cold and dry polar winds. Expect wisps of high clouds that will dim the sunshine and foggy mornings that will send the mercury

lummeting further KATHMANDU VALLEY









Present Fresh Wakefulness: A Meditation Manual on Nonconceptual Wisdom Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche Rabgjung Yeshe Books, 2002 Rs 1635

In this series of teachings and conversations, Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche, a revered abbot, Tibetan meditation master and author, conveys the indispensable principles for arriving at the heart of Buddhist practice. It is the quintessential advice on the necessities for today's yogis to arrive at liberation and enlightenment.

The Yoga of Breath: A Step-by-Step Guide to Pranayama Richard Rosen Shambala, 2002

Rs 1225 Rosen introduces us to the fundamentals of this ancient Indian method of rejuvenation, selfstudy and self-transformation. The approach is realistic and easy to follow with charted descriptions of breath and body awareness exercises accompanied by clear illustrations.



The Dzogchen Primer: Embracing the Spiritual Path According to The Great Perfection Marcia Rinder Schmidt ed

Shambala, 2002. Rs 1470

Rinnoche, among others

Gathered here is the most accessible, down-to-earth writings published on this subject in English. It includes writings from well known and venerable masters Padmasambhava, Milarepa, Shantideva, Chögyam Trungpa, and Tulku Urgyen

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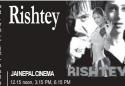
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EDUCATION IS AN ALL TIME GAIN EDUCATE A CHILD AND THE HARVEST COMES YEAR AFTER YEAR.

"Rishtev" follows the traditional Indian cinema tionships: entangled, complicated and peppered with song-and-dance routines.

Director Indra Kumar directs Anil Kapoor Suraj), Karishma Kapoor (Komal) and Shilpa (Odely), Kalainia Napoo (Kohal) and Osinga Shetty (Vyjanthi) in a drama about love, fam-ily and friendships. Rumour has it that "Rishtey" is a remake of 1974's "Kunwara Baap". Suraj and Komal were once happily married but circumstances tore them apart. The one per-son who can bring them back together is Vyjanthi, the colourful fisherwoman. This movie will undoubtedly follow true and tried Hindi film formulas-expect a tearjerker with a happy ending.



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hen an audience sinos along, you know the band along, you know and has arrived. Chances are everyone at Carlsberg's Rock Yatra on Saturday will know the lyrics to 1974 AD's "Pahilo Junima". You could say a band with enough fans to warrant a concert in Nepal's biggest stadium, has definitely arrived. Ten thousand people those fortunate enough to get tickets-even if it is in the nose bleed section high up on the

bleachers, are expected to attend 1974 AD began when six young men got together in 1994 to share their love of music. Eight ears later they are probably Nepal's most popular and bestloved band. They've come a long way since their early jam sessio in Nirakar's garage. The band has

he work of the Indian artist, Prakaash

Without Borders, Prakaash's paintings stood out

through their unfolding energy. Prakaash embodied himself through the repeated thrust of the brush and a

persistent outpouring of colour. In his next two shows at

the Siddhartha Gallery—Bodhi Leaves and Bamiyan

Buddha-Prakaash relied on the steady presence of a

Prakaash's temperament cooled down: his chaotic

diaspora of colour held to the centre and a presence of

Embodied energy and placating space meet in these works. The signifying presence of Hindu and Buddhist symbols place the viewer in a centrifugal field of colour

within or near cloud banks of centripetal brush strokes. Each painting has a quality of its own, but the display

as a whole establishes a snace that is both contempla-

tive and expressive. The repetition of symbols across

believing in the redemptive power and beauty of

the boundaries of the paintings seduces the viewer into

The matrix for this work is Kathmandu Valley. For

the Bamiyan Buddha exhibit Prakaash took hundreds

of photos of Buddhas located throughout the Valley.

single field of colour and the locating force of

peace emanated from his work. In Shakti-Sthal

Prakaash attempts to integrate these two strategies.

Buddhist symbol.

Chandwadkar has undergone a steady transformation in the past two years. In the group show Artists

had several high-profile gigs, including a US tour earlier this year, and several successful albums

The 1974 AD sound is what Nirakar Yakthumba, the bassist and unofficial spokesperson. describes as "fusion rock". They love to experiment with styles and genres. They believe music is best shared, live and with a positive message. Their consistent dedication to music and a steadily climbing profile led to celebrity endorsements from Royal Enfield and Carlsberg. The latter is the

to their name.

sponsor for Rock Yatras in Kathmandu, Dharan and Pokhara The band has used their rock star status to promote many social projects, probably inspired by the Irish band U2, who they admire. They've donated time and money for the Jasutara Art Foundation and raised funds for the Red Cross in Nepal.

Two days before the first Carlsberg Rock Yatra the band was hard at practice. Sanjay Shrestha, the percussionist, even confessed to feeling a little nervous. 1974 AD has no opening act for their show. They are the starters, the main event and the grand finale to what promises to be truly spectacular.

Band members are from left to right, above: Sanjay, percussion; Nirakar, bass: Phiroz, ouitar. rhythm and vocals, Bhanu, rhythm; Adrian, drums and vocals and Manoi, rhythm.

Carlsberg Rock Yatra, 4PM onwards 14 December at Dasrath Rangasala

by WAYNE AMTZIS

The force of that which is worshipped is diminished and vet reclaimed.

These he set in his paintings. For Shakti-Sthal Prakaash visited the power places to photograph idol, stone, tree root, shrine, niche and alcove—wherever the hand of the worshipper could be seen. Hundreds of photos representing these intimate sources of power also figure in this multifaceted exhibit. Where the vorshipper offers powder, blood or the touch of her hand in rites of worship, Prakaash paints. The immedi ate force of that which is worshipped is diminished and vet reclaimed. With the photos the presence of the Shakti-Sthal almost manifests itself. To bring forth the power of the stone-shaped gods and the colourful blessings of puja, Prakaash has printed in vinvl 4x5 foot enlargements of the smaller idols. With these images as with the paintings, beauty usurps innate force and the contemplative power of the intellect demands appreciation rather than worship.

It may be that Prakaash wishes to extend this reclamation to the very space of the gallery. Attemp ing to establish a contemporary Shakti-Sthal, Prakaash has set, within the forest of his paintings and photos, a brass lingam in a mandala of water surrounded by four televisions screening images of a man and a woman (Wang Sai Kwan and Sujata Sitoula) dancing. Does this improvised shrine and dance suggest the secular equivalent of worship? On the second floor of the gallery Prakaash's brass lingam has grown in heightthis time surrounded by an encampment of photos. For the casual onlooker an exhibit of painting, photography, sculpture and installation in a gallery setting evokes not the awe-felt immediacy of devotion but the smile that accompanies an aesthetic sense of pleasure. When the power gained through contact with the Valley's Buddhas and Hindu deities manifests through the muted energy of his brush work, where the matrix of that encounter remains in the paintings and through the interplay of the depicted icons, Prakaash's work becomes a Shakti-Sthal.

Shakti-Sthal, Power Places of the Valley: the multimedia art of Prakaash Chandwad Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited. Till 8 January





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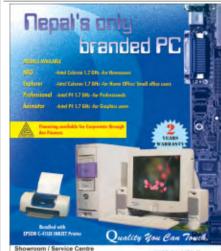
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Under My Hat NEPALI SOCIETY

by Kunda Dixit

Kingdom of Boredom

fter being hunted nearly to extinction, wild bores are proliferating once more and have returned to our urban jungles with a venge ance. Only this morning, one of them was reading the main points over the radio with the important breaking news that the president and people of Benin have just been cordially felicitated on their National Day by our leaders who have wished the Beninese people the eternal peace and prosperity that have eluded us. The second main point in the news bulletin over the Boring Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was that the Ministry of Denial has continued to deny having never exactly said in so many words that the state airline should be sold if at all to the lowest common denominator. And the third main news was that the prime minister has stressed once more that only by working together will we be

As an endangered species, our wild bores are related to old world swines. Like them, they have the innate capacity to render a fully-grown adult citizen unconscious at thirty-paces just by opening their snouts. Zoologically speaking, the wild bore is frequently male and comes under several subspecies with a geographical range that extends right across the midhills of our landlocked Kingdom of Boredom. They can be found frequently in the vicinity of regional conferences on democracy and development where they can be spotted foraging for the root causes of poverty. They take abundant coffee breaks, prefacing all their remarks with: "Let me

able to build a

futuristic Nepal just

like we have in the past.

As a service to our readers, we have put together a short biographical sketch of an average adult wild

bore so that wildlife enthusiasts can track this evolving conservation success story from the subcontinent:

Latin name: Sus scrofa soporifica Common names: Wild Bore, Male Chauvinist Piglet, Bloody Swine, Old Sow, Miss Piggy, Porky, Wart

Hog, Policeman

Local names: Bangur, Bandel Favourite song: "Kya boar bhayo" by the Rock Yogis Habitat: UN conferences, SAARC summits, itional seminars and workshops on sustainable development, and scattered across Bore-

> Behaviour: Naturally gregarious, usually noctumal, in daytime sometimes known to snore loudly during break away subgroups on peace and development, mature males drift off after dusk to nighspots in small bachelor herds, tend to dominate open forums where they never asks

questions but make asses of themselves by holding forth on their curriculum vitae. Immature juveniles prone to inebriation and excessive chatter after overdosing on fermented grape juice and single

Reproduction: Seasonal farrowing, with dominant males boasting that they have the biggest tusks, and that they sired most piglets in the forest, sows tend to keep quiet about their oestrus cycles so they wont be bothered by boisterous bores used to getting their own

Diet: Omnivorous, but thrive mainly on airline food, cookies, turnips, tubers and bulbs. Not a fussy eater, will gobble up anything if it is free. Vital statistics: Back from the political wilderness, no more on the endangered list, and future survival

prospects good.

hey say only true romantics understand gazals, slow sentimental songs that talk of lovers' eye lashes, broken hearts and starry nights. These cold winter evenings in a hidder corner in Chabahil you will hear the melancholy melodies of Nepali and Hindi gazals of legends like the late Narayan Gopal, Amber Gurung, and

Jagjit Singh wafting into the No. it's not a gazal restaurant we are about to visit. It is the home of Sailesh and Sailendra Singh. The brothers are not your usual gazal singers clad in

Indian kurtas, and 24-year-old Sailesh and his two years sibling Sailendra are not celebrity names. Like most prodigies Sailesh's interest in music started at a very young age when his father noticed him playing percussion with any old cans, or even the dinner plate.

At the age of five he was presented with a madal, and his father remembers how the shopkeener was so amazed at Sailesh's talent he gave a hefty discount on the instrument, Sailesh was further encouraged in school by his music teacher who sharpened his skills with a variety of drums. In 1987, his performance in front of the entire royal family with 12 different drums at the same time won him praises from the Queen Mother herself.

of them, the sky is the limit But as he approached for the talented Singh rothers. So, what plans? adolescence. Sailesh found himself in trouble. His voice started to crack. Luckily, his solemnly: "We want deeper voice turned out not to to make our be a disadvantage at all. And to give his songs the country proud same melody as before, Sailesh started playing

taught his brother to play the By then both the brothers were

13 - 19 DECEMBER 2002 NEPALI TIMES

ready to get into serious music. At the first nationwide Naravan Gopal Music Trust competition in 1987. Sailesh stood second. beating several hundred competi tors from all over the country. Two years later he won the first prize in Negal had all this music talent and it's only because they don't get the exposure and the opportunity that they remain hidden," says Sailesh. Last year his duet song with a female partner was nominated in the Hits FM Music Awards.

With their whole lives ahead

Carlsberg

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