





KAPIL TAMOT in SIMIKOT abita Lama used to run a string of health posts in Nepal's most remote and harsh regions, providing free medical care to

women and children. After her clinics in Torpa was destroyed six months ago by Maoists, villagers tried to talk them into leaving health posts alone. But they destroyed the clinic in Albang too. "They told us they don't want any NGOs here, they want to destroy everything built by the government and have a republic," Babita Lama told us. "Now we have to take our sick to Muchu or Simikot."

It was Humla's remoteness that had saved the district from the worst effects of the insurgency, but that doesn't seem to be a protection any longer. Maoists are even travelling across the border into Tibet to buy winter clothes and food, and Chinese border guards at Taklalot now examine the elbows of Nepalis. If they are rough and scratched, they are taken for Maoists and refused entry.

"We used to be neelected by Kathmandu even in normal times, now it is much worse," says Jivan Shahi, the elected ex-chairman of the Humla DDC. "Development has come to a halt." Even Humla's highly effective food-for-work program has slowed. Some 35 km of a vital road from the Chinese border to Simikot is only half-finished because dynamite isn't allowed.

The Chinese have offered to build two bridges in Hilsa and Muchu. "If only our own government was as supportive, Humla would be transformed," Shahi told us. "But the most important thing is to

restore peace, without that everything is futile." Simikot airfield (seen in picture, above) will remain a lifeline for food until the road is com-pleted. Subsidised rice is flown into Simikot from . Surkhet and Nepalganj after the Maoists destroyed bridges over the Karnali. The Maoists have set up : checkpoint on the main southbound trail from Humla, and take a tax of Rs 3 from every traveller Tourists bound for Mansarovar have to pay \$100. Villagers need a "visa" to go south. Locals need papers from both the Maoists and the district administration to go anywhere.

Ironically, the food situation is not so bad because the conflict has driven away so many people. Southern Humla is depopulating fast, ther are few young men left. Many of them had offered to enlist in the security forces. "The Maoists were going to come after us, so we offered to join the police or army," one young Humli in Nepalganj told . "They didn't take us, so we decided to get out."

A 200-strong police force is stationed near the airport. The army unit has set up a base on Rani. Ban, a strategic ridge above the main bazar. But at 10,500 ft, it is bitterly cold and windy here for the soldiers. "Forget about protecting the headquarters," one of them grumbled. "We are just trying not to freeze to death."

The security forces rarely go on patrol, but when they do, the villagers cower. On the road from Limi, one man huddled inside a dark tea sho whispers: "In the daytime, the soldiers come and beat us up, and at night the Maoists do the same."

Two teachers from Simikot were kidnapped and killed a few days before Dasain. Simikot resident, 29-year-old Juna Buda, was killed for not payin extortion money. Ex-MP Chakra Bahadur Shahi and VDC chairman Padam Lama had their houses looted. Jivan Shahi's home has been attacked

Most schools are closed. The government school in Simikot is open, but the teachers there dare not make the children sing the national anthem. "We take classes, but our heart is not in it, we just live from one day to the next," says one teacher. "There has never been anything here wortl destroying.'

An autonomous Karnali Authority to oversee development and administration could bring hope. But Kathmandu has only paid lip-service to the idea. With a resigned air, Jivan Shahi tells us: "If the donors push it, it could still happen." •

BHAGIRATH YOGI

rivatisation sounds great in theory. But Nepal's experience with handing over sick state-owned enterprises to private business has not guaranteed recovery. In fact. controversial privatisation deals over the past decade have reeked of maloractice.

Many public enterprises are now so far gone, there are no buyers, and the trend is towards liquidation. Soon after being appointed finance minister two months ago, Badri Prasad Shrestha unveiled his Economic Reform Program which included the privatisation of eight state-owned enterprises this fiscal year.

Ministry officials say they are fast-tracking proposals put in the deep freezer by previous governments. But many of these enterprises are so sick that there are no private-sector takers and will likely be put out their misery. The government has already decided to liquidate Nepal Coal, Cottage Industrial and Handicraft Emporium and Hetauda Textiles. government sources told us. But five others, including Himal Cement, Hetauda Cement Birgunj Sugar, Bhaktapur Brick and Tiles and Butwal Power are

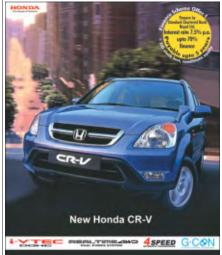


on the anvil for privatisation. The carry off a torturous sale of the most time consuming has been the National Tea Development handover of Butwal Power Corporation. Privatisation of non-

Company (See box, p7). "We have given top priority to Butwal Power Company," finance secretary Bhanu Prasad Acharya told us. The cabinet is expected to decide late Thursday on a Norwegian-funded compensation package following the Maoist damage of the Jhimruk powerplant that is delaying the process.

After identifying seven ailing public enterprises for privatisation in 1997, the government has only managed to split the Agriculture Inputs Corporation into two separate private companies, and

performing state-owned enterprises is high up on the economic reform agenda being pushed by bilateral and multilateral donors and lenders. In its 1999-2001 Country Assistance Strategy (CAS). The World Bank tied the bank's future lending with privatisation. The government's privatisation plans are also linked to the IMF-backed Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF).



Musharrafship

representative executive

HE ROOTS OF WRATH

t is readily apparent to many of us that this revolution is a dead-end street. It may not yet be evident to the Maoist leadership, or even if it is, maybe the hawks call the shots. The military-monarchy combine, on the other hand, is waiting for new hardware so it can start a decisive offensive that it hopes will break the back of the rebel movement.

Positions have hardened so much that neither side cares too much for talks at present. The feelings of war-weary Nepalis doesn't seem to count. The people don't see either side winning, all they know is that they will lose in a war they never wanted but is being waged in their name.

Ultimately, the revolutionaries will need a face-saving way out of this as much as the government does. It may be hard for the comrades to admit it to themselves, but a mechanism for public support that is based on fear and terror never lasts--a lesson that the security forces will also have to learn.

The revolution has now straved away from Mao's "mass line" into uncharted territory. This has perilous consequences not just for the nation, but for the party's own existence. Remember the brutal interna purges that caused other revolutions in our region

Baburam Bhattarai in an interview with a rightwing Moonie paper this week thinks his revolution is on track, and following with historical inevitability the scientific tents laid out by Marvismal eninisma Maoism. But Baburam also thinks that reports of Khmer Rouge atrocities are "exaggerated", that true democracy can be found in the Maoist base areas of the midwest, and that the very parliamentary parties whose grassroots leadership his revolution has decimated are now his allies in the fight for

There is a sense of déjà vu when we read this end-justifying-the-means argument. We saw it all before in revolutions that started out well because they were rooted in the peoples' wrath, but ended up engulfing their nations in the genocidal tragedies. Everything that takes us to Year Zero can be justified no matter how inhumane, or brutal.

It is revolution by default, where the destruction of a nation's fabric is so complete and the people so brutalised that even if everyone loses, the party wins. The rationale is the Leninist notion of a vanguard party that leads because only it knows the way. But violence generates its own logic, and once it is used to propel leaders. to power they will perpetuate that power through the same means. Whoever controls the killing apparatus governs

We were building democracy in this country from the bottom up when all this started. It was not working too well in Kathmandu, but it was beginning to show results in many of the 4,000 villages in this country (see Think nationally, act locally", p3). It was a more humane process because it believed in building, and not in destroying. Of course it

would take time, but our revolutionaries were in a tearing burry. We can't help. The Maoist leadership needs to find its own way out of the spiral of destruction that it has unleashed. They must do it for the country, for the Nepali people and for the zealous and idealistic comrades who joined their movement because they believe in the same things we do: a more just, and new Nepal.

Dictatorship is too crude, self-regulation of dissent is the way to go.

ndicate that Christina Rocca expressed her concerns about the instances of human rights violations in Nepal during her visit here last week.

Nepal's ruling class knows that the contradiction between what you preach and what you practice is an inalienable part of power politics. So it's quite unlikely that anyone at the Bhadrakali headquarters of the Royal Nepalese Army quizzed the high-profile guest from Foggy Bottom about Washington's own standards on human rights.

In this approach of ruling by the considered too crude. It relies instead on the ability of the middle-classes to self-regulate when made aware of the consequences of non-cooperation. Musharrafship permits olite noises about the role of free-press and he importance of human rights as long as the intellectual elite doesn't raise fundamental questions about the legitimacy of the ime. Even though we need to do a lot to atch up with Pakistan, the ruling classes of epal seem to be forging ahead nonetheless. After October the Four, rule by ordinance has become the order of the day here.

It's not just the executive functions,

even legislation seems to have fallen prey

"Musharrafship" of present-day Nepal.

Named after a neighbouring general who

form of veiled dictatorship where a

civilian government formed by an

absolute ruler runs the country

pioneered the concept, Musharrafship is a

to what has come to be termed the

According to the constitution, an ordinance can be promulgated if circum stances exist which render it "necessary or the king to take immediate action. But Subhas Nembang, a noted legal eagle and nonular I MI leader, says that all the necessity" that recently promulgated ordinances show is a pre-condition-both the Houses of Parliament are currently

The government hasn't been able to ovalain the misfortune that would have befallen had laws about royal household enses not been amended by a hastily drawn up ordinance. When a government gets addicted to rule by decree, it's very difficult to get it to accept the reality that any act made without the consent (expressed through popularly elected representatives) of the ruled is an imposition. All such laws contravene democratic principle, and by

the country is being governed by a non-

Donor agencies preaching human rights to suitably attentive activists in Kathmandu are engaged in a fail-safe game—you can't go wrong when you are converting the already converted. But these sermons have very little relevance at the grassroots where neither the Maoist militia nor the security forces are under any obligation to evercise restraint

By repeatedly stressing the Great Helmsman's dictum that the "revolution is no a tea narry". Maoist leadershin has clearly shown that it has no intention of abjuring the politics of violence just because some kind in the heart, but soft in the head. human rights activists want it to opt for a negotiated settlement. The security forces, on the other hand, can no more rely on the threat of counter-violence alone. It is forced to adopt even more violent methods to retain its monopoly on organised violence The prospect for citizen's human rights in such a surcharged atmosphere is rather bleak to say the least.

Madam Rocca came, she said what she had to say, and she left. The onus of ensuring even a modicum of human dignity and fundamen tal rights for the common people of the stry continues to fall upon the shoulders of the mainstream political parties. Donors and their collaborators may not like the ways of the mass-based political leaders, but it's those very politicians who will have to face the Maoist insurgency and state counter-insurgency on wn once the high-priests of hu rights have finished their cocktails and left

When ossified institutions take over the administration on the pretext of insuring orde representative government is often the first casualty. Denial of human rights automatically follows, since the very purpose of restoration of peace is a declaration of war The existence of a representative govern

ment is a fundamental pre-condition to restoring peace. It's a banal repetition of a selfevident truth, but nevertheless worth reemphasising: democratic rights and human rights are inextricably intertwined. It's impossible to have one without the other.

Think nationally, act locally



democracy was working in Nepal in the oast 12 years, it was working at the rassroots. Locally elected bodies, selfnment and decentralisation were flourishing, functioning and beginning to deliver development.

It was a process that took years to build, but it was destroyed in one fell swoon by Sher Bahadur Deuba in mid-July. He snatched local self-government away from the people and thereby made the single most serious anti-democratic blunder of his career. As it turned out, that move helped no one but the Maoists by giving them a vacuum to fill at the local level.

The only silver lining in the dark clouds of the democratic process after 1990 was that Nepalis finally had control over their own decision-making in the 4,000 VDCs, 75 DDCs, and 58 municipalities all

The last two local elections were keen contested throughout the country, with all the parties and many independents in the fray The polls were on the whole free, fair and

DEVELOPMENT SET

Daniel Lak's angry call for those

in the "development industry" to

speak about the current state of

Nepal is well aimed ("A develop-

ing crisis", # 121). Having both

nonye Thore is now a move

continually re-analyse the situation. The focus of what

needs to be done is shifting, for

example like working on issues around conflict displaced people

and figuring out new ways of working in conflict effected areas.

towards hiring consultants-and

consequent diverting of funds—to

worked within the development

peaceful. The participation and turnout was so enthusiastic that the joke doing the rounds was that every Nepali was a nera. With five peoples representatives to be elected from each ward and up to ten parties and independents in the fray, candidates almost outnumbered voters!

The prize was, of course, political power and the responsibility that comes out of being entrusted with the peoples' mandate to serve. Irrespective of the size or resources of the local entity, an elected representative had to show leadership qualities and a sense of accountabil ity towards the people. Good local-powernance needs participation.

rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, onsensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic vision. And elected leaders have no alternative but to deliver since the voters see their leaders every day They monitor your every move Compared to politics at the national level, account ability at the grassroots is not just a slogan it is a political necessity.

Compared to national-level politics, the participation of women in local decision-

ment organisations' practices

example. Yet despite many

making is much stronger. We got the feeling that we were laying the building blocks of democracy and development in our country. Locally-elected leaders were under pressure to deliver, and they did. They galvanised popular participation in infrastructure-building,

environmental protection, good and responsive management, local taxation. health and sanitation, vocational training creating self employment and income generation, modernisation with the use of computerised record and book keeping. Donor support was critical. They believed in the importance of local self-governance and

some very successful programs were implemented with the help of UNDP's PDDP, the Town Development Fund, UDLE, ADB. UNICEF, Peace Corps, JICA, Plan International and others. The "Build your own village yourself" program was a huge success, with finances going directly to the village level to be supplemented by peoples participation.

To be sure, local bodies had their problems and there were setbacks in the path wards decentralisation. But these problems The Maoists are only completing the process of dismantling grassroots democracy that Sher Bahadur Deuba started.

had their roots in the short-sighted policies of Kathmandu, and the rules they forced on local

councils to prevent true devolution. For example, the centre placed an administrative officer at all levels of local government citing their lack of capacity to run things as per government rules. Every central ernment wants to control local bodies to further the political and financial needs of their party cadre. This triggered haggling by nembers of local councils which were not compatible with the broader vision of the

chairmen or mayors. There were flaws in the structure or the electoral system, too, where the VDC Chairman and the Mayor were elected via the presidential system of adult franchise, but have to operate on a prime ministerial cabinet system. This caused a lot of confusion.

hearthurn and obstacles for elected leaders But on the whole, the Local Self-Government Act BS 2055 (1999) was positive. One clause allowing an elected member to change parties without losing the position, office or chair did cause controversy. On the face of it, it seems perfectly democratic to be able to change one's stand but in our context we have seen it leads to horse-trading and corruption.

The national parties also need to play down their influence in running or controlling local affairs. Once elected, local leaders represent the whole electorate and not just their specific party or those who voted them to power. Such partisanship is most visible when carried out at the local level.

Then again, the central government has special tools to control local government through ministry directives or general circulars. The revenue or most local bodies is sent by the centre as a monthly "development fund". After octroi tax was abolished, this constitutes the bulk of the revenue for municipalities. Since the centre controls the purse strings, it also tries to control the local bodies on the pretext of

nerve. The photographs of

thousands of Nepalis who have to

flee their own country in search

of jobs and security showed the

in the same issue you have

ndustrialist Mohan Gopal Khetan floating conspiracy

sad that while thousands of

theories about politics. It is very

stark reality and the great despair

of the poor people of Nepal. But

ensuring accountability.

The Deuba move not to renew the term of local bodies even though there was a constitutional provision to extend the term by a year was a cynical political move to get the UMLdominated local councils out of the way in case general elections were held.

Since polls could not be held because of the security problems, the most logical thing to do would have been to extend the term of local bodies. But logic, it seems, has no place when national politics is dominated by self-centred and short-sighted figures at the centre.

As is evident, this decision was a disaste Local bodies have been left without elected representatives, affecting the people adrsely. The field was left wide open for the Maoists. They now have de facto control of the grassroots, and for reasons only they know have destroyed one-third of all VDCs In Rukum, Rolpa, Achham, Dadeldhura, Baglung and Dang there isn't a single VDC still functioning.

The Ministry of Local Development says more than Rs 450 million damage has been done. Municipalities and DDC buildings have not been enamed. The physical infra structure may be rebuilt, but by completing the job of dismantling democracy that Douba boson the Maniere have set this

country back a century or more. Local bodies in Nepal had for the mos part proved that democracy works and deliver because elected representatives are forced to be nmitted and accountable.

It is therefore in the interest of the people and the future of democracy in this country once. And since local elections are out of the question, reinstating village, district and

(Dr Dhawal Shumshere JB Rana is the former UML mayor of Nepalganj.)

cratic governance itself remains suspended in the country. It's extremely difficult, if not Tracking six weeks of death in Nepal

The very concept of human rights is alien

to a miliou where women are considered

to say nothing of their won

treated as pariah for all of the time. The

untouchable for some of the time, and some

constitution prohibits such institutionalised

nequality, but that means very little in a

society where traditions are considered mon

sacrosanct than the provisions of the written

Cow milk may be more useful, but for

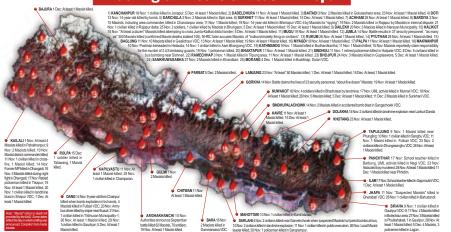
caste-Hindu Nepalis with sacred threads, cow

urine is no less sacred. This is the mind-set

tween symbols and substance. That explains

that often makes us forget the difference

the hoo-ha over human rights when demo-



LETTERS

Many analyses have been done the increased expenditure for many but the impact of the policies and marginalised ill, frequently on working practices of the develop useless profit driven treatments as one possibility. Might they further ment agencies themselves are al too often omitted. What appears enhance poverty and lacking in the public domain is much evidence of analytical self feed a disenchantment that fuels eflection, and the lack of analysis directly the rise of increasingly Ougstions like this are vitally hemselves. These are frequently important to pose and research in based on ideologies of privatisathese current times, and not just focused. Given the influence ourselves here) best intentions the Nepal, their absence in these effects of what we do, may be quite lyses results in an increasingly different to what is intended. We distorted picture of the way in which the current situation is repre only have to think of the rise in the redress this gap to include the aid critical analyses of the current

> Dr lan Harper and Sandra MacDonagh by e-mail

that may be. DEMO-CRAZY

Member of CPN-UML party Pradip Nepal ("Twisting the truth" #123) has ferociously complained about a RSS news report regarding apparent misuse of medical expenditure y few politicians in the past 12 years. Nepal in one of his regular newspaper had once written about

youths on the footpath loudly talked about "darnit MPs" (danka sansad) and had admitted that sometimes he feels like hiding the street. In this so called nublic-interest-issues nublished in news media should not be taken as "iounalistic crime" party squabblings (mud-slinging were taken as perfectly normal of democracy. At the same time, all political leaders have been saving that our nation's unique political system has four main power centres—Royal Palace Nepali Congress (NC), UML and Nepal's contention that it is a deliberate attempt by one power center to defame the NC and UMI leaders is true it cratic spirit, especially when the Royal Palace itself is digesting all kinds of direct criticism and senior leaders against the

Kamaladi

people are dving or forced to rich and the elite in Kathmandu ving nothing better to do that giving interviews and airing their cynical views. My question to you is: are the people living in Kathmandu even remotely aware of the problems existing outside the valley? What are all the rich industrialists and power brokers doing to help the country in its plame the present or previous government, the king, etc, etc? You take a walk on the busy streets of Kathmandu and find shonoing and having fun and see the poor and displaced of the streets. I am sure the Manists learnt and there is much to be done by not just the governm but every citizen of Nepal Not positive and individually

contributing by being less

G Rinisha hy omai

 Reading Kunda Dixit's "The villagers' support keeps me going..." (# 116) and Toya Dahal's "Captain saved airport, but not himself" (#117) made me proud of the patriotism and bravery of Major Khatri and Captain Thapa. My heartfelt condolence to both these great men. Those responsible for their fratricidal peoples' war. I have a kind of development are you brutality? Why are you killing the people who are helping the poor and the disenfranchised? These and others you have sion and generosity of spirit. And nathological addiction to inhumanity and violence. If your revolution is true, and if you want the support of people like us, then you will have to take the nath of neare. You still have the chance of getting out of this spiral of violence by declaring a ceasefire and negotiating Otherwise, one day, you will answer for these crimes against the people.

Kumar Rasnot Tokyo

Minors in a major war

Nepal's Maoists find themselves on a UN black list for recruiting children.



HEMLATA RAI

uddenly Nepal is everywhere in the news: for human rights abuses, for the use of landmines, for child soldiers. In reports this week by the United Nations. Amnesty International and child welfare groups. Nepal now figures on various international lists with other countries ravaged by civil war: Afghanistan, Burundi, Sierra Leone.

A country profile released this month by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers says that 30 percent of Maoist militia are underage. The coalition is a consortium of six international human rights organisations working on a global ban on use of children as soldiers and based its conclusion on data collected in 2000.

Estimates of child soldiers are notoriously unreliable. The underground group is elusive, and it is difficult to tell the age of many of the militia members. One reporter who visited Rolpa in April met many Maoists who oked like they were not more than 15 years old, but when asked they all said they were 18.

A National Human Rights Commission member after a tour of the midwest earlier this year estimated that about one forth of the Manist combatants were children below the age of 18 vears. Besides combatants, the Maoists also reportedly use

teenage children as porters. On the other hand, the ecurity forces have also been accused of imprisoning children on suspicion that they are

Maoists. The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the release of 16-year-old Diwakar Adhikari who has been in prison since he was arrested by the army on suspicion of being a Maoist. Human rights groups fighting for Adhikari's release say he has been tortured.

In a country paper presented in the Asia-Pacific Conference held in Kathmandu two years ago, the coalition against child soldiers alleged that the Maoists were recruiting children below 15, with most of the children taking part in armed conflict in the 14-18 age bracket Since then the coalition has been attempting to create international pressure on the rebels to discontinue recruitment of under-18 children in its armed

This is a sore point with the Maoist leadership, and they have repeatedly denied recruiting children. A Maoist negotiator to the last year's peace talks with the government. Krishna Bahadur Mahara in his 14 November interview with CNN dismissed the allegation as "baseless". But he admitted that the revolution has the support of children and also admitted having "young revolution-

The international coalition's lobbying with the United Nations to name the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in a Security Council resolution appears to have succeeded with the release of Secretary General Kofi Anan's report on Monday in which the Maoists figure among 23 govern-

aries" in the Maoist cause.

ments and rebel movements using child fighters (See "Killing with impunity", p5). The UN earlier appointed a special representative to investigate the use of children by the Maoists.

The success of the consortium's lobbying efforts activists here hope, will put added pressure on the Maoists to respect the UN Convention on Rights of the Child. There has heen no official reaction yet to the UN report, and the Maoists themselves are expected to formally repeat their denial that they are using underage soldiers.

The Human Rights and Peace Society (HURPES) in Kathmandu has been leading a local informal coalition against child soldiering. The group's spokesperson, Krishna Pahadi, claims that the rebel leadership has realised it is under pressure, but is still "in the denial stage".

He added: "Awareness against the recruitment of underage children have certainly increased within the Maoist leadershipalthough they have not stopped the practice." Human rights organisations have reported an increased recruitment drive in the hinterland, where Maoists have forced families to give at least one teenage child to the movement for training into the militia. This has resulted in a massive outmigration of young boys and girls.

even from districts near Kathmandu While denying that they use child soldiers, the Maoist

numbers of women in their militia has meant that "children have been drawn into the process of war". It has said that a large number of children in rural area were contributing "sustainably" in the war effort and that they were an asset for the future of the revolution.

Experience of other conflicts have shown that an overwhelming number of child soldiers come from uprooted families, and from marginalised groups and minorities. Children of families who have been victims of human rights abuse by the security forces also need no inducement to join the revolution. "There has been a sudden

increase of homeless children in district headquarters and towns near Maoist-affected districts," says Gauri Pradhan of the child welfare group, CWIN. A recent survey in Rukum found that out of 1,000 people displaced, about 300 were children and many were rine for recruitment. Ianiati and Dalit children have been found in the Maoist "People's Army", and 80 percent of Maoists reportedly killed in encounters with security forces are from Ianiati or Dalit

"In my experience the majority of children actively involved in armed insurgency are motivated by other reasons, and are not coerced into the conflict. says Pradhan. The current Maoist campaign to close schools is expected to provide a fresh spurt of young recruits for the

Human rights and wrongs



I invite anyone who thinks these thoughts are over the top to read "Nepal: A Deepening Human Rights Crisis" released this past week by Amnesty International in London. Almost alone among international organisations, Amnesty has been watching developments here since the Maoists fired their first shots in February 1996. Amnesty's policy is to monitor countries from outside their borders, visiting as frequently as possible to check primary sources but staying out of the day-to-day swirl of events and attitudes. Local Amnesty activists may offer some logistical support to this process but mostly they watch other countries, doing as their colleagues from London do, but for Malaysia, Pakistan or elsewhere

Again, it enables the organisation to function with integrity and minimal influence from local power centres or militant groups. This is why Amnesty's actions are taken seriously and this is why the authorities here, and the Maoists, must read this report urgently and act upon its recommendations. Donor countries certainly will do all of these things, and Nepal needs to worry about this. Amnesty's latest findings are of a country that's sinking ever deeper into a morass of bloodshed and disregard for the basic humanitarian norms, let alone the rules of conflict.

Both the Maoists and government forces are accused by Amnesty International of blatantly ignoring or deliberately, as a matter of policy abusing the human rights of Nepali civilians. Case after case is raised, names are named and details are given of grisly incidents-deaths in custody, extortion, kidnappings, rapes and torture. Each and every case raised in this report needs to be investigated thoroughly by both the accused parties and by independent bodies

A reputed Nepali-language publication should take up these cases on a



regular basis, weekly if not daily, reporting first the allegations then the action taken by either the authorities or the rebels to find out the truth. If a particular party is exonerated, then that can be shouted from the rooftops. If someone is found guilty of a crime-and abuse of the human rights of any civilian is a crime, not a means to an end or a regrettable but necessary casualty of conflict-then perpetrators need to be tried

and punished by the courts, if found guilty after due process. And there can be no excuses. Let us not hear of "Asian values" "Western values being misapplied to developing societies" "revolutionary zeal" or anything else that tries to avoid repugnant truths. Torture is never justified, nor is extra-judicial killing. Rape is a war crime and must be punished as such. The use of violence against unarmed

A new Amnesty International report proves Nepal is sinking ever deeper into a morass of bloodshed and disregard for basic humanitarian norms.

civilians by any party to a conflict is banned under the Geneva convention, to which Nepal is a signatory.

The Maoists too, according to the National Human Rights Commission, say they uphold the rules of war as agreed under the convention. Many of you may say: I've heard it before, all too often. and in different situations. It comes from supporters of the security orces, perhaps from policemen or soldiers themselves, and it goes like this: "We are fighting a brutal uprising, our enemy uses terror and fear against us. We have no choice but to respond in kind, to ight violence with violence, fire with fire."

This argument is spurious and self defeating. It is also potentially criminal. Ask the Indians how far dirty tricks got them in Kashmir, ask the British about how death squads and human rights abuses by their security forces in Northern Ireland only strengthened the resolve of their opponents and provided recruits to the militant groups. Ask the Sri Lankans about the same things.

The situation in Nepal is not yet beyond retrieval. I for one feel that peace is possible in 2003 (2060 BS), but only with a radical realignment of strategies by the security forces, civil society andplease—the Manists too. It could start with the formal acceptance of Amnesty's latest report on human rights, and a pledge by all sides to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. The well-being of the country demands no less.

Killing with impunity

he seven-year Maoist insurgency and government attempts to contain it have resulted in serious human rights violations, according to a scathing new report by Amnesty International. The report says least half of the 4.300 victims of the conflict since November 2001 (compared to the 2,700 lives lost in the last five years) were killed unlawfully.

The vast majority of the victims were civilians targeted for their real or perceived support to the CPN (Maoist), others were Maoists deliberately killed after they were taken prisoner, or killed instead of being arrested, "Nepal: A Deepening Human Rights Crisis" reports torture is widespread. At least 66 people are reported to have "disappeared" since November 2001. They were last seen being taken into custody by security forces. More than 200 "disappearances" have been reported to Amnesty International.

Human rights abuses by the Maoists have included deliberate killings of an estimated 800 civilians considered "enemies of the revolution", hostage-taking for ransom, torture of people taken captive and deliberate killings of members of the security forces after they were taken captive. The Maoists have also been responsible for recruiting children into their ranks and using them in combat situations. The rapid deterioration in the human rights situation is set against a background of a mounting political crisis in the country and embedded in a pervasive climate of impunity, said the report.

Împunity is a longstanding problem in Nepal. Successive governments' willingness to condone the actions of the security forces, even when they have committed gross human rights violations, was underlined by the incorporation of Section 20 in the Terrorist and Destructive Activities (TADA). This section grants prosecution immunity to members of the security forces "or any other person" for "any act or work performed or attempted to be

prespire grobal treaties, criticited are originally rectured as societies by governments in the Congo, Burundi and Liberia and are prevalent among rebel groups in Colombia, the Philippines, Uganda, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

"This shows the international community is serious and also that the community is watching," Otunnu said. An estimated 300,000 child soldiers were carrying arms in over 40 countries worldwide, most of

ments of Congo. Burundi and Liberia were named as recruiters of child

groups as well as governments, making both accountable for such actions, the report said.

Olara Otunnu the LIN special representative for children and armed

conflict, said the report for the first time named governments and groups recruiting youths younger than 18 for military combat.

them in Africa and East Asia, according to UNICEF. The report listed 23 groups including governments and rebel factions in five countries where child soldiering is common. While the govern-

Nepal makes the list

ments or Congo, busined and clients were named as becomes or came. Soldiers, Otunnu included Nepal's Maoists in the list of rebel groups using children as soldiers, porters and sex slaves. (A picture of children hired as porters by Maoists in the midwest, above.)

conduct of parties and how they treat children during conflict.

The standards being violated include a number of human rights pacts as well as an amendment to the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child that prohibits the use of children younger than 18 in combat. These standards apply to insurgent

Otunny said the report represented the 'beginning of a systematic effort in a new era of monitoring and reporting on the

A new Amnesty International report exposes the human rights crisis in Nepal.

responsible for grave human rights violations has raised major questions about the commitment to or concern for human rights, even though the Constitution of Nepal protects fundamental rights and Nepal is a signatory to all naior human rights treaties.

Faced with the widespread impunity and the authorities' lack of willingness to remedy this, existing institutions in Nepal such as the Supreme Court and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) are not able to address the deepening human rights crisis. International assistance is needed to provide increased human rights protection and create a law enforcement system canable of greater transparency and accountability. Amnesty International also believes international insistence that human rights and humanitarian law standards be upheld will assist in reducing violence and protecting vulnerable civilians

The report was based on the findings of an Amnesty International delegation to Nepal in September which collected meticulous information on atrocities by both sides. It will be submitted to members of the forthcoming United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) at Geneva in March 2003. Amnesty International will press for the adoption of a resolution expressing concern about the deepening human rights crisis in Nepal, in particular reports of widespread extra-judicial executions, "disappearances", torture and unlawful detentions.

Amnesty International says it will also urge members of the UNCHR to consider appointing a Special Rapporteur for Nepal. They have called upon both the Maoists and the government to uphold human rights and humanitarian standards as a confidence-building sten towards neace talks

DOMESTIC BRIEFS

Corruption report released

Transparency International released its annual report on corruption in South Asia this week, with mixed results for Nepal. Of the five countries in the survey, Nepal received the worst score for government effectiveness and critical scores for graft/corruption, accountability and press freedom. However, Nepal received better scores in six of the seven measured categories of corruption than most other countries in the region. Only the tax sector, which 25 percent of surveyed Nepalis report as being corrupt, received a score above the regional average. The survey, which involved the participation of 3060 respondents in Nepal, argues that Nepal's four most corrupt sectors are, respectively, land administration, customs, police and the judiciary. The complete report is available at

"Back to village," say Maoists

NG - Maoist rebels have called on people who have fled their villages to return and "lead normal lives". Thousands of villagers have fled to Dang's towns fearing for the safety of their lives and property. But last week, the Maoists sent letters to local elders staying in Ghorahi, Tulsipur, Lamahi and Bhalubang to return or face repercussions.

The former chairman of a remote VDC who now lives in Ghorahi told us: "I don't know what to do. if I don't go back they may track me down here, but I don't trust them to leave me alone if I do go back." Amar Shah, another villager from Teghera who has been living in Ghorahi for the last one year doesn't mind if we use his name, and tells us: "I'd rather lose all my land and property than go back to my village." The Maoists also threatened to confiscate the land and property of those who do not return to their homes, and are not allowing anyone to buy or sell land without their persmission. (from Ram Hari Joshi)

Rocca and Bhattarai

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca's four-day visit to Nepal was billed as a "fact-finding" mission and follows a series of high-level stopovers in Nepal by senior US and European officials in the past year. But Rocca also took the opportunity to hurl a warning to the Maoists that they may be placed on the US government's terrorist list if they continued with their violent activities.

"Although the Maoists have not yet been put on any official terrorist list," she added, "this step may be taken into consideration if their violence continues unabated." This was not just a general reference to the Maoist attacks on ordinary Nepalis, but officials said it was a warning to the Maoists not to target USemployed personnel in Nepal. Last month, the Maoists took responsibility for killing two Nepali security

Rocca also said the US was involved in "close and continuing" dialogue with India and other countries on the situation in Nepal and said Washington wanted to see constitutional rule and multiparty democracy flourish in Nepal. She compared the Maoists to the Khmer Rouge and added that violence had to end and

the insurgency was not the answer. "The tactics currently employed by the Maoist insurgents are reminiscent of the tactics of the Pol Pot in the indiscriminate taking of innocent lives, including the forced recruitment and victimisation of innocent

While Rocca was in Nepal, the Washington Times newspaper in her capital published an interview with Baburam Bhatarai in which he appeared to answer US concerns point-by-point. Asked for his response to the comparison made between the Maoists and the Khmer Rouge, Bhattarai said that the Khmer Rouge's atrocities had been exaggerated. "There is no independent and authentic account of events in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge available so far," Bhattarai maintained.

Asked about the killing of the embassy security personnel in Kathmandu, Bhattarai said US govern

ment employees and American citizens in Nepal were "completely safe". He said the two had been accused of espionage, and added: "Henceforth, if any such charges are levelled against any such employee, the

Elephant polo

The National Parks team, led by Captain Ram Prit Yadav, won the double at the 21" annual World Elephant Polo Championships (WEPA) hosted by the Tiper Mountain Group on the polo field at the edge of the Royal Chitwan national park last week. The Nepali team beat Chivas Regal Scotland, the defending World Champions, captained by Peter Prentice. The National Parks team also won the Tiger Moun tain All Nepal Challenge, a

match played by mahouts on their own elephants, beating the Elephant Polo Championships are an annual invitational even arranged by Tiger Mountain and



Mandala House

1. 412412, 429119 (0:00 cm - 5:00 p

A Clinic for Cosmetic

Acne/Scars/Warts/Mole

Falling Hait/Dendhuff/Baldness

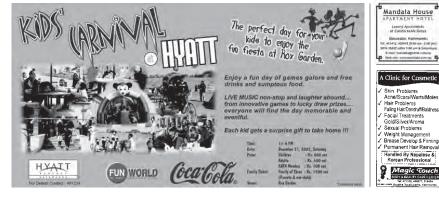
Handled By Nepalese &

Korean Professional

Hair Problems

Gold/Silver/Aroma

Sexual Problems



SOMEWHERE IN NEPAL

Split personalities

the palace for seeking to marginalise

Girija Prasad Koirala's belated warning of an ugly "divide-and-rule" ploy ha injected new life into the quest for consensus. The Kangresi patriarch had good reason to fear a domino effect of the departure of senior leaders from the CPN-UML. Nepal Sadbhavana Party leader Mukti Nath Mandal opted out of the allparty resolve to step up protests against the palace, saying the Maoists were the real villains Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) manipulating the force and foibles

Season's

rry X-Mas menu will be unfolded

with the likes of Roast Turkey and Plum Pudding

accompanied with soul toothing

Delive Garden

Santa on Sale

Widespread display of X-Mas pastries, takes and breads. The Pastry Shop throws up

an assurement of plum puddings, cales, Yule Logs.

Or custom create your own imaginative hampers

Partry

Inferno

the curse of Cain

Lazimpat, Kathmandu

Tel: 411818, 423888

president Surva Bahadur Thapa told restive party colleagues that he signed that statement to promote national reconciliation. From the new warmth in the tone of UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Jenal's views on the monarch. Koirala knew he was running out of time to sound the siren. A day later, he promptly proceeded to

During the early Panchayar years, it was postulated that politics could easily be managed by

Indulgence

X-Mas Eve buffet at TFC

with an elaborate spread including Rossi Torkey, compliniented with free flow of wine.

For dinger at Rs 1799 nett

25 December

X-Mas brunch at TFC with Roast Turkey

Rs. 1199 nort.

31 December

Includes welcome drink Free Flow of

Sparking wine, beer or soft drinks.

Re. 1400 nort

THE WAR

Inferno - the curse of Cain

A live-wire event with the most astounding

happening duo - Jimmy Tangaren & Jazzy Jon

in the DI circuit (Considered the Bast DI in India)

Buffer Dinner with Unlimited Drinks

hear and sound synchronized by the mo-

Lavish Buffet dinner accompanied with Live Musi

Caral Singing and southing Saxophone recital in the Labby

of 200 Nepalis. That number grew later, the RPP hit back by forcing exponentially over the decades until it overwhelmed the system. The newly legalised parties accepted the cardinal wisdom in

1990. Rabindra Nath Sharma's assertion that there were more expanchas in the Nepali Congress and the UML than in the RPP didn't win him the party presidency over the weekend. It did clarify how the red-carpet treatment the big parties accorded the ex-panchas in swing constituencies doomed the RPP from the start. (Six years

political parties. But they also are upposed to raise probing, if oftentimes plain, questions. What if the king genuinely didn't know how to rectify his errors? From restoring the House of Representatives, to announcing the election date, to forming a broad-based government in keeping with the spirit of Article 128 of the constitution, to restoring the Sher Bahadur Deuba government, the possibilities are ominously expansive Four of the Super ix outside government shouldn't have had too many problems

eing on some solution.

To be sure, public participation

in street protests has energised our parties. Those who berated the bis nes for having mauled the faith of the people have turned to mocking the assemblage of activists ensconced in the relative safety of the capital. They fail to learn from the protests of 1990 and 1979. It's not or nothing that Kathmandu is still called Nepal by old-timers.

One remarkable thing about post-4 October politics is the image makeover that seems to be underway in the mainstream. A lot of us still believe our leaders have become democrats only because their privileges are under threat. At least we're now prepared to be proved wrong. Consider the number of people who see political tint as

things of value, like, say, criticism of well in the Khadka-Gupta-Wagle trio's graft travails. The people being raised in support of our liberties We need much more though, to conclude they resonate with genuine concern for our well being.

The political change of 1990 brought a rare opportunity to expand the Nepali city-state into a national realm that would allow the people to participate fully in collective decisions. We've come a long way since the days when the Rastriya Panchayat member from Doti used to be fixated with overflowing sewage in Baneshwar during zero hour. It's just that the national filth hasn't received the attention it deserves.

The suspension of civil

liberties during the state of emergency couldn't sufficiently alert us to what we risked losing irretrievably. Much will depend or how well we have learned our lessons this time. Love them, or hate them, but our leaders aren't going to get any better than who we are. The political class, too. must have realised that the tools of the democracy campaign are infinitely different from those of a perpetual war of national libera-. Political victors need a double-strength inoculation of humility to uphold the supremacy of those they represent.

of ideas are supposed to produce

comrades and Kangresis to take

turns propping up its leaders as

In a nation fragmented on so

many fronts, conflict is perhaps an

confrontation shouldn't be seen as

Madisonian conviction to conclude

an aberration. You don't need

that the only way such conflicts

could be suppressed is by suppres

ing freedom. Robust and uninhib-

ited exchanges in the marketplace

inevitable fact of life. The politics of

prime minister.)

Rabina and Rabin in hospital

"It all seems like a dream to me " save Rhakta Rahadu Regmi as he watches his children Rabina and Rabin playing in the hospital garden. Bhakta Bahadur had just playing in the hospital garden. Ismaxta sanadur had just arrived with his children on Saturday at the Sushma Koirala Memorial Hospital (SKMH) in Sankhu after a six-hour ride from Simara. There has been overwhelming support for the Regmi

family since this tragic story was first reported ("Why the children?" #121), and the SKMH offered free treatment. Rabina and Rabin were badly burnt in a Maoist arson attack on their bus on 4 November near Malangwa. Bhakta Bahadur's wife, Anju, was among three passengers who died in the incident. The children have still not been told of

mother's death. When Dr Andreas Settje of SKMH read the story, he was so touched that he got the hospital to offer free treatment no matter how long it takes. "I felt really upset after reading their story. I've come across a lot of severe cases like this. But the history of this case is very tragic,

organisation INSEC for Rabina and Rabin's expenses and rehabilitation have reached nearly Rs 50,000. Many of the contributions came from school children. "When I read the story I couldn't stop crying," recalls Sarah Neupane, of Class 11 at St Mary's School. "We thought we could contribute, so we made copies of the article and distributed it " Neupane's effort raised Rs 5 000 from her

"The story of Rabin and Rabina shows the impact of the meaningless war and the suffering that the Nepalis. especially children, are going through," said another contributor, Meena Shrestha from Bijuli Bazaar

Bhakta Bahadur thinks god has answered his prayers, and is thankful that fellow-Nepalis have responded so immediately and generously to his family's tragedy. He had no one else to turn to, and was getting increasingly worried about whether his children would recover fully.



ainst infection the treatment will include skin grafts, hopedic surgery of the fingers as well as psychologics nseling for another six weeks. Four-year-old Rabin is now bored of staying in bed, and as hopping around the hospital compound while his nurse runs after him. Six-year-old Rabina looks erful looks carefully after her brother

have already become the most-popular patients. Doctors and nurses given them full attention, other patients and even total strangers hug and talk to them in the garden.

Settle says the burns are serious, and besides quarding

with the friends she has already made ong other patients. ppily surprised with the overwhelming pport from Nepal and abroad. "It has

he Children's Programme at INSEC. "As a media can play a role in highlighting the

 Shota and Julie Kamishima (Rs 10,000) 2. Lincoln School Community Service Class of 2002 (Rs 10,000) 3. Anonymous (Rs 5,000) 4. Rita Bhandar (Rs 5,000) 5. St Mary's School students (Rs 5,000) 6. Nabil Bank staff. Binaya Regmi, Kapil Sharma, Bishnu Acharya, Bikash Mishra, Prabin Chettry. Sundar Kadel, Bhuvan Dahal, Pradeep Bista (Rs 3600) 7. Anne Erpelding (Rs 3,000) 8. Stalf of Nepal Bangladesh Bank, Janakpur (Rs 2,500) 9. Meyna Shreetha Riisii Rs 20 (Rs 2,000) 10. Hanna Renerliker (Rs 1,000) 11. Pushkar Dannar Relaisi (Rs 5,00)

FCONOMY BIZ NE Tenth Plan

As usual, the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) has identified poverty reduction as its overriding goal. The plan, made public this week, aims at reducing the number of people below poverty to 30 percent of the total population in the next five years. The National Planning Commission (NPC) has estimates 38 percent of the current population lives below the poverty line. Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission (NPC) Shanker population lives below the power just view challenge to the relation a famility Currission (Very California). Sharma said 58 percent of the total development expenditure in the plan period was expected to be financed by foreign aid. The plan has set a 6.2 percent growth target if the law and order shuation improves. If it doesn't, the plan will settle for 4.3 percent growth. The plan emphasises coordinating security and development issues, reconstruction of infrastructure destorated by the Maisti Insurgency and rehabilitating people who have fled from

ADB assistance

Perhaps due to the dire situation the country faces, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) a major multilateral donor, has pledged to nearly double its assistance to Nepal next year. The ADB will provide a \$115 million in loans and grants to Nepal for 2003, up from \$60 million this year. Resident representative of the bank in Kathmandu, Richard Vokes, said the sum will be dishursed for five loans and nine technical assistance projects He said deteriorating security has been the biggest impediment for economic development in the country. "Given the continuing political instability and difficult security situation, the targeted economic growth rate of 4.3 percent in the current year is clearly not achievable," said Vokes. In 2002 the ADB approved two loans for ndary education support project and urban environment improvement project.

Shikhar Beats

Twenty bands have been selected to take part in the Shikhar Music Beat Contest to be held in Kathmandu on 4-5 January. Popular bands like Cobweb, Robin & Looza:, Mukti & Revival, Dr. Pilot and the Mystic Band are scheduled to perform at the concert. The winners stand to win Rs 172,000. Surya Nepal is sponsoring the program to promote its

premium tobacco product, Shikhar. Vogue Advertisement and Event Management will organise the event at Dasarath Stadium in the capital.

Signature Whisky Launched

Nepal Liquors, in collaboration with McDowell & Company, has launched Signature Rare Whisky in the Nepali market this week. Manufactured at its plant at Biratnagar, Signature Whisky is an exquisite blend of rare aged Scotch whiskies and other distinctive malts. It is smooth and has a mellow character, catering to the refined taste of the contemporary Nepali palate, said Gautam Mallick, general sales manager at the company. The 750 ml bottle of Signature Whisky will cost Rs 625 in the domestic market. Nepal Liquors is well known for brands like McDowell's No. 1, McDowell's Premium and Bappiper.

New showroom of Morang Auto

Morang Auto Works, the distributor for Yamaha motorcycles in Nepal for the past 27 years, has opened its new shownoom at Tripureswor. The increased volume of business led the management to shift to a larger shownoom, built to standards set by Yamaha Motor Co. (Japan). Moran Auto hopes the spacious and scientifically planned new showroom will cater efficiently to customer needs.

Travelling in style

Samsonite, the global leader in stylish luggage, has opened an outlet at Durbar Marg in the Nepali capital.

Samsonite Travel World, the one stop shop for all travel needs for the consumer, displays a range of Samsonite luggage as well as other products to create a suitable ambience for discerning shoppers. The company philoso-

Rural consumers

There is salvation for consumer goods manufacturers.

Urban areas like Kathmandu

FMCG consumption for the Big

Boys, A multipurpose household

budget survey conducted by the

household expenditures in some

approximately five fold between

turers concentrate their promo-

tions in urban areas.

985 and 1995. So, it comes as

On the other hand, the per

Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG, as it is known in business circles) have zeroed in on the rural markets in South Asia to raise profit margins. Having plateaued a bit with urban saturation, they are going back to the village

Cut-throat competition in several FMCG categories has led to a search for alternatives. That is why companies like Hindustan Lever were smart enough to recognise the potential of an otherwise neglected rural market. The answer for our own beleaguered economy could lie in the vast majority of Nepali consumers spread through the nearly 4,000 villages in this country.

The rural market has lain fallow for several reasons. Most Nepali marketers see rural areas as poverty-stricken and disease infested with low or no disposable income. A lack of credible studies and statistics of the rural retailing environment and consumer behaviour have undoubtedly contributed to this opinion. But studies have shown that it is the volume that makes this market lucrative.

capita consumption of these Except for some organised products is already stagnating and retail outlets in urban areas, small shelf space is at a premium. outlets in rural areas dominate Consumers are growing immune the retailing landscape in Nepal to discounts and bumper A recent AC Nielsen ORGschemes, which results in low MARG study estimated there are profit margins. The logic behind 130,000 outlets in rural Nepal. the freebies doesn't always add Most of these shops are small up. A family of four which uses a with daily turnovers of less than tube of toothpaste a month will Rs 1,000. They sell anything from not increase their consumption twofold despite a fall in prices and a bumper offer.

hold expenditures in rural areas ir Nepal are unavailable, one can accept consumption of hair oil toothpaste and other products have increased over the years. even if the frequency of consump tion may be lower than that of their urban counterparts. The good news for FMCG manufac urers with an eve on the rural market is a large population who were not traditionally identified as potential consumers. A barometer for market

ompetition is product penetra rion in retail outlets. This also provides for an interesting omparison of FMCG penetration between urban and rural areas. undoubtedly comprise the bulk of Soaps and detergents are available in more than two-thirds of urban outlets, while the little that makes it to the rural market is Nepal Rastra Bank says per capita mostly counterfeit with little or no representation of major personal care items have increased brands. The expansion of these products into rural areas is a ugely untapped reservoir.

no surprise that FMCG manufac-The task before FMCG marketers is not easy. They have to develop the market and then redesign products for rural consumers. Companies who inves early in rural areas have an advantage and the bonus of brand loyalty. To accomplish all this requires missionary zeal and a FMCG manufactures will have expanded away from urban saturation, and rural Nepalis will have better choices and genuine merchandise. The bottom line is it's a win-win situation

Selling out

can no longer sustain them."

from 🖒 🗈

Tangible progress in the handover of Royal Nepal Airlines Corporat (RNAC) and Nepal Telecommunications Corporation (NTC) were in fact among the main conditions for Nepal qualifying for the World Bank's highcase loan scenario.

The new tourism minister. Kuber Sharma statement last month, that he vas willing to hand over the management contract of the loss-making RNAC to anyone local or foreign who could fork out Rs 1.5 billion, proved controversial. Sharma's deputy, Ravi Bhakta Shrestha, clarified to us last week that what the minister actually meant was that RNAC would be turned into a public limited company and its shares floated. But for this to happen, the national airline needs to streamline management and curb its annual losses of Rs 1 billion

Ever since privatisation was launched by the Nepali Congress govern-ment in 1992. 18 companies have been handed over, but there are over wo dozen in various stages of sickness still left. They are haemn Rs 2.4 billion a year, and the government is just not able to pick up the tabs anymore. Just RNAC makes up nearly half the losses.

According to a recent Finance Ministry report, only 14 enterprises have

completed their audited reports. It adds: "The performance indicators of public enterprises show that the financial efficiency and physical achieve ments are worsening day by day." The government has only received Rs 245.7 million from state enterprises, 1.27 percent of its total share

Officials say the major objectives of Nepal's largely donor-driven privatisation program have been reducing the role of government in business-related activities, enhancing private sector participation in the economy, and attracting private "shy" capital in business ventures. But critics say the forthcoming liquidations prove the failure of the privatisation process. Asks state sector expert Narayan Manandhar: "How can you call liquidation of companies on the verge of death privatisation?"

Ratnakar Adhikari, co-author of the book, Privatisation: Expectation

and Reality also argues that privatisation, by definition, should increase competition and efficiency in the market. "But most of the privatised enterprises have turned into sick units and the country hasn't gained much from the privatisation in the past. It seems to have been directed out of donor pressure," he added.

Officials dony that the process is donor-driven and say privatisation has now become a question of the survival of the treasury. They cite the example of the Soviet-era Janakour Cinarette Factory which has 1 200 employees, but occupies only 29 percent of the tobacco market in the

market share with just 400 staff. Balananda Poudel of the Corporation Coordination Division at the Finance Ministry told us simply: "The abilities of most state-owned enterprises are so high that the government

The situation is so bad that the government is scrounging just to employees of the companies to be liquidated. "We had asked for over Rs 220 million to pay off the staff of the Sajha Yatayat, out of which the government made available only Rs 50 million," said Shyam Sunder arma, Registrar at the Company Registrar's Office, who is also serving as liquidator to the public transport enterprise based in Pulchowk, Some imployees have sued the government challenging the liquidation of both aiha and Himal Cement.

Even companies that were privatised relatively smoothly have gripes against the government. Says Diwakar Golchha, whose conglomerate took over the Nawalparasi-based Bhrikuti Pulp and Paper ten years ago: "We have enhanced the factory's capacity eight-fold, improved productivity and quality, but we have got zero support from the government after privatisation." Golchha complains that he pays taxes worth Rs 6,000 per tonne paper, whereas cheap paper is being imported from international market at zero duty. "How can we survive in such a situation?" he asks.

The privatisation process has been bungled mainly because of

political interference and corruption, even though the rules and proce dures are in place. The new government needs to not just redress past wrongs, but also meet fresh targets. Donors supporting privatisation realise this is big challenge for the government, but say it has to bite the bullet.

"State-owned enterprises are a major burden on the treasury and have a history of mismanagement and inefficiency and they add a further financial burden to a government budget already under severe pressure. says Chris Jackson, economic adviser at the British aid group, DfID.

"Privatisation is a difficult reform area. However, we hope to see evidence of renewed political commitment in pursuing reform driven by the curren

DfID had no plans to provide further support to public enterprise reform, but Jackson says it would consider future support if there was evidence of commitment from the government. Under a DfID grant totalling \$4.5 million, the Adam Smith Institute advised the Privatisation Cell at the Finance Ministry from 1997-2001.

The process is now at the crossroads, and some say it needs a serious have been raised on the credibility of the whole process of privatisation, we had also supported it on a merit basis. There is a need to make the entire

BPC saga finally nears end

stors will finally win the majority stakes in Butwal Power Company (BPC) in the next few days. Last week, a proposal submitted by the Privitisation Committee at the Finance Ministry went

urgency because the once-extended deadline for this money expires Friday.

"Undue delay in the process of privatisation would drive potential investors

to the cabinet for final approval. By late Thursday, as we went to press, the council was expected to approve it. BPC's privatisation has been a saga of red tape, lobby pressure and even Maoist damage to the 12 MW Jhimruk plant earlier this year (see pic). The plant in Pyuthan listrict suffered a loss of nearly Rs 270 million. The Norwegian government earmarked \$3.1 million for repairing it, and the cabinet meeting took on added

away as they would find alternative projects for investment elsewhere," said Norwegian official. BPC is Nepal's biggest privatisation project, and

Interkraft Nepal had bid for 75 percent shares of the BPC at Rs 950 million. Its rival, Independent Power Company (IPC) Nepal had offered Rs 866 million. Nepali officials 11°C.) Nepai had offered RS 806 million. Nepail officials nvited Interkraft for negotiations in March this year, but by then the plant was bombed by the Maoists.

ed jointly by the Nonal government and United Mission to Nepal in 1966, Butwal Power Compan anacity of 17 MW and owns 14 9 percent of Himal Power Limited. Himal Power is currently owner and operator of the \$135 million 60



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Seasons Greetings

over the Christmas and New Year holidays, so much so that most of us face alarming levels of stress just researching the best way to ring in the new. Simply a case of too many options, and too little time. This year the annual NT guide to celebrations traditional roast turkey to the not-sotraditional pink salmon steak, so you Once you make up your mind all you have to do is step off the treadmill, give thanks for the year that was, seek good cheer at the bottom of a glass of eggnog, and make some new year esolution that will stick.

True gourmets have plenty of reason to celebrate as restaurants nul out all the stops to tempt the discerning palate. Christmas Eve dinner at the Hyatt Resency's Rox Restaurant promises to be quite

turkey, all rounded off with Christmas pudding. 491234

For great ambience and a nopolitan Christmas, you can't do better than Café Mitra. Celebrate the season surrounded by contemporary art and the temptation of good wine melting brie tartlets, pink salmon steal and sweet mango soufflé. 259015 This holiday season, you can

combine good cheer with charity if you eat at the Yak & Yeti because , management makes a contribution to the Friends Council Service of Nepal with each meal. Good deeds are easy if it is a five-course dinner at the Chimney Restaurant. Feast on salmo and mour, traditional most turkey. plum pudding and mulled wine by

Paris of a bysone era comes alive on New Year's Eve with Moulin

dancers and an international gourme buffer prepared by Executive Chef Victor Holla, The Moulin Rouse

audience has free entry to Sinners in Heaven at the Atrium. 248999 It's a difficult choice between: Christmas Eve buffet or perhaps a grand buffet lunch the next day at Alfresco in Soaltee Crowne Plaza Perhaps both? If samba is more your style, then step into the new year at Meeha-Malhar with international

dancers and Panchtatva. Sample the sweet treats at the patisserie with a generous 20 percent discount. In the quiet heights of Sanepa, within the comfortable premises of the Summit Hotel you can enjoy a peaceful Christmas dinner with th option for a vegetarian menu. The

same tastes can be encountered within the palace walls of Patan Museum Cafe

the night away on New Year's Eye at the Summit. 521810 Candlelight, a Christmas tree

and an unparalleled menu: homemade eggnog, hot mulled wine, traditional turkey finished off with warm Christmas pudding— Kilroy's creates a European flayoured Christmas celebration Christmas day is a family affair when Santa Claus visits with gifts for the kids 250440

Hotel de l' Annapurna promises variety for the whole family. The Coffee Shop is the venue for Christmas and New Year celebrations with great food, even for vegetarians, and a live DJ. Ghar-o Kabab will offer an unlimited kabab and beverages accompanied by ghazal recitals by maestro Saaz Sinoh 221711

25 December 2002

red wine.)

New Year's Eve

Nrs. 2500.00

wine, Live music by leartbreakers (All Taxes)

Then, of course, there are those

delighted to either get out of Kathmandu all together, or find an oasis of calm here in the Valley There are magical destinations waiting, some of them a lot close rhan you rhink

Éscape the humdrum at Dwarika's Hotel. Check in for a Christmas or New Year's package that includes a soothing massage, delicious afternoon tea and seasonal pastries. At Christmas enjoy cocktails and a six-course dinner or a gala dinner with a live band on New Year's Eve. On Christmas day indulge in a traditional lunch with all the trimmings. 479488

Godavari Village Resort, the eco-friendly resort located 13 km from the city centre, is set among extensive gardens and offers an overnight nackage for New Year's Eve that includes breakfast (in

Kathmandu Valler

a bird's

our view of the volley

of Adverture Comp.

& Country Kitchen

Lokuri Bhaniyang



bed?), a welcome drink, special gala dinner with wine and live music by the Heartbreakers. Wine and dine on a set menu on Christmas day

Amidst the serenity of the Gokarna forest with a backdrop of the Himalaya is Le Meridien, the only international standard 18-hol course in Nepal. So if golf is your bag, gift yourself a two night stay at the Country Club Heritage rooms for golfers with meals at Country Club House or Hunter's Lodge Restaurant.

Cleur, Corel

Singing, Fun &



verest Panorama Resort has a view worth waking up to on New Year's Day, taken in from the private balcony of your centrally heated cottage. The pine and oak forests are great for hike For more leisurely pursuits there is mini golf, tennis or a spot of fishing in Indra Sarovar Round off the day

Just away from Nagarkot proper is Nagarkot Farm House, a hillton resort surrounded by thousands of fruit trees and great mountain views from the typical Nepali-style building. The cosy restaurant prepares set meals from local organic produce. A serene setting to enjoy long walks, good company and perhaps contemplate the universe 271545

Dhulikhel Lodge Resort, built in the Newari style, faces the Panchka Valley and offers breathta of the Jugal Himal peaks and bike, go on hikes, raft or just lounge on the outdoor garden patio Packages are available for

Christmas and New Year 222380 You can't do better than a glowing recommendation from Time Magazine: "If Kathmandu's relentless traffic, noise and incense laden smog becomes a little too suffocating, head to Nagarkot for some larity...and there, the Club Himalaya Resort boasts an indoor

nool sauna and a helindad " Head

for Nagarkot's trendy resort. 414432 Borderland is the prime destination for adrenaline junkies Three hours north of Kathmandu, the resort is set on sprawling terraces waterfalls. Borderland offers very Packages that include village walks 425836

"Silent Nights" at Shangri-La Village, the boutique resort in Pokhara, celebrates the holiday season with special rates for Nepalis and residents of Nepal. Th Jazz Bar hosts Christmas Eve dinner while Shambala Garden will serve buffet lunch on Christmas day. Celebrate the New Year at the Jazz Bar with an overnighter, 43574

If you want to go somewhere warmer, then Temple Tiger Jungle special three-day winter packages that cludes golf and tennis and a 30 Lodge in the Royal Chitwan National Park is the place for you. This is a percent discount on all spa facilities deluxe jungle resort with individual villas with attached baths and private balconies, and daily guided tours by Ring in the New Year with a grand hall dinner, live music and lots of attractive prizes and gift hampers. 780306

If you want exotic and remote that is within reach, then a 20 minute flight from Pokhara takes you on one of the trained naturalists. In the evenings, look forward to a crackling wood fire and excellent food. 244651 world's most spectacular flights between Annapuma and Dhaulagiri to Jomsom Mountain Resort. The resort sits above the delightful town of Jomsom, overlooking the Kali Gandaki gorge and on the lap of the Nilgiri. The e-night package includes a round















Refugee rights

CANBERRA - Australia's refugee policy has led to rights abuses says US-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) in its report, "By Invitation Only: Australian Asylum Policy".

Canberra's 'Pacific solution', which involved diverting asylum seekers from Australian waters to Pacific nations willing to take them on a short term basis in return for financial support is also viewed critically. HRW takes issue with Australian government claims that simply because asylum seekers transited through another country on their way to Australia they should be returned to their country of origin. Controversy continues to surround the Oct 19, 2001 sinking of SIEV-X, which went down in international waters. resulting in the drowning of 353 people.

The Australian government rejects the accusations of human rights abuses. Phillip Ruddock, of the Ministry for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, rejected the Human Rights Watch report as "riddled with factual errors and...defending the practice of using people smugglers." The Australian government recently rejected recommendations from the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to set time limits on refugee detentions. (IPS)

Trading places



ENEVA - The World Trade EU's future frontiers. Ten new Organisation (WTO) continues to attract new members despite the fact that multilateral in 2004. Two other countries. negotiations continue to be Bulgaria and Romania, can aim for bogged down by disputes membership three years after that. hetween the developing Turkey has had its status as an South and the industrialised officially recognised candidate for North. China, which struggled membership reaffirmed, even if for 15 years to become part of the international trade syswill actually join. tem, finally acceded to the WTO a year ago, on Dec 11,

2001. China became the largest consumer market on the WTO roster and has eight radically about a strong EU foreign years to adapt its economy to comply with the multilateral system's rules.

The WTO approved the addition of Armenia to its membership, on the heels of Macedonia's accession, bringing the member-country total to 146. However, the open-door policy the WTO has followed since its creation in 1995 has encountered an exception in the case of Iran. The US blocked Iran's accession to the multilateral trade body for the eighth time in the last year and a half.

Sunachai Panitchnakdi the WTO chief said reversing the marginalisation of the least developed countries (LDCs) is one of the major challenges the organisation faces. The participation of the 49 LDCs in global trade has fallen from 0.8 percent in 1980 to 0.5 percent. (IPS)

Ethical dealings

. ON - An anti-corruption group has unveiled a set of guidelines that it says will help reduce corrupt practices by transnational corporations and their agents in the developing world. TRACE (Transparent Agents and Contracting Entities) says its "Standard for Doing Business with Intermediaries Internationally" will fill a critical gap in global commercial practices and correct some of the wrongdoing seen increasingly in international business deals.

The non-profit organisation says its effort, supported by major law firms and investor groups, is aimed at corporations that conduct business with foreign governments. Under the standard, firms would: review the business and technical credentials of foreign business intermediaries; require three independent business references for the person: request disclosure of prior bankruptcies or lawsuits and do an extensive media search of the intermedian ies and their work. They would also investigate whether any government official or political candidate has ownership interest or family relationships to the business concerned.

Applying the TRACES standard would eliminate bribery especially in industries like arms trade, oil and gas, and construction and engineering, where multinational firms use agents in talks with foreign governments. (IPS)



COMMENT

Second, the international context in

which the EU operates is being

revolution underway in Washin

was largely able to count on a

no longer holds.

requirements.

ton. For the past 50 years, the EU

benign partnership with the US in a

EU being unprepared for its

"big bang" enlargement aggravates the problem. No one has any idea

how to run a union of 25 or more

basic logistics, starting with the

geometric escalation in translation

The enlargement schedule

agreed at Copenhagen will define

and Switzerland may one day

the final limit of the union. Norway

possibly seek to join. Aside from the

war-ravaged Balkan states, the only

imaginable additional candidates,

assuming that they are classified as

"European", are Russia, Belarus and

member states-not even in terms o

nultilateral context; that assumption

transformed by the strategi

"Big bang" union



he European Union summit that just ended in Copenhager has more or less settled the members, from Central Europe and the Mediterranean, will be admitted mighty doubts remain as to when it

It is urgent for member states to think seriously about re-writing the EU treaties in terms which will be workable for the long term. In particular, they need to think more

and security policy for two reason First, enlargement will take the EU right up to Russia and the former Soviet Union; if Turkey joins, the EU will extend to the heart of the Middle Fast as well

A large EU will have to have the character of a federation: this is a question of arithmetic, not ideology.

Ukraine. Russia is just too big, too Asiatic, too nuclear, and too much of a "great power", to be accommodated inside the EU. In theory, the advantage of this

"big bang" enlargement is that it may concentrate minds on the need for a radical re-think needed for a bigger EU. Past enlargements have seen in packets of one two or at most three new members and existing members pretended the need not fundamentally change the EU's institutional arrangements. That pretence is no longer tenable. Fortunately, the ground is being prepared for reform by a conventio on the future of the union, chaired by former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing.
The trouble is the steep

escalation coincides with a swing of opinion in a number of member countries in favour of a more intergovernmental EU, with more emphasis on cooperation between sovereign states and less attention to common EU institutions. This is notable among big member states like Britain, France, and Spain; former "great powers" who fear being submerged in a mega-Europe. They hope to perpetuate their influence by asserting claims of

national sovereignty.

But this is the wrong solution to the problem of a bigger EU. Decision-makine is already difficult in an EU with 15 members. It will

become impossible unless the scope for majority voting is enlarged, and the veto power of individual states reduced. A large EU will have to have much more the character of a federation than a small EU. This is a question of arithmetic nor ideology. An analogous argument applies to the development of a more effective EU foreign policy. If the US continues to downgrade its commitment to multilateralism, and intervenes militarily wherever it pleases, then the world will become a much more dangerous place.

British Prime Minister Ton

Blair says that Europe should be

partner, not a servant or a rival, of the US. That would certainly be progress on the European side and would require much closer foreign policy cooperation within Europe But unless there is a fundamental change in the posture of the Bush administration, it seems doubtful that partnership will be on offer a all. If we are living in a world in which the US acts solely in its own immediate national interests, the EU will be compelled to do likewise. No EU government, however, yet seems prepared to face this. • (© Project Syndicate)

(Ian Davidson is an adviser to, and a columnist for, the European Policy Centre, Brussels, and a former columnist for the Financial Times.)

Celebrating the irrational



Kahneman, a psychologist, has demonstrated how individuals systematically behave in ways less rational than orthodox economists believe they do. His research shows not only that individuals sometimes act differently than standard economic theories predict, but that they do so regularly, systemarically, and in ways that can be understood and interpreted through alternative hypotheses, competing with those utilised by orthodox econo-

To most market participants and indeed, ordinary observers—this does not seem like big news. Wall Street brokers who peddled stocks they knew to be garbage exploited the irrationality that Kahneman and Smith exposed. Much of the mania that led to the bubble economy was based on exploiting

In fact, this irrationality is no news to the economics profession either John Maynard Keynes described the stock market as based on a beauty contest where the winner guesses best what the judges will say.

This year's Nobel prize celebrates a critique of simplistic market conomics, just as last year's award did. Last year's laureates emphasised that different market participants have different (and imperfect) information, and these asymmetries in information have profound impact on how an economy functions.

They implied that markets were not, in general, efficient; that there was in important role for government to play. Adam Smith's invisible hand is invisible at least in part because it is not there. For more than twenty years economists were enthralled to so called "rational expectations" models which assumed that all participants have the same (if not perfect) informaion and act perfectly rationally, that markets are perfectly efficient, that nemployment never exists and where there is never any credit rationing.

One reason that economics is such a difficult subject is that economists cannot conduct controlled experiments. Critics say subjects bring to experimental situations modes of thought determined outside of the experiment, and thus the experiments are not as clean and the inferences not as clear cut. Nonetheless, economic experiments provide insights into a number of important issues, such as the improved design of auctions. Most importantly, the irrationality of market participants, which was the focus of

It is important to study people and economies as they are, not as we want them to be.



Kahneman's work, has been verified repeatedly in laboratory contexts. Amusingly, it appears (at least in experimental situations) that the subjects are not as selfish as economists have hypothesised-except for one groupthe economists themselves.

The Nobel Prize signifies how important it is to study people and economies as they are, not as we want them to be. Only by understanding better actual human behaviour can we hope to design policies that will make our economies work better as well.

(© Project Syndicate)

(Joseph E Stiglitz is Professor of Economics and Finance at Columbia University, the winner of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economics, and author of "Globalisation and its Discontents".)

Jammu and Kashmir. Last month

New Delhi announced it would

amassed at the border—to punish

This confrontation cost India double

its entire higher education budget. It

achieved none of its stated objectives; a

Islamabad's "support for terrorism".

fact that Islamahad has exploited its

India is frustrated at this, and resents the

position in Bush's 'War against Terror'.

But it is venting its frustration in the

wrong place: SAARC is a multilateral

forum whose charter prevents a

discussion of bilateral disputes.

Pakistan for its sponsorship of

"cross-border terrorism", in

ment House last year.



ones of reconciliation between fair and relatively free elections in vals India and Pakistan have eceived a big setback with the cancellation of a summit of the demobilise its 700 000 troops outh Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), scheduled for mid-January in Islamabad. Host-state Pakistan particular, an attack on India's Parlia announced the cancellation this month but it is India, and at its behest, tiny Bhutan, that effectively scuttled the meeting. Both India and Pakistan have blamed each other "nermanent", "wrifiable" end to

for the summit's cancellation. This will hurr SAARC's emergence as an economic or trade oloc. Ironically, it is likely to cost India more dearly than any other member of the seven-nation grouping. Hopes of a thaw in India-Pakistan relations soared after the

vibrant economic bloc is the surest way of shooting oneself in the foot. In 1999 too, India cancelled a SAARC summit following a major conflict with Pakistan at Karoil This time round, India falsely claimed they were not communicated summit dates, although they were, in Sentember Later. New Delhi made its

> attendance conditional upon "progress" toward setting up a South isian Free Trade Agreement, and still later, on Pakistan ending its support to "cross-border terrorism" t accuses Pakistan of dragging its eet and trying to wriggle out of its commitment to allow more imports from India and grant it MFN (Most Favoured Nation) treatment under a World Trade Organisation agreement. This is largely true, but the reality is more complex. Pakistan says the MFN issue is extraneous to SAARC. SAARC has lived with these tensions. Why India now cites them to scuttle the summit, has to do with two calculations.

Sabotaging SAARC's evolution into a

with potentially disastrous global

consequences.
India's second calculation is

that SAARC is dispensable. New

Delhi would like to pretend it is in

the size of its economy, the skills of

the global big league by virtue of

the educated layers of its popula-

information technology. It would

rather do business with superpow

ers like the US, the EU and Japan.

and the Association of South-east

Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is

considerably more dynamic and

attractive than SAARC. India has

found it hard to enter into a cosy

has been knocking on ASEAN's

relationship with any trade bloc. Indi-

doors, but the latter is moving to set

up free trade agreements with China,

South Korea and Japan, Meanwhile,

India has neglected trade with other

being squeezed out of all regional

Obstructing and sabotaging

SAARC's evolution into a vibran

economic bloc is the surest way of

condemning the region's 1.3 billion

people to economic isolation, social

backwardness and political strife. By

may have accomplished that negative

holding SAARC to ransom, India

feat. ♦ (@ IPS)

shooting oneself in the foot and

SAARC statesand faces the prospect of

tion, and its relative success in

First, its leadership is loath to go to Islamabad and shake hands ith President Musharraf. Musharraf wants normalisation of relations with India to be made conditional on talks on Kashmir which India is reluctant to hold Absent diplomatic contacts, and amidst tension, the two could once again get into a nasty confrontation brandishing the nuclear sword—

Biodiversity and biopiracy

NEW DELHI - India's newly passed biodiversity act has come under strong criticism from leading environmental activists who say the legislation alienates indigenous farmers from their own resources—but ilitates biopiracy.
Union Environment and Forests Minister T R Baalu, claims the act

safeguards the interests of local people, growers and cultivators of biological diversity, as well as Indian researchers through the new National Biodiversity Authority (NBA). State level boards and manage-ment committees that will regulate access to plant and animal genetic resources support the act. Indian citizens and companies are allowed free access to biological resources within the country for research. purposes but are barred from transferring findings to foreign entities without the NRA's approval

Critics from the Research Foundation for Science Technology and the Environment (RFSTE) argue these provisions only succeed in burying biodiversity under a mountain of bureaucracy that can only serve to alienate ordinary farmers from their resources while making international biopiracy easier.

India has documented over 45,000 species of flora and 75,000 known species of fauna and contains with its borders two of the world's 10 biogeographic zones. The country is one of the world's 12 megacentres of biodiversity. (IPS)

Extremist activity

KUALA LUMPUR - Much of the international spotlight on terrorism has been focused on Indonesia and the Philippines, but new reports indicate that there may be more links to extremist activity in neighbouring Malaysia than has previously been thought of. According to a recent report by the International Crisis Group (ICG), Malaysia has been a base for terrorist figures over the past years.

At a symposium on Islam last week at the United Nations University in Tokyo, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said there was a link between a group of Malaysian Muslims and the al-Qaeda network. He said the link could be tracked to the 80s, when a group of Malaysians and Muslims from south-east Asia who went to Pakistan for religious studies came in contact with Afghans fighting occupying Soviet forces.

Since last year, the government has used the tough Internal Security Act to arrest over 70 people accused of being supporters of Jemaah Islamiyah, the group that has been blamed for the October attacks in Bali. While Mahathir says the terrorist link was only through a small group, the ICG report puts more emphasis on Malaysia's role, (IPS)

Biased reporting

DHAKA - The release from detention of two foreign television journalists last week and the continued imprisonment of two of their local colleagues underscores Bangladesh's sensitivity to media coverage relating to claims that religious extremists are operating there. Last week Leopoldo Brono Sorrentino and Zaiba Naz Malik, two British-based television journalists, arrested in Bangladesh on 25 November on suspicion of anti-state activities, arrived in London after being held in prison for two weeks.

Police said the two entered the country to gather "twisted information with a motive to project Bangladesh as a base for extreme fundamentalists and a sanctuary for the members of dreaded al-Qaeda and intertunists and a satircular for time intertunists or unequous discause and Taliban." They were released on condition that they would not broadcast any material shot in Bangladesh. No formal charges were brought against the journalists, who used fake identities. Their arrests started a bitter debate over the wisdom of the government's decision to imprison the journalists, but also highlighted suspicions of the foreign media's intentions when reporting about Bangladesh amid the international ttention to religious extremists in Asia. (IPS)

by ANTOANETA BEZLOVA

Party doctrine for

future

development.

or a well-off life, which emerges in November, or a well-off life, which emerged from their crucial underscores their increasing anxiety over social inequality

Confucian in origin, the 3,000-year-old phrase refers to a condition of moderate prosperity, and its fleshing out as the new party slogan is meant to appease the grievances of millions of Chinese peasants and workers who have been left by the wayside by more than 20 years of wrenching market reforms. The Chinese communist leadership is still loath to admit its ultimate roal is to create a middle class, party theoreticians have opted for a term with rich historical overtones that would appeal both to China's nascent well-off groups and placate the disgruntled social classes.

In the wake of the congress, a deluge of media reports about 'xiaokang' have said that all of China will reach this level of "moderate well-off life" by 2020. This is a revision of late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's stated goal in 1979 of reaching a well-off society by the end of the 20th century. At the time, Deng also warned that in the rush toward modernisation some people would "set rich first" while the majority of the country's 1.3 billion population would get rich later. "The new line indicates China's leadership will pay more attention to overall social progress in addition to economic growth," says Lu Xueyi, sociologist at the Institute of Sociology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

In his speech at the party congress, outgoing party chief Jiang Zemin admitted that the well-off life that Chinese people were living was "at a low level", is "not all-inclusive" and "very uneven". He pledged to quadruple the country's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in 2000 by 2020, neaning it will exceed \$3000. But the real challenge China faces in pursuit of an overall 'visokane' society is how to achieve fair distribution of social wealth because 'xiaokang' denotes not only material comfort, but also social equality

"Economic development has been the top priority in the past two decades. Social justice is equally important," wrote a team of academics, including political scientists and economists, in one of China's most influential think-tank publications, the Strategy and Management Journal, in May.

The new blueprint for China's in just several hundred families

Between 1995 and 200, state-owned firms and work units laid off some 48 million workers. "Economic development, especially in the past six or seven years, has become a zero-sum game," the authors of the article wrote. "While a minority got rich rapidly, some social groups became losers for the first time "The article also warned of an impending social crisis: "The situation that worries us most is that even the highest leadership denies the nation is polarised between rich and poor," it said. "If it goes on, the nation will have to pay a big social and political price."

Judging by the pronouncements at the 16th party ingress, where a new leadership with Vice President Hu Jintao as elected as party chief, Beijing is coming to grasp the magnitude of social risks hidden beneath the country's owing wealth gap. The call to build a 'xiaokang' society as been termed in the state media as a blueprint for China's future development and members of the Communist Party all over the country must formally study its ideas. A high-profile economic conference also declared the key priorities of government work for next year would be how to improve the welfare of rural people, laid-off workers and impoverished households. In the past decade, China has attracted some \$800

billion in foreign investment-but to sustain China's annual economic growth of 8 percent in the future, Beijing needs to reduce the country's dependence on erseas capital and to create a sizeable group of middleincome consumers. "The importance of foreign capital in China's economic rise has often been overlooked," says Richard Baum, professor of political science at the University of California in Los Angeles "Chinese leaders however, are well aware that they need an lternative source of economic growth should one day the flow of foreign money into China dry

Immersion Course on contemporary social issues

Deli for Applications:

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Left is right

Jana Rhawana 16 December

THIS PAGE CONTAINS MATERIAL SELECTED FROM THE NEPALI PRESS



You have remained quiet following the royal declaration.

I haven't remained quiet (on the 4 October royal move). Even before the present government was formed and showed its true form, I had made my views clear. I told those who accused the king of being regressive not to be so hasty. The Nepali Congress holds the biggest responsi-bility for the current situation, but that doesn't mean we are at loggerheads with His Maiesty. We have to think about the long term and resolve the crisis through dialogue. When I said this, rightists lauded me for being right while leftists. told me I shouldn't have spoken in the king's support. I still say the royal declaration wasn't regressive. There are ways to move on from here. Peaceful understanding and dialogue can save the country from regression. The king, however has been careless towards political partiesthose who came to power after the People's Movement. It's natural for the public and the

political parties to feel angry if the palace chooses to go it alone. Rather than working to create a consensus, the political parties are intent on criticising the kingis declaration as unconstitutional and regressive. Theyire working towards

undermining the monarchy. I will not call the royal declaration regressive, unconstitutional or undemocratic. The king has reiterated that he wants to hold elections quickly and to hand over power to the government formed after the election. Even the present government has said it wants to hold elections as soon as possible. The current crisis is the result of the king being put in a difficult position and the inability of the parties to come to a consensus. We can't call it an unconstitutional or regressive step. A few positive aspects have emerged from this situation. Corrupt ministers are being taken to task. Today, the people will not be swayed by the terms "democracy" and to vote for political parties. If the parties are right in their criticism of the king, why are the people quiet? The day after the royal declaration, there should have

What direction will the nation take when political parties react to the royal declaration? From his deliberations with political leaders and the views that the king has expressed, I do not suspect him of trying to undermine democracy and establish autocratic rule. But if powers within the palace and rightists surrounding the king are trying to use him to bring about such a situation, we have to fight to the end. I do not think the demonstrations and public meetings taking place now are aimed against the king. But I do suspect a rightist conspiracy to undermine democracy, which the people fought for in 1990. This suspicion is aimed at those rightists who want to make the king helpless and then take power.

What is the way out for the country?

The most important issue is to solve the Maoist problem. As long as they ignore the Maoists, no party can run an effective government. When the king formed the government, his priority was peace and security, local elections and general elections, in that order. This is a US conspiracy Jana Ekata, 16 December



nobrietio the current

Rocca, US assistant secretary of stat for South Asian Affairs in her recently concluded visit has recommended suppression of the insurgency. During her four-day stay, she met the king, prime minister, chief of army staff and leaders of political parties. While everyone else in the country is looking for a political solution. Rocca came un with promises of increased US aid to Nepal. She appealed to the Maoists to lay down their arms, totally overlooking the need for first creating a political environment conducive to their surrender. She also hinted that

her country might enlist the Maoists

China poses. If the Nepali Congress

and CPN-UML is committed to the

welfare of the country they should be

able to speak out for non-interference

Pointing fingers

Hindu, 10 December

Column by Sirich Shumser Rana in

It has become popular to say that

nothing significant happened in the

as a terrorist group in the near future. they haven't reached a consensus on It becomes obvious the purpose of what His Majesty should have done her visit was to encourage the Parties that malign the king by government to use force and supprestrying to interpret the country's constitution to suit their nurposes is sion against the insurgents. It cannot be just a coincidence that her visit not a new phenomenon. We can coincided with the growing momenconclude that it is the political parties themselves who are responsible for the rum of a campaign for a political solution to the Maoist problem. It is present constitutional crisis clear that the US benefits tremen-At a time when the parties should dously from instability in Nepal and have worked in collaboration with the has already developed relationships king, they are trying to portray a with the reactionary forces in this ngular competition between the king, the Manists and the parties. This country. The US hopes to oversee its anti-China movement" from Nepal clearly demonstrates the parties are against democracy. to weaken the economic challenges

> Muslim women Sirazuddin Khan in Himalava Times, 16 December

this is true. Political parties enjoyed

their monopoly and expanded their

wanted to hold elections when they

were in power. They were not above

mobilising government resources for

their own benefit. These political

parties now accuse the king of

violating the constitution after

of national politics-including

Ganesh Man Singh and late Man

Mohan Adhikari, had repeatedly

said monarchy is the only institu-

country's constitution. We must

The anger of the parties is

geared towards the government

ny program to deal with the

Maoist insurgency so far. Despite

accusations levelled at the king,

tion that has abided by the

not forget this reality.

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, late

seeing the royal move did not serve

their interests. Leaders at the helm

organisations down to the grass-

roots. More than once, circumstances proved that political parties

Forty-six-year-old Amilianis य टावनस learning to read and write. She spends two hours each morning and ning studying together with her daughter and grandson. The humiliation and discrimination this Nepalganj resident was subjected to

country for the last 12 years. In fact, in various government offices only added to her resolve to get an education. She started learning to read and write with the help of her 15-year-old daughter, Naira Bano. Soon, other women in the community joined her and Amiran's example has encouraged 50 women from her community to become literate. "I don't feel shy to learn along with my grandson rather feel proud," said Amiran. She is a rarity in the mid-western district of Banke wher nearly 90 percent of the Muslim are illiterate. "This is a

> social worker from Nepalganj. Wanted: iudges Budhahar, 18 December

welcome move. We are also trying to

find ways to support such initiative," said Mohammed Siddiqui, a noted

Nepal's courts are experiencing alone. But they haven't brought out shortage of judges which has resulted in a delay of justice. The posts of seven judges-two permanent posts and three temporary posts—are vacant at Nepal's Supreme Court. The Judicial Council, comprising the Chief Instice two senior indees the minister for law and a member nominated by the king, has yet to address this problem. Consemently the number of cases are piling up. A large number of judge posts are also vacant at the appellate and district courts. Many of these posts have been vacant since the time of ex-Chief Justice Keshav Raj Upadhyaya. Filling up these posts has become a big challenge for present Chief Justice Kedar Nath Upadhyaya, At present, seven posts in the Supreme Court, 29 posts in the appellate courts, and 15 posts in the district courts are vacant. For the time being, about 16,000 cases have been put aside at the Supreme Court while 25,000 cases at the Supreme Court. appellate courts and district courts are awaiting hearings.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The Sher Bahadur Deuba government declared the Maoists as terrorists. The present government has not reconsidered. Until decided otherwise, they are terrorists

- Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand in Raidhani. 13 December.



Cartoon of the week

स्पेसटाइम दैनिक Spacetime, 15 December

Weeping not allowed

Himal Khabarpatrika 16-30 December

"Jogimaraka Jvundaharu" is a documentary made by journalist Mohan Mainali for the Centre for Investigative Journalism. "Jyunda" literally means the living, but ironically the film is about 17 young men from Jogimara village in Dhading district who were killed by security forces while they were building an airport in Kalikot. The story is linked through the narratives of their widows, fathers, mothers, sons and uncles. They all lost their breadwinners and the effect on Jogimara has been

devastation Mainali's film documents the grief, the loss and chronicles how the families and the village coped with the loss of not even getting the bodies of their relatives back. The story of this community was first published in Himal Khabarpatrika and Nepali Times (#106).

Jogimara premiered recently at the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival 2002. The documentary proved to be so popular that two additional screenings at the Russian Cultural Centre played to full houses. Many in the audience couldn't hold back their tears, and many were so moved that they asked how they could help the relatives of the dead.

However, the government didn't share the audience's empathy. It made its displeasure known by harassing the festival organisers

and even the film director. Groups of uniformed policemen made their presence felt at the festival venue. There was a demand for the tape and plainclothes policemen were asking questions. Finally, a phone call from a higher-up authority directed the film not be shown at all.

When an "incompetent" government declared an "emergency" in November last year, it started a process of eroding our fundamental rights. Now, with a "clean" government and a rescinded emergency, it seems we aren't allowed to watch a movie and grieve for our fellow Nepalis. Have we lost the right to ween too?



HISTORY AND CUI TURE

free to write on anything related to contemporary Nepal. The vast majority of stories written by those in school were set amid the Maoist insurgency. The children could have written on any aspect of today's life, and yet they-almost uniformly-chose this topic. It made me feel

Not that the stories were bad. Most were crafted very well, and displayed a sophistication of language that I had not expected from teenagers writing in what is, in many cases, their second language. Judging for the quality of language alone, I should have been impressed. But I got stuck on the question; what are the limits of our children's collective imagination? And what do these limits say about us?

A surprising number of stories depicted the Maoists as warriors for a just cause. Others depicted them as misguided in adopting violent methods, but essentially good people. Only a few stories depicted government forces in heroic terms. These stories came, by and large, from children studying at the most elite schools of the country. The children had obviously seen

> they had formed strong views about it. Their idealism was typical of their age, and sweet. It was the uniformity of their choice of subject that kept haunting me. What does it say about us that our children-all-want to write about war? Perhaps we wrote them in our

little of the insurgency themselves: yet

childhood as well: those poems and stories that school children send in to the daily newspapers, published much to the pride of parents the country over. Some of these works are good, and some need a little more work. The large majority are very altruistic. Many dispense advice on how to develop the country. Others sing paeans to the beauty of the motherland, Indeed, national pride is much in evidence, as is a tendency to preach, lecture and wax What is it that leads our children to

write on such weighty, important matters, matters that-no offense to children-really are beyond their reach? Why don't they write, instead, on their schoolroom tensions and playground politics, or on the foibles and follies of their relatives and neighbours and friends? What is it that makes them feel that their everyday experiences are not worthy of stories and poems?

"Write what you know" being the first rule of writing. Not the only one, but a good one to begin with, since it teaches the budding writer the value of observing the world around him or her. The imagination is served by these observations. From close scrutiny of a game of marbles between friends, a story of great beauty could unfold, even a story that touches on

But perhaps I am being nostalgic. The story below, which I came across by chance, was written by Aayushi Sapkota, a student in class 3, while her father was detained on allegations

of being a Maoist:

One day at our house 10 or 12 army came. First we didn't know that who was coming. So we thought that someone was coming to our aunt's home. After that they knocked on the door by calling out our father's name. So my mother opened the door and looked to see who they were after. After coming inside our house they started to check our room and ask questions and beat my father. After checking everything they did not find anything. So they went out. They beat my father very much, then they put my father in a ieen. I became sad and cried.

That day was 'Shiva Ratri'. Lord Shiva was born on that day. We should do puja for Lord Shiva that day, saying we are trying to bring out my father. We are going to be successful. One day they called my mother to their barrack. So my mother went, but I could not go because I had gone to school. My mother went and met my father there and returned. After that day I also went, but they did not give me time to meet him. So I returned Here, then, is a child who is writing what she knows. It is not her fault that what she

In Imperium, his book on the messy integration and disintegration of the Soviet Union,

Leaving

In the December Himal

why Ithinsenetay its always opersent halways with URI...

Exposing the saffron brigade's fundraising scam Starvation amidst surplus: The business of hunger Ved Mehta's tempest of self-revelation

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War and the Child's Imagination The marriage of Ram Kumar's son Part II

n the evenings, while the seniors drank rum and played cards, Rajesh sat beside them snatching a drink or two himself and sometimes even having a few hands at the game. He enjoyed this new found freedom, away from the glaring eyes of his father and mingling with senior officers gave him a sense of fulfillment. But now there was only one thing lacking in his life—a pretty wife. Slowly the thought was hitting him harder, especially when he saw that every evening while all the other officers had their wives to go back to he was left with no choice but to go back to a lonely, dingy room. He wanted a change desperately, and lately spent his nights figuring out vays to bring this up with his father.

FICTION

However, proposals for him had already been nouring in from various sectors in Kathmandu, but as the father of the groom, Ram himself wasn't satisfied with any of them. Sometimes the girls were not pretty enough while at other times no agreement could be reached on the dowry issue. He was quick to point out that he wasn't after money but for his own daughters' marriage, he had to sell the small patch of ancestral land that he had in the village. Now it was only fair he got a portion of the fortune back.

After rejecting scores of proposals, finally hope had come through a colleague at the office. The family in question was the colleague's neighbour They were looking for a suitable boy for their daughter who had passed matriculation examinations with second-class honours. The colleague. Kiran ii, was carefully handpicked by the girl's father to act as the middleman and Kiran ji flour ished in the honour. Twitching his long handle bar moustache and adjusting his traditional cap every now and then, he painted his masterpiece, expertly blending his stroke with fluidity and caution.

"She is not only beautiful but an expert cook as well. She sprinkles her food with a pinch of spice and a dash of love. No wonder, I keep smelling my hands hours after eating and what's more, she is 10th passed. I'm telling you, don't let this chance slip away. They are willing to give twenty thousand pees in cash along with a bed and a cupboard."

He then dug his hand into his back pocket and ok out a passport size photo of the girl. When Ram looked at her, he was at once engrossed. He felt the young cherubic girl smiling at him was someone he had known for a long time. Perhaps a heautiful daughter he had never had, since his own aughters had not been blessed with any striking uality. After some thought, Ram consented to meet

the party at their house, on the following weekend.

That night he told Maya Devi about the proposal over dinner. She crouched in her space, istening to every word without giving any response. Ram slurped to his satisfaction, pushing balls of rice into his mouth, licking daal that trickled like teardrons down his wrist. After he finished, he belched, abruptly got up to wash his hands and left the kitchen. He sat on his cane chair kept on the small patio, and lit his yak cigarette.

"Sharmas from Baneshwor...Wonder if they're elated to the Sharmas from Chahbail. Anyway, if they're giving a bed and a cupboard with twenty thousand rupees, it's not such a bad deal," he murmured under his breath and gave a long sigh, as his eves fell on the small patch of unkempt garden growing wildly outside the patio. He flicked the garette butt into the garden and went in.

All week, Ram thought about the forthcoming meeting, and was suddenly overtaken by a new gust of energy. Whatever he did, he had the event at the back of his mind. At the office, he sat on his desk with the ledger open in front of him, peering over at Kiran jl's table, eager to strike up another conversation about the Sharmas, Kiran ii, himself tremendously excited with his role, sneaked to his table at every given opportunity, carrying a brown file to give the impression that it was official, and sat beside him to divulge yet another piece of information on the Sharmas

At tiffin time both of them went down to the tea stall and discussed the background of the Sharmas at length. Their roots, branches, sub branches. Inevitably somebody or the other would



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

have been an acquaintance of Ram. After their tea and fried peas were consumed, Ram paid for both and they walked back to the office; Ram in a pensive mood, stroking his chin with his fingers and Kiran ji wiping his greasy fingers on his long

moustache, a perpetual grin pasted on his face.

The day finally arrived. Ram got up earlier than usual, and as he did every morning, went to say his prayers in the puja room. Bare-chested, clad only in a white dhoti with the sacred thread hanging loose on his shoulder, he briskly made his way around as if he had ten other things on his mind. For Ram, the half an hour spent there was the most peaceful moment of his day and he rounded up his ritual by rotating the incense stick with his right hand and tinkling the bell with his left hand. Immediately after the prayers were over, he

hurried to Rajesh's room and banged on his door. "Rajesh, eh Rajesh, get up fast and wash yourself. Your mother is waiting for you in the puja room. These young men today..." he muttered and went about like a man on a mission with no time to waste. But Rajesh was up already, lying on his bed, staring vacantly at a crack in the ceiling. He had been waiting for this day and could not contain his excitement when his father had asked him to come to Kathmandu. The deal had been struck without him having to bring it up, which had made him so happy that he had celebrated the occasion by swigging half a bottle of rum all by himself and making his seniors dance with him to folk music. And now when the moment arrived, he felt at peace with his burning desires. He had seen the girl's picture and had coyly nodded his appreciation to his sisters. He felt lucky that such a beautiful girl would ever come his way and already in his mind, started fantasising about their first night together. Now he was doing the same when he was roused by the loud thuds on his door.

By ten, the Kumar family was ready. Ram was dressed in a gray tunic with traditional close-fitting trousers and a flower-patterned cap resting proudl on his head. Maya Devi, was adorned in a red sari and jewelry, which she had worn only during her daughters' marriage. But even the lavish dress failed to bring any light to her face. Rajesh wore a neat white shirt and a pair of red trousers crisply ironed and properly creased. The dress was a perfect match for the blush on his face. When the daughters arrived, carrying their babies like bundles of clothes, they all headed off, squeezed in two taxis to the house of the Sharmas

The Sharmas greeted them at the door. The father of the bride, an officer in the Ministry of Health was a cunning Brahmin with an aquiline nose and sly eyes. He received them with the traditional namaste and a wide grin, flashing an uneven row of tobacco stained teeth. His wife who had appeared from behind had a striking resemblance to Maya Devi.

(To be completed in #125)



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ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS * WINNER Showcase 2002 women entrepreneur's exhibition 10AM-7PM, 21-22

December at Tridevi Temple, Thamel, Snow and other adventures: "Poems in Frames" by Mark Wyatt at Lazimpat Gallery

PUB & CAFE

- 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. * Tamang Cultural Festival and International Tamang Conference 2002.19-22 December, Exhibition Hall Rhrikuti Mandan

* Kids Carnival at Hyatt Regency 10AM-4PM, 21 December. Rs 1500 for family of three,

Rs 600 inclusive of all activities. 491234

Winter Day Camp ECCA for students (Class 4-9) 29 December-14 January, ECCA. Thapathali, Kathmandu. 268297,268328 email: ecca@mos.com.np

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

- * Paddy Foley's Irish Pub A wide range of drinks and food. Live music on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday nights, 416096.
- * Friday Indulgence Taste 12 Scottish single malts for Rs 999 at the Piano Lounge, Hotel

- The Coffee Shop Christmas Eve Buffet dinner Rs 600 per person, 24 December. Christmas Day Buffet lunch Rs 450 (veg), Rs 500 (non veg), 25 December. Hotel de' I
- The Rox Restaurant Traditional Christmas Eve dinner Rs 1700, 24 December Christmas lunch buffet Rs 1250, 25 December.
- Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. * The Fire Club drinks, dinner and dancing, 8PM
- onwards. Rs 1999 couple, Rs 999 per person. Thamel 410809 Multi Cuisine at Nanglo's Deli, relocated to Durbar
- Marg. 224707 * Wood fired pizzas, cocktails and coffee at the
- Roadhouse Café, Thamel 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.

GETAWAYS

- 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 Lakhuri Bhaniyang Getaway at Adventure Camp & Country Kitchen, 15 km from Lalitpur
- r day trips, short hikes, picnics or overnight stays. 981032785, 418922. . Christmas at Dhulikhel Lodge Resort Rs 2002 per person includes dinner, breakfast and welcome drink 222389 011-61114

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

NEPALI WEATHER

All pretty much settled over the subcontinent. And first signs of the dense fog over the Indo-Gangetic plains visible in this satellite picture taken on Wednesday morning. As winter advances, and the mercury plummets erature inversion over the plains and moisture from n expanding irrigation network over the Nepal tarai and he Indian plains is going to make this thick fog some-imes lasting days. There are no signs of a cyclonic rculation over the Bay that could pull a westerly front our way. So expect morning fog in the plains and Kathmandu Valley, giving way to hazy afternoon sunshine.

KATHMANDU VALLEY









This completely revised edition builds on the framework provided by the earlier text. It traces the history of development communication, presents and critiques diverse approaches and their proponents, and provides ideas and models for development communication in the new

Contemporary Pakistan: Political processes, conflicts and crises Veena Kukreja Sage Publications, 2002

Rs 472 The author provides a rare seasoned analyses and insights into the political processes at work in Pakistan. She maintains the military regards its dominance of Pakistani politics not only as a right but as a duty. This is a topical, cogently argued and insightful commentary.

The Civic Culture of Local Development Laura A Reese and Raymond A Rosenfeld

Sage Publications, 2002 Rs 2935

The focus on economic development policy provides a window on local decision making and allows for the development of a theory, introduced by the authors, about the role of local civic culture in framing local decisions of all types. New research questions are posed and new

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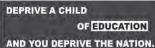
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James Bond's 20th cinematic outing, Die An-other Day, keeps things fresh. Bond is leaner, meaner and edgier, especially when MI6 strips nim of his double-O status after his imprisonnent in a North Korean prison. Pierce Brosnan's ourth movie as the super suave spy has more than the usual signature action chases, requi-site gorgeous co-stars, snappy one liners and exotic locales. Judi Dench (M) and John Cleese (Q) return in this sequel, joined by Halle Berry (Jinx), Rosamund Pike (Miranda Frost) and a cameo appearance by Maddona, who also sings the title track. Die Another Day will silence critics who said the Bond series should've been uried years ago.



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Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Spam scam

hanks to recent advances in Information Technology, it is now possible for us to receive vital tips for living our lives to the fullest right here in the comfort of our office computers. It is tempting for us to take the information revolution for granted, but imagine how lost we would be if there was no one offering us discounted purchases of viagra online, or telling us how to get a 5.25percent 30 year

fixed rate mortgage.

Imagine, all this knowledge and tip-offs are sent to me personally by anonymous benefactors for 100per-

cent free of cost. And, as our forefathers taught us, we should never turn down anything that

To those of you who just delete their junk mail without even thinking, a word of warning: you may be throwing away your chance of being a virile billionaire with a double PhD from the University of Phoenix, have incredibly white teeth, and be the proud owner of a Honda Civic for just \$100! How? Just send me your credit card number and date of expiry.

(Ha-ha-ha! Just joking.) As a matter of fact, all you have to do is disable the spam guard on your internet, and the world becomes your oyster:

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Turn the Clock Back!

I request you to let your government know that I am very distressed to learn shout the mass sacrifices of animals at the annual Gadimai Mela in Bara District. How dare you

carry out this savage act against innocent creatures when you are perfectly aware that ten times as many animals are beheaded in our abattoirs every month? Please let your government know that they shouldn't try to compete with us in harbarism against the animal kingdom

Dear Sir. Thank you for your response to my letter of 15th instant. We are glad that you have just deposited \$800,000 in our bank account in the Cayman Islands. You have made the right decision. To answer your query about when 75% of

Mr Sonny Abacha's inheritance will be transferred to your own offshore account let me assure you on my Scout's Honour ("Cross my heart and hope to die.") that we will do this in the not too distant future Mufasa Matata & Co

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Positively Malvika

beauty queens. She plans to

get a degree in mass communication with a little

TV presenting on the side,

just till she learns enough

to work behind the camera.

She dislikes judamen-

tal people, but in the two weeks since being crowned has learned that

as a public figure she

petite, graceful and

will be judged. "People

that with the single-minded fetermination that she applies to her life. "You have to really elieve in what you're doing because if you're unsure then your objective isn't clear. Make a plan for what you want and how you're going to get there. Then on for it." This 21-year-old set her sights on the Miss Nepal crown when the pageant began in 1994 but waited till she graduated before sending in an application. For a closet eminist ("I know what my rights are and what I want, but I don't go on and on about it."), Malvika thinks beauty pageants "are a positive way to showcase what you are" and nothing annoys her more than airhead sterentynes of

ss Nepal 2002 Malvika Subba's private hurdle up to that, you have to try to be was learning to strut in high heels. She pursued erfect. But at the end of the day I'm just normal Malvika," she savs Her family and friends don't treat her any differently. With a small moue she says her mother still monitors her pocket money. doesn't allow too many late nights, too much TV or long phone conversations. Malvika confesses she wasn't

used to the attention. "I'm not enjoying all of it because now, as a public figure. I think before doing things. But I'm taking it in my stride," she says confidently. The highlights of her public appearances have been her fans, young aspiring beauty queens, who ask for autographs and tips. Her advice? *Finish your education because that's really important. Absorb what's happening, read and groom yourself."

Malvika thinks Nepali pageants have a long way to go compared to India where they have become lucrative money-spinners, especially after the success of several Indians at the Miss Universe and chance, she would like to compete for Miss World and represent Nepal as an "Ambassador of Peace".

"We have to show we want peace and are determined to reclaim what we had before-a peaceful nation where we did not have to live in fear." .



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