

DASAIN WISHLIST

For whatever it's worth, here is our Dasain wishlist:

That the government and the Maoists stop twiddling their thumbs and take secret high-level talks to their logical conclusion. Otherwise we will be tempted to believe that both are just using the time to prepare for a final showdown.

2. Do we actually have a government at the moment? Don't see too many signs of it. But it can't wait for talks to conclude, rural development has to go on a Marshall Plan-style campaign.

3. That there is a serious and massive push to create new jobs by spurring domestic and foreign investment. This is the only way to reduce poverty, and the frustration that fuels extremism.

4. Rescue the tourism industry by: a) lifting absurd passport and ID requirement for Indian tourists, b) launching aggressive promos in India, East Asia and Australia, c) rescue sabotaged deals like the one with Taiwan's Mandarin Airlines, sign new charter agreements and allow code-sharing. Look East.

 To implement point 4, Royal Nepal Airlines needs to be freed from its political shackles and allowed to function as the efficient, modern airline it can be. Add. aircraft, start ferrying tourists from regional hubs and turn the decline in intercontinental travel to our advantage.

 Launch anti-corruption drives and start with the most blatant example of graft: the nationwide adulteration of diesel and petrol with subsidised kerosene. This is not only a health hazard and a drain on the economy—kerosene meant for the poor is being siphoned off by criminals. Everyone knows who they are. Catch

7. Let's keep our eyes on the big prize and pragmatically renegotiate the trade treaty with India. Why should our bilateral trade be held hostage by a bunch of smugglers? The sooner we legitimise trade, the better prepared we will be to play by WTO rules.

8. The garment, carpet and pashmina industries are reeling. Half a million jobs are at stake, (Read "Labour pain", #64), Act now,

 Restore business confidence by maintaining the truce with the Maoists. Even if the talks are unsuccessful, regressing to the killings fields of pre-July should be prevented at all cost.

10. Implement the above nine points as if our nation's existence depended on it. It

Truth is the first casualty

None of us should have any illusions about it. The US-led bombing of Afghanistan is to assuage domestic public opinion in the wake of the devastating 11 September attacks in New York and Washington. The air raids are not supposed to achieve military success—after all, there isn't much left to bomb in the rubble that is Afghanistan. More than 90 percent of Americans until last week favoured military retaliation. What Genrie W Rush has to decide is when the anti-LIS backlash in soft Islamic states like Pakistan, Uzbekistan or Indonesia gets to be a liability to his country's own geo-strategic interests. Now that the Taliban has made the smart move of allowing in media to film the cruise missile craters, international public opinion will start to turn.

But what is it about superpowers like America or regional powers like India that when the nation goes to war, its supposedly free and independent media suddenly goes ballistic with patriotic jingoism? Combined with global satellite and cable, this has the effect of turning wars into programme highlights. Learning the lesson from the Vietnam debacle, Washington is playing the propaganda war through a pliant media, which has made pacifism a dirty word and any talk of finding the root causes of terrorism heresy. As Michael Massing of Columbia Journalism School argued in this paper two weeks ago ("One voice", #63), the US media's onesource treatment of this war is reminiscent of the Soviet Union.

The western media has always reflected the interests and concerns of the western world. That is to be expected. But the trouble is that the western media is the source of news for not just the west, but also the rest of the world. When defeating the Soviets in Afghanistan was in the western interest, the war was interesting for the western media. The Islamic jihad was glorified as a war against the Evil Empire. When the Red Army retreated beyond the Oxus in 1989, the west and western media lost interest in Afghanistan. When the mujahideen started killing each other and destroying Kabul in vicious a fratricidal war, not many foreign journalists were interested even though the carnage was much worse than during the Soviet occupation.

The west's neglect of Afghanistan in the 1990s meant that the country remained in the penumbra of global media. As fundamentalism dug its roots and the Taliban shook its iron fist, the interests of those who fought proxy wars in Afghani stan became limited to seeing it as a transit for Central Asian natural gas. Now that we have concluded Afghanistan is the hotbed of global terrorism, the country is back in the news. The moral double standards of Cold War media coverage contin ues: just replace Communism with Al Qaida. And the battlefield is still Afghanistan.







compared in "College comes to Dhulikhel"

programs than humanities and commerce. We

agree that the quality of the education in TU

humanities and commerce programs but you

cannot generalise. Of course, there is political

interference in TU and it is easier to manag

just one college in Dhulikhel than several

Jitendra Raut's "Asylum" and Alok

Tumbahangphey's "College comes to Dhulikhel" (both #64) have forced me not

only to question the credibility and objectivity

of your paper but also turn pessimistic abou the Nepali press. Because if Nepali Times

exceptions to a general rule or blatantly advertise a product or an institution in the

guise of an article or a report, no other pape

to do any better. Both reports lack the basic

criteria for publication in a well-esteemed pa

like yours. Tumbahangphey's write-up on KU

gives a false image of a private university of the

few for the few as a solution to the terrible state

of Nepali education today. Raut's is a libel

against all Nepalis and he takes a few isolated

cases of Nepali asylum seekers to defame the

entire populace. His tone is not only conde

scending, but also disparaging to the Nepali

KU's management, class size and observa-tion of a schedule are definitely better than

those of TU. More importantly, it has held

back some of the nation's money that would so

to foreign institutions. And yes, the grand old

TU is mismanaged at best. But still it doesn't

mean that you can make an analogy between TU with more than 190,000 students all over

the country and KU with less than 2,500 students. The article overlooks the qualificat

currently published from Kathmandu is likely

publishes reports that transform a few

campuses as TU does.

may not be as good as that in KU only in

(#64) is not fair. KU has more technical

LETTERS

AMAZING HEPAL.

I was alarmed and disappointed by the misconceptions in "Asylum" (#63). Asylum seeking in the LIK is made to sound like a holiday but this is far from the truth. The article claims that, after arriving, surviving is easy. "Even those without acqua help don't have to worry much: the British government gives you 36 pounds per week as survival allowance, 10 pound in cash and 26 pounds as food vouchers." In reality, asylum seekers find that the weekly allowance is not enough for a dignified existence and the voucher system is intensely humiliating. Entering the UK in container trucks is also made out to be easy but surely the fate earlie this year of the Chinese people who died while they were hiding in a refrigerator container, is enough warning about the dangers of illegal entry. Only desperate people are forced to take these desperate nethods to flee persecution and seek asylum. Sadly, asylum seekers in the UK often face hostile treatment from the authorities. The experience is traumatic, not a holiday

Clare Woodall Lazimpat

It seems you are trying to butter the orgetting the plight of Nepalis abroad. We sold our property to go to abroad since we were too honest to get jobs. We may not have fear of persecution in Nepal, but we were desperate to support our parents and children. We would like to return to Nepal, but we need to use source-force with ministers just to get a job. We are not here any criminal activities, we are not rrorists, and we are not here to exploi Nepal. We are earning some pounds and ending it to our families at home. Media here never writes against the national interest why should you write against those of us who desperately need to stay here for

Sudhir Sharma

of TU and its role in nation building? After The way Tribhuvan University (TU) and all, who produced the like of Suresh Rai Kathmandu University (KU) have been

Aruna Kandel

"Shreeram"

Thailand

Why does CK Lal keep slandering great Nepalis? After great Gandhian Dr Dilli Raman Regmi, this time he has insulted the memory of Khadga Bahadur Singh, a great leader and a visionary. He established Tikapur so that there can be a modern planned town in far west Nepal, and the town is now an educational centre. Why does CK Lal have a problem with that? It is very easy to criticise doers. I know you will not publish this letter, but I am writing it anyway

Rajyalaxmi Hamal

CK Lal is right about most of the things about Tikapur (#64). But he is wrong in saying that Maoist scourge is on the wane. Tikapur is the Rolpa-Rukum of the tarai. The terror of Maoists is still very much there, and that is why farmers have not been able to harvest the paddy even though it is ripe. Lal's views about Tikapur's isolation is wrong. Fifteen km is not a long distance, and Tikapur can easily be connected with Mahendra Raimarg if the xisting road is black-topped. Connection with India is bad but that is not important because there is no major Indian town nearby

Naresh Singh Thakuri Nepalgunj Prakash A Rai (Letters, #62) misses Samuel

"Mad Dog" Huntington's hate for all races other than his own in Clash of Civilisation: Either Mr Raj has not read the book or he is opelessly dim-witted. In any case, as long as Colin Powell calls the shots in Washington CK Lal need not worry an all-out war in his neck of the woods. Good paper, keep up the

Satyendra Berkshire, England

John Paul Lederbach in "Let's do the unexpected" (#63) blames the tragedies of 11 September in the United States on the Arab-Israeli conflict. While there is no doubt that this conflict has called to arms some disaffected Arabs to Bin Laden's cause, it has not been their revered leader's cause until this week. His cause was first to free Afghanistan from Soviet domination. When that goal had been reached thanks largely people with him. to aid from the United States, he needed another one. The next purpose-for-living was to rid Saudi Arabia of invited American troops. SUBLIMINA While the Soviet-Afghani issue was

blatantly imperialist, the arrival of American troops in Saudi Arabia was



to protect Mr Bin Laden's country from Iraqi imperialism. It has been quite clear that neither the Saudis nor he Americans are going to change their mutual interests to suit Mr Bin Laden. Now that the United States and several dozen countries are cooperating to ferret out this megalomaniac and the repressive regime he supports, he has desper-ately sounded a new clarion: the Arab-Israeli conflict. Of all the

venom he has spewed and the manipulation in the name of Islam this issue will certainly embolden more poor young people to willingly give up their lives for the cause. What a supreme irony: it appears that Secretary Colin Powell was about to announce support for the nation-state of Palestine. This is a man who has gone over to the dark thousands of otherwise decer

Suzanne Silvers Houston Texas

I am an early supporter of the Nepali Times, and appreciate your news coverage and reporting. However, after many weeks now, I am compelled to write you about the advertisement for a wrist watch You know, the one with the woman's leg and the armature going up her ass. I find it distaste-ful and repugnant. Thank you for paying attention and being more careful about the subliminal ages you are presenting to the Nepali audience, as well as the global audience. Please show more taste and responsibility in the ads you accept. Wendy King

Kathmandu

CORRECTION

The email address in Action Aid's vacancy announcement (#64) should read: jobs@actionaid.org.uk. The photograph of the weaver in "Labour Pain" (#64) should have been credited to CK Bhusal

Now Open!

After raging through the shapping wolls of Mondo unwind on the Steam Boat to Hong Kong.

Tel:212508, 271090 Fee:272309 Descriptions of the section of the s Bookle I week souther or personalists comIt's a Chinese experience with a twist, lat your senses wander through the Rayours of Boli, Potaya and Phuket to the forfeet edge of the East. China Gorden. The Chinese restourant where recipes also come from China Garden based the shores of China.





AMAZING HEPAL

Afford while

But (r-help)

Way hord to botel



















nutrition and education, that

status of Nepali women

over the past 20-30

I think the situation of

to be deplorable. Yes some

progress has been made

but it is nothing to be

proud of, or brag about

A country that still has 65

percent of women illiterate

where we have one of the

women, this should have hap-

progressive legislation being

pened 20 years ago. And the most

enough. We still have a long way

to go. The progress is excruciat-

A few women leaders are

coming out, and girls' enrollment

increasing quite rapidly. And that ought to be the highest priority for

UNICEF action in the coming years

right, but girls' education is perhaps

the best investment that a nation

in Nepal-girls education. It is

important not only on its own

Have you seen a

major shift in the

"Cynicism is the obstacle to Nepal's

My principal responsibilities are

fund raising, communications,

advocacy, external relations, our

because I am an old timer with

relations with the rest of the UN

ystem and civil society groups. But

UNICEF—I've been with it for 28

rears, and have worked at different

program and planning. I also advise

director, on other matters beyond

my main areas of responsibilities

levels_I take a lot of interest in

Carol Bellamy, our executive

mobilising resources for UNICEF,

Kul Chandra Gautam, a soft-spoken and modest 53-year-old from Gulmi, is a self-made man. He rose up the ranks with hard work and integrity to become a deputy executive director at UNICEF. Gautam spoke to Nepali Times about his career, Nepali children and global challenges.

How did you end up at

Long way from Gulmi to New | and admission at Dartmouth, It In the early 1970s I was a student i the US. It was the height of the Vietnam War, and the anti-war movement. University campuses were bubbling with protests agains the war. I had been quite involved. was fascinated by how a small country like Vietnam could take or the world's superpower and bog it down. I did some special courses on Indo-China, its history and School in Kathmandu. I applied to politics, particularly the life of Ho Chi Minh. I studied French and some US colleges, and was offered full scholarship Asian politics. I was a student at Princeton when the Paris Agreement was signed and U Thant was the UN Secretary General. UNICEF launched a major operation for post-war relief and econstruction. I contacted UNICEF, and they called me for an interview. I was hired on the spot

took me one-and-a-half years to get I come from a small village called a passport: at that time the people Amarpur, about a half-day walk government were very suspicious west from Tamghas. In the old days we had to walk four days from ansen. Now with a four-wheel drive you can go up to the district headquarters. When I grew up then vas no school, obviously no roads. vent to high school in Tansen and finished school from JP High

They said who is this boy who comes from Gulmi, is not related to anybody important, how did he get a scholarship? The fact that one got it on the basis of merit was not an ssue. My father is still in Amarpur, and I make it a point to go to Gulmi every time I come. I just enjoy being home, with my people and unwinding from the rest of the world. Being out of touch, no telephone, no electricity. no TV, no Internet, no email no cars. It is just

wonderful.

Has the destruction of the UNICEF office in Quetta affected your holiday? It happened when I was here. Every morning New York time, or evening Nepal time we have a conference call involving our executive director, who was in Russia last week, myself in Nepal and our regional director here Nigel Fishe

that, although with the Maoist who has also been insurgency we too are beginning to appointed to be see some of the phenomenon we see n parts of Africa. But on the whole if you look at infant mortality, under-five mortality, there is some

> Take drinking water supply– almost 80 percent of the people now have access to safe water. Ten years ago it was half of that, 20 years ago almost non-existent. The other success story is Vitamin A, which is a major cause of malnutrition, mortality and blindness. Today Nepal is considered one of the best in the world—65 districts

coordinator of our efforts in Afghanistan and surrounding areas. We are monitoring the situation Quetta. Fortunately, no staff member was in the building at the time of the incident. It is a very serious situation.

We are now trying to bring in some supplies, certainly from the borders with Iran, Uzbekstan, Tazikistan and Pakistan. How does the situation of

Nepali children look?

think that Nepal is somehow

of most of Least Developed

Countries If we look at the

either. Compared to other LDCs,

Nepal is actually doing quite well. In many countries in Sub-Saharan

Africa there is an actual retrogres-

sion, mortality rates are increasing because of HIV/AIDS, because of

somehow Nepal has been spared all

conflict, drought, pestilence.

But there are major challenges In this country we still have high female illiteracy and HIV/AIDS is coming alarming. I think our Because we are Nepalis, we tend to leaders are not quite awake to the looming crisis. In 10 years time HIV/AIDS will be the major cause exceptional. That we are exception of death among young people in this country. We have this horrenally poor or exceptionally backward or not much progress is being made. But from my vantage point in New York, Nepal is actually quite typical dous practice of child trafficking, it is a shame. Nothing effective is being done to stop that. On balance we are moving two steps progress for children it is not a great ahead and one sten back. uccess story, but it is not a disaste

In Nepal, different UN

with good poverty alleviation

activities including employment

income generation, micro-credi

distribution and coverage is high

There has been good progress in

salt iodisation. You no longer see

goitre in young people, only among

the elderly. Immunisation is going

well. We had only one case of police

in the country last year, and we are

sure we are on the way to eradicat

ing polio, which would be a

intastic achievement.

agencies have begun working together to address issues affecting poverty, and not just do things under their "mandate". Is this a strateoid move, or did it just happen? It was a deliberate plan of colleagues here. This is the way to go cause poverty is the ultimate cause of many of the ills. But poverty is not just lack of income, overty has at least three dimensions: income, which is related to productive employment, second the lack of basic social services, then lack of education and health are both consequences of poverty as well as the cause of poverty. We realized that if we worked in some of the same districts, in some of the

And implementing is going to be harder because of the insurgency. Have you assessed how this could affect the development of children?

can make

Our colleagues here in the UN are quite aware of the impact on development of the insurgency. Certainly in terms of young people we are aware that children human shields, and that is unacceptable. There is disruption of schools. This is unacceptable Children should be left out of the conflict. Let the adults do the quarrelling, fighting and the negotiating. Leave the children alone. I suggested to the prime minister that we hope as part of the negotiations that are going on, one point may be to declare children a "zone of peace". Don't disrupt schools or health centres

For God's sake make children one of those issues on which both parties can agree.

What is the role of NGOs and government in delivering development? NGOs are new important partners, but in Nepal many NGOs are urbanbased. There are a very few active in remote areas, so the government is and will continue to be a principal partner. In terms of overnment performance, viewed from New York, it is average, not a stellar one. Forty years ago Nepal and South Korea were exactly at the same development level: per capita income was about the same, less than \$100. Compared to some East Asian countries, Thailand, Malaysia, v are far behind. But compared with the sub-Saharan countries we are doing fairly better.

So we're are just better than

Yes. I see Nepal on the average and we should not be happy with being an average. We should be that is the challenge. Nepal in many ways is in a fortunate ituation. Here is a country that verybody likes. If we could produce results, there is no limit to donor support. Many other countries face hostile neighbours, there is war. Except for the unfortunate Maoist insurgencyhas been a peaceful country. We nave good relations with our neighbours, and have everyone's

Do you see fatalism as being one of the obstacles? Many of us in Nepal tend to be cessively pessimistic and ynical. Sometime ago Dor was one of the obstacles to

Bahadur Bista wrote that fatalism levelopment in this country. I would sav fatalism is an old obstacle to development. A new obstacle to development in this ountry is the cynicism. We hould look at some of the thins ve have achieved despite all odds nd be a little bit more optimisic. We are not at the bottom of the heap, we need to redouble our efforts. Last year in Washington

DC there was a big global health meeting in which the vitamin A project in Nepal was honoured as being the best in the world. If you read the Nepali newspapers you would not know that, journalists here should highlight the positive and help fight cynicism. Particularly in this ime we need some encouragement and positive feedback. Nothing succeeds like success, we need to breed success, we need to reate a more optimistic atmosphere. Yes, things are bad and difficult but there is hope and lets focus on the hope. Children are

development... -Kul Chandra Gautam would give a multiplier effect. highest maternal mortality rates where girls are trafficked in huge numbers. We are now having this debate about property rights for

which is also quite recent—Nepal goodwill. We really should be

shops r closed, stores r shut maids day out, driver's off! its festive time and Hyatt brings you...

Dasain at Roxs

NRs. 2058 per person per night (twie) scarnic basis).

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Fake bankers...

It is now the turn of bank employees to be put through the paces. After looking into the academic certificates submitted by its officials, the Rastriva Baniiva Bank says nearly 600 employees working in the bank's branches around the country have fake academic qualifications. But it hasn't take action yet: the bank hopes to complete inquiries it has started with some of the universities concerned, largely in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in India, before Dasain. After that they will look into the academic certificates of junior staff. Some 5,800 people work in Rastra Banijya Bank branches around the country.

...also teachers?

About 8,000 public school teachers have submitted their resignations after the government began checking the education certificates of government school teachers nearly two months ago. Of approximately 150,000 teachers working in 25,000 public schools around the country, the government suspects about 45,000 teachers are holding fake certificates. The Education Ministry is expected to accept the resignations soon. Despite the lack of official data, the Nepal National Teachers Association, based on reports from their district branches, estimate the figure to be around 8,000 and most of them got the jobs after political pressure. Those who feel they can pass off their certificates as authentic, better watch it: the Education Ministry says it will seek diplomatic help to verify certificates from foreign education

Khadka Down Under

The Maoist problem appears to be unnermost in the minds of Nepalis everywhere. Even in Australia where Nepalis based in Melhourne expressed their concerns about dialogue to visiting Home Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka, Khadka, who was down under attending an international AIDS conference, was quick to reassure them at a reception hosted by the Nepali Association of Victo-

ria: "The Maoist problem has to be and will be solved through dialogue. This is the belief of the present government," he told members gathered at the Gurkhas Brasserie, a Nepali restaurant. However, Khadka, self-assured and confident, added on a sterner note: "If the problem isn't solved through dialogue the government will have to adopt harsh measures." Nepalis in Australia also sponsored Dasain programmes in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra with Nepali performers, Santosh Pant, Nabin Bhattarai, Kunti Moktan and Kumar Basnet.

Just when Dalits had thought their days of social exclusion were over, the "upper" caste have proved that old habits die hard. "Taka Jatra" a pre-Dasain four day fair in Baitadi Malladehi in west Nepal has been cancelled for five years after some Dalits entered the Dilashaini temple complex to offer puja. The idol was being prepared to be taken to Haridwar in India for ritual cleansing. VDC chairman Dipak Bahadur Ram confirmed that the traditional healer Java Singh Bohora had ordered the cancellation of the fair for five years. In a related incident, a "Ramleela" programme was cancelled for this year after a dispute between Dalits and non-Dalits, Member of Dalit Mukti Samai Puran Singh Daval was beaten up by upper caste people three weeks after he unsuccessfully tried to enter the Jagannath temple. The police reportedly just looked on as non-Dalits organised a rally protesting the entry.

Food for school programme

On the eve of World Food Day 2001 on 15th October, WFP Executive Director Catherine Bertini said research and decades of experience show that school feeding can immediately alleviate hunger, dramatically increase attendance, improve performance and ultimately help educate many more girls and boys. The World Food Program provides meals to more than 12 million school children in 54 countries, including Nepal. The largest provider of school meals in the developing world, the WFP has been feeding 250,000 children in public primary schools in 16 food defici districts in Nepal. Recently, it extended the program to five more districts making a total of 21 districts. School children receive a midday hot meal made of fortified blended food (maize, wheat and soya), vegetable ghee, and sugar.

Collateral damage

QUETTA: An old man, Najib, stands weeping in the hall of the main government hospital here. He uses the trailing end of a tightly wound turban to wipe tears from his cheek. His son sits beside him, one eye and an arm bandaged tightly. There should be a grandson here as well, but the five-year-old, also called Najib is dead. He is collateral damage a civilian casualty, a victim of an American bomb on Kandahar.

"We don't like Taliban, we don't like any of them." the elder and surviving Naith is saving, his voice rising with emotion. "Why did the boy have to die? What did he ever do? What did any of us ever do?" Questions that can't be answered, not to anyone's satisfaction. Anyone who tells me that five-year-old children are unavoidable casualties of war, that the deaths of children in the World Trade centre attacks merit other young lives snuffed out, is beneath contempt. There is no way to rationalise or explain what happened to Najib. But, bereaved, righteous and increasingly fearful, the Americans continue to bomb Afghanistan. At least as I write this and a second week of death and destruction rains from the sky on a land that I once loved.

A Pakistani friend who knew one of the countless victims of the 11 September atrocity telephones to ask some unanswerable questions. "What the hell are they doing," he wonders, "Do they think they can catch terrorists by bombing piles of rubble into smaller bits?" It is not, of course, that simple, nor is my friend entirely accurate in his assessment of the air strikes. Military installations and equipment have indeed been destroyed with surrounding damage kept more or less to a minimum in many places. The Taliban infrastructure of war—medieval, or perhaps pre World War I—has been crippled; something that might have been accomplished with far less expenditure and triumphalist rhetoric, not to mention the death of little Najib and others.

What about the four United Nations mine clearers killed earlier in the campaign? Was I alone in feeling a twinge of nausea when British ministers on the BBC referred to the UN's measured announcement of the deaths as "unconfirmed reports". The daily claims from the Taliban It's time to start waving a white flag. Let's see what hits me first.



diplomats here of civilian deaths are dismissed as "unverifiable" by journalists and others. Perhaps, but does anyone dare to challenge the grief of Najib and his son? I don't, I believe them.

Reluctantly, near the end of the first week of raids, it was acknowledged that several ordinary folk may have died in Kabul during one late night blitzkrieg. Note please that this was after US claims of "air acy" were widely made across the international media, but they kept on bombing at night. The four admitted deaths in Kabul came we're told, as a 2000 pound bomb was being dropped on—wait for it a helicopter! And they missed. Instead a house 500 m away is hit and at

least four breadwinners of an already beleaguered Afghan family are obliterated. That helicopter, already crippled. collapsing, without spare parts, may still be there. What will they target next? Taxis?

Don't get me wrong. I still hold out hope that the vicious Taliban can be toppled. I thought, I prayed that perhaps our American friends were going to encourage volutionary change in Kabul and Kandahar while concentrating their understandable anger on finding and catching Osama Bin Laden. But no.

They chose the easy way out. They bombed and fired missiles from high above a land that can't really fight back, and they smashed and blew up and flattened mud huts and rutted airstrips and badly maintained, ancient Soviet military technology. I thought the aim was to get Al Qaida, but first we're blasting away at everything around the venomous network, ripping down barely living trees to

get at the spider and his web. The momentum of these things is beyond us ordinary folk. We have o say, we are either for America or a potential target of its wrath. Isn't that what George W Bush said during one of his many halting speeches over the past weeks? Well, I suppose it's time to stand on the rool waving a flag. A white flag. Then we'll see what hits me first. Will it be the hijacked planes with terrorist pilots or American not-so-smart

reapons? Can we take a small step back please? President Bush, please take note. So far, the terrorists are winning



Bahuns and the Nepali State

ot long ago, Tashi Jangbu Sherpa and I were discussing ome matter in a courtyard near Patan Dhoka. A Maruti jeep bearing government license plates came to a halt about 50 feet away An officious-looking bureaucrat he could not have been anything else-stuck his head out of the window and waved towards Tashi gesturing him to walk over. Tashi, an accommodating Nepali if ever there was one started moving towards the jeep. I held him by the hand and stopped him short. Again the official waved at him, this time

irritably. I held on to Tashi and called out, "What is it that you "I'm looking for the doctor's

"It's just there, you may

Now this may be considered an ordinary, everyday incident. But to where the people of ethnic origin re ahead of other communities, me it was rich in meaning, about understandings and expectations in but by and large it is the parbative a society that is modernising but and Newar who have traditionally remains feudally insular. The partaken of the national spoils in parbativa (Bahun or Chettri) officia the arena of economy, academia, did not know either of us and vet administration, politics-and now he chose to call Tashi with his flat NGOdom And the two areas 'Mongoloid' features rather than where the injustice of under- or me with my aquiline 'Caucasian' ones When the aphieur cash had to a grand scale are those of politics and administration. If we believe decide who to trouble to take those 50 steps and answer his query, he chose to call the one with the flat communities and castes, then of course all groups must be properly and proportionally represented. features

I asked Tashi, who is President of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, a well-travelled businessman who knows the ways of the world, "Why did you make to walk over when he summoned you so crudely?

"This is just the way things are, aren't they?" was his reply. This one little episode speaks for the numerous indignities people of 'ethnic' features (and, to be sure

A course correction is needed when so much of the people's present and future is in the hands of one community.

bank counters, at the airport departure/arrival points, or ever n the civil service. while waiting in line to pay the electricity bill. Across class lines, people with sharp features are put o the test less than others Some may demand why bring

up such a divisive issue when the ountry is undergoing one grave crisis after another "What with the maobaadi and all..." But the scrimination against one or other kind of Nepali—whethe madhesi women Dalitorin this instance hill ethnic—is a matter of critical importance. If we ignore the injustice that is the unremarked undercurrent of our society, then This information should set more problems are bound to surface

There are of course some areas on-representation is carried out o Nepal is a true mosaic of different

More than anything else, the service examinations and were destiny of the nation lies in the hands of the political parties and the government machinery. There can be no doubt in the minds of 1993, and now the number has Nepalis that Chettris Newars and especially Bahuns have ont a higger slice of the representational pie in these spheres. In the last decade of democracy, the peoples' representaion was supposed to grow increas-

transuility while in the midst.

of Nepal's natural beauty.

proportion of Bahun that has grown | extenuating circumstances which could help us digest this data,

Statistics from the Public Service Commission (picked up by organised by the Janaiati Mahasangha) indicate that in the nast decade there has been a substantial growth in the number in the "Bahun/Chettri" category who get pass the examinations for the ivil service. Simultaneously, there has been a drastic, even heartstopping, drop in the number of Newar, janajati (ethnic), Dalit and people of Tarai origin who make it nto government service

alarm bells ringing, but so busy are we in charting the course of the Magist 'revolution' the inter-parts wranglings and hatching of one more conspiracy theory on this or that, that this relentless downturn over the years has gone practically unremarked. It is said that the officials of the Public Service Commission themselves are comisant of this negative trend and are properly concerned, but one loes not find representatives of the educated classes furrowing their brows and—where necessary railing against what the statistics

And this is what they show among those who passed their civil assigned to ministries, 69 percent were Bahun/Chettri in 1983-1985 this was up to 81 percent in 1992peaked to 98 percent. The propor tion of Newars who made it into the civil service during the same period is down from 19 percent to 11 percent, and rested at 1 percent n 2000. The figure for the janajati category has dipped from 3 percent

some would say. For example, the capable individuals from non-Bahun communities are far les interested in the civil service, or other fields have opened up in recent years are more attractive and lucrative than a civil service position can ever hope to be (discounting corruption), For example, there is foreign employ ment of all kinds now available NGOdom has become a magne or the capable, and opportunities in the business world has obviously attracted away Newar who earlier would have joined

In every sector of society, whether in the political arena, the ducation sector, the media as a whole and especially the press, or the bureaucracy, it is obvious that the Bahun are predominant. It would be fair to say, therefore, that Bahuns have essentially been running the country for the last decade. If we were to agree that the country and system have failed to live up to their promise, at least for statistics being cited.)

> Sure, the others are finding one community that makes up ess than 15 percent of the opulation should have such lout over the direction of the entire country and its people. And t is also necessary to ask whether corrective mechanism must not be sought so that both Nepal's political terrain and bureaucration echelons are more representativ of the communities that inhabit this differentiated land

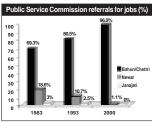
democracy for many reasons including the fact that our politi cally powerful classes and bureaucracy are not representative of the population—and in fact are ecoming less so as far as the civil service is concerned. To bring

about the change that is required, you do not need a benevolent ictatorship/monarchy, nor do you need Comrade Prachanda's path or the hiving off of independent homelands' for the 'indegenous' The change in representation car be brought about from within the existing constitutional dispensation This will begin to happen the responsibility of forming public opinion—the educated classes, including foremost the Bahuns among them-decide that there is an unfairness about which needs redressal. This is a serious, even volatile issue that must not be pushed aside on any pretext. Whatever the reason or causes for this phenomenon of under- or nonrepresentation, a correction is necessary which will show up in the

in the years to come. Khabarpatrika, the letters in picture of his understanding of ethnicity, language and the We remain an incomplete

modernising Nepali state





lthough it didn't look so ominous at the time. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's troubles started even before h took the oath. For three days, the planetary position wasn't propitious for the swearing-in ceremony. For another two days, Deuba tried hard getting the political alignments right while drawing up his cabinet list. In between, aides to the prime minister elect tried rearranging the furniture at directions they hoped would prolon his tenure. In the end, Deuba decided to undernin the endurance of his

formula: promises of phase-wise abinet expansions to accommodat and pacify supporters, peace talks with

land-reform agenda. In a highly deceptive sign of the mes, the communists gave a thumping endorsement to the prime ninister they wanted as he read out hi eight-point agenda for change in liament Now that Deuba has ered on all three fronts well before completing 100 days in office, the cople don't know whether to blame celestial compulsions, political

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Impatient kangresis

Deuba's flock is already itching for a break and government ministries are in dire need of reorganisation.

for his failures. (Few rated his

ment's take-it-and-return-it

proposal wasn't even remotely

on report. It must have been

omething it had taken out a

thoroughfares to celebrate. The

not actually acquiescing in, the

impending erosion of its independ

Investigation of Abuse of Authori

The Maniete trusted Deuba

he had legally become prime

minister They, too, have now realised that the feel-good exchange

nough to order a truce even before

of pleasantries at top resorts is doing

le but strengthen the restive

battle-hardened flank of the party.

As long as the negotiations stall on

the non-negotiable, hard-liners on

both sides can expect to fortify their

probably get out of this morass is by

positions for future offensives.

One way Deuba could

ty's anti-vice squads.

proficiency in crafting flawed

last fortnight, which served to underscore the depthof Deuba's oes. The home and health mini flew separately to Melbourne to participate in an AIDS and drugs onference That tells you two things Deuba's flock is already itching for a break and government ministries are in dire need of reorganisation. Deuba can handle his health minister. The difficult one is that the characteristically assertive home minister control a chunk of 20-plus MPs, most of whom are still waiting to get into the Cabinet. The home minister, who has the fearsome reputation for determining the fate of all recent Congress governments, left a memo listing the MPs he wanted aboard just in case Deuba planned to expand he cabinet in his absence. The easiest way out for the prime

inister—creating more vacancies by splitting ministries and setting up new ones—is not feasible for a ountry that apportions half of its ınnual budget on regular expenditure. Moreover, that course would be n clear violation of the pledges given to the donor nations, agencies and onsortiums by two sitting member of the cabinet. So Deuba may have bought time by appointing a government panel to suggest ways of organising the ministries, but he not avoid the day of reckoning. By giving him a free hand to

Dashain & Tihar

at Soultee Crowne Plaza Kathmandu

closely coordinating policy with the party. The Nepali Congress central rivals in the party have indemnified committee should work out a clear themselves against any responsibility power-sharing formula with the leader chances of success very high on the of its parliamentary party. Every bloc day he was elected, anyway.) Leaders and patron in the ruling party must of the main opposition party, already infuriated by the governtry to apportion minis in a way that would remain within the tolerance level of the donor community women's property rights initiative are humiliated by the belated and meet the internal equilibrium test. Within months after assuming power realisation that Deuba's land reform in 1990, kangresis dispelled the myth that they are a homogenous entity grounded in their Badal Commis working for a common objective barring, of course, the preservation of painful for the UML to vote agains political power. In terms of organisaional behaviour, they are more like the procession across the capital's main Taliban, an association of disparate alliances held together by a desire to ninister probably can't cou ng on to positions of privilege and too much on the judiciary, either, pelf as long as they can. which sees him as indifferent to, if

Even with a comfortable majority the Nepali Congress has produced three prime ministers halfway into the the five premiers of the highly inwieldy hung parliament look like

country has long realised and begin circulating internal party memos or who beco how long. Ministerial appointments ould then be worked out in accordance with the existing balance of power in the party and portfolios distributed accordingly. That way, the people can expect the House of Representatives to last its full five-year term and live under a government that is not in perpetual risk of implosion. You don't have to amend

sentatives of a benign phase of

It's time for factional bosses to

acknowledge what the rest of the

Nepali politics

the constitution to work out a participatory process that democracie like Italy, Japan and Israel have lived with. The practical benefit of such an arrangement is that Deuba could one day serve as Chaken Persond Bastola's foreign minister or Ram Chandra kangresis having to carry inflated or punctured egos.



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dia. Mandala House



Option 9 - Samuel Verilians (Party)

constant Physician and Elin Deputies and absorbed Characteristics and In-Regal's rich culture. Through speciacular riews, remote villages, an ancient forerass and a unique Dubonia number, capture the

> Returns to Break altered to eat at Party on Saturday to wree up - 50 and 500.

Option 2 - The Ulbranes Chill Chief

Crab a good book and sheigh out in the sun on screenling creen terraces on the banks of the Drote Root. Spice up your relevation with a bouch of advantance. Date your pick and crabbs your own and ministrations. The department and with a for letter, and parameter allies. Markets (190).

Homol, Balliniando — for School, 420404

ideologue Bhattarai. government. It is mostly the Bahun from the hills that have the required education and orientation for bureaucracy, and his explains their preponderance among the inductees into the civil service (It should also be noted that even though the Chettri tend to be clubbed ogether with the Bahun as narbativa" it is in fact the Bahun who are mostly represented in the civil service

rvice to the political parties, which play the overwhelming role today in giving (mis)direction to the state, here again we find an over-representation of Bahuns in comparison to their proportion in the population as a whole. The top leadership of the major political parties are almost exclusively Bahun, with a few Chettris ncluded and nothing but a prinkling of the hill ethnics and other communities. This is true for all the large parties-from the extreme left to the far right. The Nepali Congress has a 31-member Central Committee Within it. 18 are Bahun, five are Chettri, four are from the tarai, and there is on Newar, Kirat, Gurung and Giri each. The Standing Committee of the UML has 11 members and here is only one Chettri there The rest—all ten of them—are

Bahun. And what of the Maoists.

Turning from the civil

who makes such amical use of the ethnic card in their rush to build a people's republic? Half the leaders of the Maoist organisation (those whose names are known) are Bahur ncluding the supremo Dahal and

the time elansed since 1990, then it would also be fair to say that the Bahuns are overwhelmingly responsible for this sorry state The response to such an indictment should ideally be an introspection rather than outrigh rejection, or finding reasonings and excuses as to why things are the way they are. Sure, the Bahun tend to "make it" better because of their tradition of learning and statistics of the political party its derivative, mental discipline. leadership and in the data put out by the Public Service Commission greener pastures elsewhere. Even accepting these arguments, one should ask whether it is correct to maintain the status quo where

Writer's note: When a version of this article first appeared in the 1-16 September issue of Himal support all came from the janajati fold and the brickbats all from the bahun side, indicating a divide that in a more progressed society would have been less obvious. The writer would suggest that readers also refer to an earlier piece. "Need to know your Nepali" (# 45), to get a fuller



Kathmandu on NHK

Japan's NHK television is setting out to do something very nice for Asia's 'mysterious cities' alongside Beijing, Banaras, Jogjakarta, Isfahan and Kyoto. The crew is in three cheeping, Benaras, Jogjakarta, Isfahan and Kyoto. The crew is in three cheeping and the change of the cheeping and the change of the and Kyoto. The crew is in town shooting footage on High Definition Digital Television (HD-TV)-the latest technology-and will show the growth of Television (HD-TV)—the latest recrimingly—and will show the dissing computer the city and its culture from the Kirati era up to the present, using computer generated graphics to showcase what it is not possible to film.



Dasain shopping

The House of Rajkarnicar, the pioneer in business expos in Nepal, is back to help you lighten your wallet. They're here with the Dashain Mahostay 2001 from 12-20 October. The Dashain show will have over 150 companies selling their wares in Bhrikuti Mandap exhibition halls. The exhibitors include some of Nepal's largest business houses that sell everything from instant noodles to state of the art electronics-the Khetan Group, the Golchha Organisation, the Chaudhary Group-and well known foreign companies such as Emami, Revlon, Shahnaz Hussain, Personi, and Phillips. The expo also has things to do for those not interested in shopping-cultural programs, and a food festival with offerings from popular eating and watering holes in Kathmandu

New motorbikes

The motorcycle market in Nepal is growing fast, with more companies joining the race and promising to outdo each other in product and after-sales service. Loncin is the latest Chinese company to join the race with its Terminator (Rs 137,700), Custo (Rs 105,000) and Slimmer (Rs 93,700) models. Pioneer Marketing, an undertaking of the Sharda Group, is the sole dealer for the bikes in Nepal, which come with a two-year warranty and the assurance of easily available and cheap spares.

NTC discounts

Nepal Telecommunications Corporation (NTC) is in a festive mood—it is offering 50 percent off on domestic calls and 25 percent off on international calls made during Dasain and Tihar. The Dasain cuts will apply from 23-29 October and the Tihar discounts from 14-16 November. NTC says its mobile users will get a 33 percent discount on the bill covering the same period.

NTV Unplugged

Babu Ram Panthi, Wuhan, PRC

Not only other communist parties, but also the Maoists should unite by

government. But Nepali communists will never unite because all they are

changing their policies. Then, maybe our country can have a stable

interested in is power for themselves, not in the welfare of the country.

The House of Entertainment (P) Ltd. has taken up the challenge of bringing fresh air into NTV's otherwise staid or plain bad programming. The half-hour NTV Unplugged entertainment programme—modelled after MTV's feature by the same name, premiered last week. It features well-known Nepalis and also promising young singers, musicians and local bands. The company plans to sell good entertainment and also CDs with their recordings. The program is on air every Friday at 9.45PM.

agreed to this new provision.

to know what the value addition

could mean: output minus input divided by output. This means the

oil—Nepal's main export to India

FNCCI says Nepali vegetable oils

would still be eligible for duty-free

exports without quantitative restric-

tions. That leads to the next question

talking about calculated? The FNCCI

is mum on this though its officials

asked their Indian counterparts to

Kathmandu in August Nepal was

prepare a version of the treaty for

they had proposed.

was no draft.

claim the 30 percent was something

Nepali officials are said to have

discussion when the two sides met in

assured this would be tabled when the

joint secretaries would meet in New

Delhi—that meeting is over, and then

It is not fair to blame Nepal for

failing to reach an agreement as they

have nothing concrete to work with.

This week our ambassador in New

stalemate was our inability to do ou

homework in time to address India's "concerns". I would like to ask the

ambassador if he had communicated

those concerns to the government, and

unattainable. Their goal is a mirage.

Shravan Pokhrel

Leon Pun, Hong Kong

Kosh Prasad Neunane Korea

education

Rajeeb L Satyal

power hungry. Robin Sitaula

united front

Bigyan Sijapati

Manish Pandey

Buddhi Pant, Coventry, UK

Delhi said the reason behind the

How is the added value India is

neans in practice. By one measure it

But this is easier said than done

What does India want?

Our secretary for Industry, Commerce and Sunnlies Bhanu Acharya is in New Delhi this week to discuss ways to get the Nepal-India trade treaty ewed before it expires on 5 December. Given the experience of the past two rounds, there is a possibility that the talks may be deadlocked yet again and Acharya may return with an agreement to meet again. Back home he would be charged with not having done enough homework, or not being able to understand India's "concerns There is a strong possibility that the talks won't go anywhere because we just don't know what India wants ncorporated in the revisions.

Officials from the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and ndustry (FNCCI), which had lobbied to get the 1996 treaty signed by India, has been trying to tell Nepalis what India wants. They tell us privately that if Nepal agreed to India's changes in rules of origin an value addition, the treaty could be renewed. But they aren't sure if that alone will do the trick.

The FNCCI handed in a report to the prime minister about a month ago, and only a month later did it become public. Commerce Ministry officials had not even seen it before that Officials there are said to have ried to get a copy and were unable to locate one at the Prime Minister's Office earlier.

India is said to want Nepal to agree on adding 30 percent value as the basis for origin certification against free trade, without any quantitative restrictions. If that is done

Would it be the better to have a reunited non-Maoist Communist Party of Nepal?

build our country into a beautiful place for us and our future then let us

It would be really good to have a united communist party only if they are

inin together and start now

Ariun Guruna

India would agree to a renewal without if he can explain them to the Nepali seeking additional changes. It is said public? The best that can happen for the out-going commerce secretary and our ambassador in New Delhi had

Nepal is automatic renewal. If that is not possible, the minimum we expect Mr Acharya to come back with is a because nobody in government seems clear understanding of what India wants. India can help by telling us clearly whether it wants trade under the Most Favoured Nation regime or continue the preferential treatment added value in hydrogenated vegetable granted by the treaty to Nepali exports. Nepali officials who see the treaty working well to boost exports cannot go about guessing what India wants. would be around 14 percent. But the they have simply never been told.

19-25 OCTOBER 2001 NEPALI TIMES

Could India gain by forcing Nepal to plead for agreement on 30 percent value addition? There is a ossibility it would be difficult for dia to negotiate for concessions with its larger trading partners after imposing restrictions on a poor, small neighbour when the November WTO round begins in Doha.

A win-win scenario for Nepal and India is to agree on renewing the treaty as it is, automatically, before it expire Nepal would also need to do is take mmediate actions to address the sensitive issues of "surge" and "dumping" of certain Nepali and assure India such acts will not be allowed to happen again, because we must accept that there are certain things just not right with how we are

(Dr Chalise is the former Secretary of Industry)

The reunion of non-Maoist communist parties is absolutely necessary. The

wishes of the people after the restoration of democracy in Nepal have been

The majority of Nepalis know that communist parties are just another name

for destruction and obstruction to the country Manist or non-Manist. So the

more urgent question is: "Wouldn't it better for Nepal to have no commu-

No. It is immaterial and of no value to Nepal whether the communists unite

or not. We need massive changes in our value systems to preserve honesty, creativity, and hard work by making a fundamental change in Nepal's

The communists in Nenal are like amoeba which solit by binary-fission

They are not radicals, they can't bring change in society, they are all just

It would have been better if we did not have any communist parties. They

do not have any relevance in the present day. However, they have somehow managed to become the second largest political force in the

country. Credit for their strength goes to the anti-people policies adopted by the Congress government. In any case, it would better if they were a

Even though the communist "thing" is passe in most developed nations, I

believe in Nepal's context, a united communist front (in the absence of an

alternative), sans the Maoists, would provide a much-needed, formidable

opposition to the ruling Nepali Congress. A good and strong opposition is a must for maintaining the checks and balances within the system.

Though the Nepali Congress is ruling the nation, the majority of votes in

the latest election were communist. Actually the Nepali Congress would have been a minority if all the communists were united. In order to give a

Yes, if all the communist party of Nepal reunited, they can come with a

challenge to the ruling party, they must unite.

They have only their own interests in mind, not that of the nation.

uined, and the only way is to have a party that fulfils their needs.

Communist ideology is outdated in this age. Their utopian theory is

prohibition scare. The government managed to get the pro-Maoist women to agree to four dry days a month and stricter enforcement of drinking age and control of sales. But that did not stop Maoist supporters from razing the Shah Distillery in Nepalgunj in

irprisingly healthy—apparently oyed by years of good monsoons, ports and remittances from Nepalis ne face of continued political

st few years. But as long as there is ncertainty in the peace process and ack of confidence in the governnent, fiscal discipline will almost certainly begin to creep in. That happens when weak governments are rced to buy political support with

"The market looks upbeat now out this may not last past Dasain. ays Rajendra Khetan of the Commerce and Industry "It is a roblem of lack of confidence and

The IMF Staff Report foresees o medium-term scenarios: high growth and low growth trajectories. Political and economic stability are rucial for Nepal to take the high growth road. If the Maoist insurgency and political instability persists then the IME foresees a low owth scenario.

rowth it needs to fully implement forms to achieve 6-7 percent GDF rowth. This would entail keeping nflation under five percent, ncreasing domestic savings and naintaining comfortable foreign xchange reserves. All this can appen with political and econom stability, which could then lead to ncrease in agricultural production, as more irrigation systems get built,

and there is investment in new hydro and road construction projects. Bleak Dasain

GDP in the low-growth mode would hover at around three percent—a direct fallout of political uncertainty and a slowdown in the pace of reforms. Continued political unrest would trigger downslides in private investment and tourism receipts. A slowdown in agriculture rowth would lead to lower demand for non-agricultural goods. Slow reforms would mean a net decrease

n donor assistance—because v on't be able to spend it. All of which would have a domino effect on fiscal discipline and inflation

The political stability busine reds now is not only restricted to resolving the Maoist problem. It is equally important to have a strong wernment that can focus on publ olicy. Whether and when this will nappen is hard to tell, given the ruling party's well-known propen-sity for infighting. A best-case

solitical scenario is a united Left orming a government, the ossibility of which has been oushed further away after the Marxist-Leninists have decided that it will hold no more talks with the main opposition UML. A Left overnment would bring stability government and isolate the Maoists, but it will disrupt muchneeded economic reforms with which the comrades have ideologi

Will the Nepali economy take the high road or

the low road? A lot depends on political

stability and the pace of reforms.



s if things were not bad enough in 2001 with the insurgency, royal massacre, Nepal bandhs and strikes, the postmade prospects for Nepal's economic recovery sudo much worse.

BINOD BHATTARAI

Domestic and foreign invest nent is below zero, as even thos already in Nepal pull out. The purchasing power has been hit, the ublic is not shopping this Dasain. Alcohol, which was one of the most profitable industries has been a rictim of scare tactics by Maoist women. Shares of the Himalayan Distillery were floated a month ago, but only Rs 30 million of the expected Rs 173 million had been raised till last week. Banks and finance companies that underwrot shares. This used to be unheard of—shares of even suspect ventuers

have always been oversubscribed. The writing on the wall is clear: the economy is going into deep freeze and may already be in Some early signs are the

slowdown in exports, the slump in tourist arrivals and lower government revenues reflecting falling receipts from the sales of beer and alcohol. Then there is capital fligh due to political uncertainty and the panic that followed the prime inister's "revolutionary" land reform plan. Even investments that were in the pipeline are now held up by the confusion. A weak monsoon in the eastern tarai grainbasket is bound to affect overall agriculture production an the overall economic growth. The lack of business confidence

and early signs of a slowdown are already apparent in this year's Dasain bazaars, "The crowds are there, but they are buying very little," says Rajesh Kaji Shrestha, of the Nepal Chamber of Commerce. "Shopkeepers are trying to clear stocks and few are replenishing or ordering new supplies, which is a

The Himalayan Distillers oublic issue could have done bette had it not been for the Maoist

August after the government and the rebels had agreed on a "ceasefire." Despite the rocky scenario, lepal's macroeconomic indicators look

abroad. It is also a result of appropriate exchange rate, monetary and fiscal policies. But economists warn that in instability even this achievement may egin to fray At the "Article IV" consultation held in August, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) gave Nepal a not-too-bad rating mainly because of our macroeconomic health over the

andouts

ederation of Nepalese Chambers of e just don't know what is ahead

If Nepal wants to aim for high-





Of the many splendid restaurants in Kathmandu Valley there are some that stand out for their ambience and aroma.

Tucked away on two acres of wooded greenery in New Baneswoo Hotel Sunset View, offering a delightful blend of Nepali and Jananese food, overlooks Patan and Kathmandu and serves some of most Kathmandu—soba (Japanese buckwheat noodles) made from flown in from Tukuche in Mustang is ground in a jato (stone grinder) t a fine flour, kneaded and then cut into noodle strips by hand. The soba piece de resistance involves lightly boiling the noodles and serving the dish cold (in summer) with soba thuyu (a soup from soy sauce seaweed, sake and fish) and lighth fried tempura. Sweet tasting soba dango, (buckwheat balls in soya sauce) and buckwheat tea are served alongside. And of course soba vu (the water in which the soba is boiled). The meal is rounded up with Japanese sweets. "The flour is the key. 80 percent

says Hiroko Tulachan, who runs Sunset View with her husband Arjun. Since the couple started the soba restaurant four years ago, there's been a steady stream of clients, Japanese tourists, American and European ex pats and a few Nepalis. And unlike most of our favourite foods, soba is the ultimate health food—it is said to be good for hypertension and the digestion, and is naturally fat-free. If the food weren't reason enough to go here, diners can also watch soba chef Shankhalal Thakali, who was trained in Japan, working in the kitchen, making the noodle that millions of Japanese cannot live without. Of course, you don't have to eat soba—the restaurant also serves udon, refined wheat flour noodles. (482172)

These two restaurants, both run by the Summit Hotel, are among the nicest alfresco dining options in the city. The Patan Museum Café only does lunch and high tea, which is a shame. The ambience is unbeatable, hypnotic, almost. The courtyard and the garden with its trellises and little nooks and crannies is alluring, and the sight of the

museum's splendidly renovated façade is a delight to look at and blocks out the sound of hattering tour groups in then, that even city residents not just tourists—go out of neir way to spend an afternooi r Saturday brunch here.

The Summit Hotel Garden, cated in a rather high Sanepa ul-de-sac, is lush, well-kept nd welcoming. In the evening is cleverly lit with warm light n little niches in the wall near oor level. In the day, the garden feels secluded and away from the din of the city and it is sheer luxury to spend an afternoon in the stillness with a beer or cup of strong filter coffee, looking at the views over the city and even the mountains

The menu in both places is similar: sandwiches on French bread the popular Museum burger, pure comfort food like the liver and onions platter, the tempting—and calorific—bread basket, a filling Nepali thali, excellent fish and chips with a lavish helping of chips, excellent potatoes, and a crunchy chef's salad. The Summit Garden also does a barbecue with live music on Friday nights. Desserts are a strong point in both cafes—the orange bomb, the lemon souffle, the chocolate mousse and the apple pie are always delicious and wellpresented, (521810)

The new outlet at the Radisson is the best place in the city to catch the sunset. On the fifth floor of the hotel overlooking the attractive and very blue pool, the restaurant offers views of the ugly, unplanned city, but also of Nagarjun and the forest near the British and Indian embassies, from where flocks of egrets fly south, just past the terrace, in the evenings. On a clear day, there are views of Gauri Shankar. But the most spectacular feature is the sun setting behind Swovambhu

The Splash has regular tables and chairs, but more fun is the bar-style



seating around the edge of the terrace. For nights with a nip in the air, ther is also limited covered seating which looks very comfortable and cosy. The menu is a surprise-not just your usual grill fare. There are interesting etarian options such as the Cajun cottage cheese with balsamico pepper and the bean steak with peri peri chilli, veggies and the honey-mustard sauce one generally assumes goes with pork. There's plenty for carnivores, a range of burgers, inventive sandwiches like the chicken tikka sandwich with nint yogurt and a substantial king fish with lemon-caper butter. The Splash also has an amusing take on the classic Surf and Turf combination—here it is called Pasture and Pond. You get the tenderloin, but with elaborately prepared prawns instead of lobster.

If you are a vodka drinker, there's something to rejoice about: The

Splash offers a range of cocktails made with flavoured vodkas (think herbs, clove, fruit flavours) and liqueurs like aniseed liquor. Now if only there were seating at the attractive beaten-copper sided bar. (411818)

The archly-named La'soon is in a Pulchowk. Run by Maria, a Ghanian





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model and now also runs a school, La'soon is a happy refuge for hordes of lunch devotees who find few other options in the area that probably has the most NGO-workers per square inch in the city. La'soon serves up a cosmopolitan mix of Italian-and American-influenced food. The pastas are filling and flavourful, ranging from spaghetti with feta, olives, capers and chilli, to the simple delights of noodles with pesto. The garlicky mixed bean stew and the chicken in wine sauce are a delightful meal for the starving, while the African peanut soup (when it is on the specials board), the quiche or the tomato and mozzarella salad are perfect for a lighter meal. Other winners include the sandwiches, the Nepali set meal and the jacket fish

with lemon and pepper.

The temptation to sit back with a beer or, indeed, a glass of wine from the restaurant's more than adequate selection is strong, but perhaps best resisted if one is going back to a long workday. In this case, have a go at the espresso-based coffees, which are excellent, especially the extensive selection of Swiss coffees brewed in La'soon's brand-new Krups Nespresso machine. The excellent food and drink and pleasant lemon-yellow and grey interiors with changing artwork on the walls make this one of the most congenial places on the quieter side of the Bagmati. La'soon runs the same menu for dinner, and on weekends, there is often live acoustic music by members of 1974 AD and friends. (535290)

There's nothing quite like The Rox in the city for over-the-top stylishness. An almost overwhelming concoction of granite, marble, slate and blonde wood, this is the place to go for a Very Posh Night Out. The Rox is on three levels, the main dining floor with its show kitchen and un-stuffy seating arrangements including counter seating, the mezzanine, which serves as a pre- or post-dinner lounge for the cigar set, and the trendy Rox Bar on the lowest level, which has a number of seating options and opens on to a terrace and then the garden.

The drinks menu is exemplary and includes a huge variety of cocktails, including The Rox's delicious signature drink, the Caprioschka, a drool-worthy selection of single malts, an extensive



wine list and cocktails by the pitcher

The food at The Rox keeps pace with the décor. There are simple, rich dishes for the meat-lover—tenderloin, sirloin, lamb chops and whole trout, and appetisers like liver terrine with green peppercorns and a berry compote, baked scampi with garlic and coriander and stuffed bell peppe with pork, rice and oregano. Vegetarians have nothing to fear—there is a wide selection, and some dishes are particularly good, such as the quiche with leeks, potatoes and blue cheese or the marinated grilled cottage cheese with veggies, bell peppers and lavoche. (491234)

If you like Korean kimchi, go to Jjang. Actually, go even if you have never eaten it before. Mostly patronised by Korean clientele (always a sign the

food is good), this Korean restaurant in the heart of Thamel, serves a selection of Korean cuisine that tastes grea is easy on the stomach, and won't dent your pocket. Try the set menu or be more adventurous and go for the Kim Chi Gi Ge, a kimchi stew with tuna, pork or vegetables. Also excellent are the le Yuk Bok Gem, pork seasoned with parch (a paste of Coke, sugar ginger andgarlic), and the Dark Do Ri Tang, chicken seasoned with parch and served with soup, punch balls or steamed rice and niso soup. For the carnivore, the Korean-style sushi is a special treat with ham.

vegetables, kimchi, cheese, tuna or beef. There's plenty for vegetarians too—one of the most delicious options is the Den Jang Gi Ge, a soya bean paste stew with vegetables served with a

But the Nepali Times favourite is the traditional Bi Bim Babmixed vegetables (and beef, if you like) cooked Korean-style with rice

seasoned with a special hot sauce and served in a hot stone fried egg, seasoned with a special hot sauce and served in a hot stone bowl. With its accompaniments of kimchi and miso soup, this is a perfect autumn evening meal. (412715)

Finally, a Chinese/ Oriental restaurant without a single red lacquer item in sight, and no trumpery fans and wind chimes. The 'new Orient' has arrived at the Soaltee's new outlet (a branch of the legendary China The warm-toned, lightly veined marble floor, the two slim waterfalls contained between glass that is lit to appear russet, the shattered-glass contained between glass that is lit to appear russet, the shattered-glass and wrought iron screen that sections off a large table, and the carefully neutral grey-brown furniture with hunter green upholstery all come together to make a wonderfully tranquil and cosy space. This is a perfect place for families as well as couples, friends and even to dine out alone. The row of tables for two (or one) are far enough from each other for privacy, but close enough to strike up a conversation if you



sive nine-page menu features Mongolian, Thai, Vietnamese, Malaysian, Indonesian and some Japanese food, too. There are even a couple of specialities from Calcutta's Chinatown here. The effect is pan-Asian and utterly delicious. The soya and wine chilli chicken, the peking 'duck' (they use chicken), and the Japanese-style teppanyaki are perfect—light, yet satisfying, intensely flavourful but never overspiced, and all fresh- and wholesome-tasting. The vegetarian dishes are sublime—very unusual fried cream corn, crunchy, garlicky bok choy, baby corn with juicy oyster mushrooms, and an emperor fried rice that

beats the pants off any fried rice we've ever eaten. For a meal in a bowl, the soba noodles or the prawn and chicken soup in a thick garlic and



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difficult to do

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things solo.

The food is

Chinese, the

Right behind the Keshar Mahal garden in the lane opposite the Tridevi temple in Thamel is a quiet little garden restaurant that the management describes as "a place of joy". Dechenling Beer Garden Restauran and Bar is the perfect place to relieve stress—in the heart of the city. The garden is extremely pleasant and the dining rooms are tastefully, but not overwhelmingly done up.

The menu is an interesting mix of Nepali, Tibetan, Indian, and Bhutanese dishes. There are few better places to go with your family or a large group of friends and indulge in the Tibetan hot pot Gyacok with its mix of seasonal vegetables, mushroom, vermicelli, pork fillet and chicken with side dishes of steamed dumplings, chicken capsicum, Tibetan bread, or butter rice and fruit dessert. The Bhutanese speciali ties, Ama Dharti-chilli, cheese, and mushroom curry served with rice, or the Pak which is chicken or pork with cabbage and rice are perfect for the lone luncher. For a quiet beer in the evening, the hot garlic potatoes are the perfect accompaniment. (416387)





Marpha. And it's a great start to a night out in Kathmandu. What's truly unique about Jatra is its uniformly excellent, but the sukuti sandheko (dry meat pickle) and alu sandheko (potato pickle) deserve special mention. The music is great and even the dullest evening is enlivened at Jatra. (433859)

MERCANTILE

An old white house at the end of Saat Ghumti, Thamel with a sign that looks like it may lead to a lazy blues bar. Jatra, which has a cult following in the city, is a confusing place. It's an artist's hide out ere you can paint, develop pictures or look at artwork. It's a bookworm's lair, perfect for a lazy afternoon with aromatic coffee from around the world. It is equally nice for lovers, who can get away from the bustle of normal restaurants and spend a quiet evening lost in each



Kathmandu's bars and restaurants are clearly doing well as far as names go, and The Red Onion has to be one of the best. It's more than just a fancy name, though, and if you are a devoted drinker who likes choices that go beyond the usual beer-whisky-rum-vodka, this bar around the corner from the Radisson Hotel is the place to go. On what is probably one of the most extensive drinks menus in the city, The Red Onion offers everything from the relatively common Bailey's to umeshu, Japanese plum wine, and sake. For the brave-hearted, there are serious cocktails, and even the perennial whiskey drinker has a decent amount of choice. For the really brave, there are cigars. The food is

perfect for a watering hole—well-proportioned momos, pizzas, pakaudas, burgers and sandwiches, and variations on -wings, drumsticks and barbecue



numerous fat sofas (complete with back), loll around without feeling vulgar, watch TV or just stare ahead cedly. There's something to look vhere—the bar has nice aditional Newari tilework, as do he windows, and right above the tage there are three mirrors set in d wooden window frames which adds a nice feeling of cosy

. Which is also why it comes as a surprise to notice that while this isn't a biker bar, there is a miniature metal bicycles on the windowsills. (416516)

Internation Gazzen Cod. Hotel Shangri Lo, Lazimpat: Pizzas to crepes, Indian curries and Chinese selicacies in the prize-winning garden. 412999 100 Fair Payvillons. The Everest Hotel, Baneswore: Indian specialities from Bengali to Punjabi. irant, Hotel Yak & Yeti, Darbar Marg: Excellent borscht and other Russian b. Hotel De L' Annapurna Darbar Marg: Kabab madness and other ich Indian food. 221552 Ian Rui, Thapathali: Lip-smacking

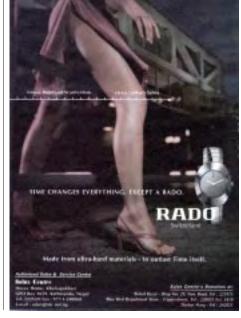


ant, Thamel: Mountaineers, continental cuisine, and good drinks, 414336

Room. Darbar Marg: The perennial family favourite, great momos. 222636 Hotel Malla, Lazimpat: Great fish, all-round delicious Chinese food. 418385

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Making a way in the world

mentality; an account of a visi to India, An Area of Darkness, by a Trinidadian of Indian origin, and the delightful ories in Miguel Street whose haracters are a cross section of the population of multi-ethnic Trinidad. eople have won the Nobel for far les accomplished work.

Sometime in the 70s Naipaul began worrying about the capacity of the novel to keep up with and terpret our rapidly changing world. This coincided with the fact that he was building upon his experience of colonialism and post-imperial trauma in his native island and looking at the rises of identity and social construction in all the world's sites of dying olonialism and fallen

mnerialisms He began travelling, producing he award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to VS Naipaul is three books about India that analyse testimony to the power and the some of the key problems in that prawling miscellaneous country and glory of the writing of our region and due reward for over 40 years of a oploring his affinities with the land of his ancestors. He also visited Islamic man's dedication to the unrelenting demands of his craft and calling. He countries producing Among the has continued to be naked to his Relievers and Reward Relief Thank God for illiteracy, no Ayatollah enemies. He has never compromised his opinions or feelings to satisfy local realised that his critique was more demands. He has walked a long lonely devastating than Salman Rushdie's road, avoiding the pain of living in But these two books are less about the these islands, but also denying himself religion of Islam than about imperialsm and the horror and terror waiting the immediate pleasures of being here and enjoying the status of culture hero. to be unleashed upon the world by the person looked up to and cherished fundamentalism and fanaticism of am kind. As usual this clear-sighted and thinking writer writes about catastrophe years before the explosions come

I had given up hoping. He was first nominated in 1972 when he had already written ten books including the Making an artistic response to his classic West Indian novel: A House for on nerverse view that the novel was Mr Biswas; the most original historical dead, Naipaul brought to travel work on Trinidad—The Loss of El writing a concern with ideas about and Dorado: The Mimic Men-a subtle interpretations of the world, as well as fictional study of African-Indian novelistic techniques that made the

KEN RAMCHAND

by his society.

travel book a more searching medium than it is in the hands of less driven writers. In The Enigma of Arrival and A Way in the World, he went further. crossing and re-crossing the boundary lines between fiction and non-fiction sometimes taking advantage of the onfusion to make 'fictional' statements that readers swallow as if they vere non-fiction and vice-versa.

He must have been nominated for the Nobel almost every year after 972. So confident was Newsweek magazine that he would win it in 1980 they put him on the front cover as "The Master of the Novel". He came lose again in 1992 when the prize went to Derek Walcott.

He has been attacked again and again on ideological and personal grounds. He has been seen as a nokesman for the Metropolis agains Third World culture. He has been riticised for having said nothing wa ver created in the West Indies. He as been accused of anti-Negro rejudice and for saying Africa has n future, although no one has written nore feelingly about the disruption of African readitional life, the patronising attitude to their culture and values, and the ways in which Africans are strangers in their own cities

commentary on his presentation of women. Women are never central characters, and in Guerrillas, In A Fire State and A Bend in the River. here seems to be a misogynist streak But the attitude to women in Naipaul's writing cannot be described imply as anti-feminist. Here are some of the clues to think about before we make up our minds: the greatest nimus is directed against White women of a colonialist or liberal bent: the attitude to female sexuality is

There is a substantial negative

exuality; there is some political allegory floating around; and the attitude to the female is an acute expression of an attitude to the flesh.

All I can do here is state again that although it is possible to be critical of certain aspects of Naipaul's work we should concentrate on the work, not the man. Who can read Biswas, Miguel Street, Finding the Centre The Loss of El Dorado, The Enigma of Arrival, and Letters Between A Father and Son and tell me that the work is not Trinidadian? Not even Naipaul He can say he is British but his work is West Indian. His experience of colonialism, mimicro and post-imperial destitution in Trinidad and his stubborn desire to write in an arid place are the foundation of everything he has written. His comic sense was born of his suffering

the incongruities in our world.

Of his stature as a writer no one ms to have any doubt. But we should also notice that a man who keeps engaging critically with a people and a place is a man who suffers and cares no matter what he says outside of his writings. His vision is pessimistic, but a man who keeps on creating cannot be a man who does not believe in human possibilities.

His work is comic, provocative, and intellectually stimulating. We will cherish Nainaul as someone who is constantly forcing us to question our values and beliefs, someone who is able to shatter our complacencies and make us abandon many half-truths. I find reading him a chastening and humbling experience. On top of that, he makes me

laugh.
(The Trinidad Express)

WORLD RECESSION

How bad will it be?

n late summer, there was a chance the world night avoid recession: Japan was in a mild sion, Europe was expected to emerge from a slowdown, and the US was caught between slipping briefly on an economic banana peel and outright recession. But the dramatic loss of confidence worldwide last month has tilted the balance. The IMF may not say it yet, but the world is in recession. World economic growth, which has averaged 3.8 percent over the past 35 years and more than 4 percent last year, is now poised to fall to about 2 percent. Is this an ordinary recession or could it turn into something like the ugly early

1980s? Worse, is there a risk of depression: The central scenario is relatively benign-US and Europe uptums by the middle of next year. Monetary stimulus—ever more from the Federal Reserve, and more hesitantly from the European Central Bank-provides an underpinning for demand expansion. Monetary stimulation takes time to show its effects, but it works. There is also-in the US, not in Europe-fiscal expansion There is a tax cut worth half-a-percent of GDP in the mail, another full percent of GDP in fiscal spending and tax cuts is on the way to approval. In the past, a monetary and fiscal expansion policy has

got economies, notably the US, out of recession. This time too there are positive factors in the US: no banking or real-estate crisis. The stock market, which soared high, has been sold off to a point where even long-term observers believe the sell-off is mostly over.

But weak points abound. Japan, in recession and unlikely to emerge soon, is the biggest risk factor. No policy instruments are left to lift Japan's economy. The common plea to stimulate inflation to jump-start the economy only lays bare Japan's absence of effective instruments to help itself. If Japan capsizes, it takes Asia with it. In that event, a deep world recession—or worse—is unavoid able. Yet, a prompt US upswing might let Japan hang on for a few years more. A second weak point is Europe. The European Central Bank has been slow

o cut rates, fearing inflation, though that is the least worry today. European public finance is locked in the Maastricht treaty and cannot stimulate growth. If the US recovery is not prompt and substantial, Europe will reviet the Maastricht provisions that make counter-cyclical policies impossible. For now Europe is getting by with growth just short of recession levels. But there may be a progressive downward recession a

the US recession widens to the world economy. Emerging markets are the third weakness. atin America is in recession. Default in Argentina is expected; Brazil has an election-year ecession and debt problems akin to Argentina. Mexico is entering a recession. It is the same in Asia—lack of exports and reform have cut growth

So why believe in a moderate recession and an early upturn? The strongest reason is that in the US there is no major issue other than onfidence, and that may return soon. After that, the ballast of monetary and fiscal policy will raise all ships. It has done so in the past 10 recessions This one is no different, except that it may be nilder.

Once the US pulls out of recession and Europe turns up, we are set for a moderate recovery in world growth. There is no chance of a new boom, however, as world growth will gradually build up to 3 to 3.5 percent, not even average growth of the past. The disappointment ahead is not the lack of an upturn but of slow growth once it comes.

However, if confidence worldwide fails to rise, output will plummet. That was the case in 1982 when world growth fell to just 0.6 percent. That is far from a world depression, but it will mean massive unemployment and bankruptcy.

Rudi Dornbusch is Ford Professor of economics at MIT and a former chief economic advisor to the World Bank and the IMF

Well-being well-off

WASHINGTON – A nation wanting high quality of life and environ-mental health needs freedom, good governance, and education, says a new country-by-country index. Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), used a new approach to survey 180 countries' human and ecosystem "well being." Building on previous quality-of-life vardsticks, such as the UN Human Development Index which includes health, education and GDP data, the Well Being Index covers indicators including health, good governance, press freedom, corruption, education, crime, and equity with a range of environmen tal trends. The report says 141 countries, including almost all of sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia—"combine high levels of deprivation and environmental degradation." Sweden topped the list and Iceland, Austria and Canada—long-time residents of the top-tier of global progress tables—were also high up.

Some rankings, however, were rather different. Dominica came in sixth, and Guyana, Latvia and Peru ranked higher than the US and the Netherlands, sixth and eighth in the Human Development Index, but at 27 and 38 here. Robert Prescott-Allen, author of the report. environmental factors and a wider view of human development explain much of this change, but lack of data was also a factor. Netherlands' slide reflects its poor environmental performance, the US slipped due to the wide gap between rich and poor, impacts on the global atmosphere, and high percentages of endangered species. The report noted that, contrary to notions that environmenta protection depends on the wealth of a nation, differences in ecosystem health occur between countries with similar standards of living Austria, for example, has the same quality of life as Belgium, but takes less of a toll on the environment. "The report suggests a high standard of living is possible without ruining the environment-by changing the way development is pursued," said Achim Steiner, director of the IUCN. (IPS)

Paying the price

UNITED NATIONS - The UN warns that an impending global economic crisis in the wake of 11 September will have a devastating impact on the poorer nations, where the battle to reduce poverty has already been crippled by cuts in development aid, onerous debt burdens. protectionism, and a rash of civil and military conflicts. Gross world product (GWP) is expected to grow at only 1.4 percent in 2001, compared with a previous estimate of 2.4 percent, with partial ecovery to about two percent in 2002. International trade is expected to register "virtually no growth" this year, although the figure could increase to around four or five percent next year. Kinniburgh says the most severely affected economies are expected to be in South and East Asia, where GDP growth projections for 2001 have dropped from 4.1 percent to 1.7 percent. These countries, which depend on exports and tourism, include Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea.

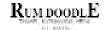
The UN has updated its annual World Economic and Social Survey to take account of the potential impact of the attacks in the US. Estimates of the destruction of human and physical capital in the US range between \$40-\$100 billion, "The impact (of the attacks) will be worse than any of the events of the last 40 years, including the oil shock of the 1970s," predicts Ken Goldstein, an economist with the US Consumer Board, Ian Kinniburgh, the UN's director of development policy analysis, adds that population growth outpaces economic growth in most developing regions, so their economies were more vulnerable to external shocks in the first place. (IPS)

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Where the tales are as tall as the monorains.

Succeived, visules and burgers boundiful, with a regetamen correly. The Intenditiest bur around the most consisted bregitate between block and busineston. Liver bound on househood and history.



this transformed Pakistan's natural

requirement for a friendly neighbour

client state. Consequently, Pakistan ha

into an unvielding obsession for a

ended up alienating Afghanistan's

ethnic minorities, and driven their

leaders into the laps of India or Iran.

Pakisran's obsession with a strong

Pashtun state in Kabul flies in the face of

history Until 1973, when Afebanistan's

ruled in Kabul, the Afghan government

But Zahir Shah declined to open a from

against Pakistan during the 1971 Indo-

But this benign Afghan attitude

Daoud, a Pashtun nationalist, deposed

the king and seized Kabul in 1973. He

started to foment nationalism among the

Durand Line was aggressively challenged

by Afghanistan's communist presidents Hafizullah Amin and Nor Mohammad

Taraki. both die-hard Pashtuns. Thus,

strong and centralised Pashtun

governments in Kabul have eithe

pandered to Pachtun pationalism in

Afghanistan by supporting Pashtun

Pashtun-Islamic fundamentalism to

This should have suggested to

Pakistan's military that a strong Talibar

eparatism in Pakistan, or tried to expor

established a strong, centrist state and

Pashtuns of Pakistan. After leftists in a

1978 coup overthrew Daoud, the

changed after Prince Muhammad

Pakistan war

king, Muhammad Zahir, a Pashtun,

une non-Soviet and friendly to India



ne opposition Northern Alliance,

whose constituent Taiik, Uzbek and

ssistance from both Iran and India

This is the idea of Pakistan's need

"strategic denth." first articulated

in 1990 by Pakistani army chief Gen

Aslam Beg, Gen Beg believed that in

difficult war with India, Afghanistan'

the event of a long, drawn out and

friendly territory could serve as a

staging zone, providing secure

eceived economic and military

would compromise its security.

NAJAM SETHI

aunched last week by the US and its allies against Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, Pakistan's president, Gen Pervez Musharraf called for a rehabilitated Afghanistan with a new broad-based government whose formation should be "facilitated" rather than imposed by the West This was reiterated by Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar's warning last week that a puppet regime must not be installed in Sattar should know what he is

rating bases for Pakistan's air force talking about. Since the Soviets were kicked out of Afghanistan in 1988, Pakistan has tried to cobble together But times have changed. Giver the development of nuclear weapons and the deployment of ballistic and prop up four governments in Kabul and failed. Except for the missiles and faster jet planes, it has government led by former President never been clear what Pakistan might Burhanuddin Rabbani, (an ethnic want to "park" in Afghanistan, or why, Tajik), which is still recognised as in the event of another war with India. legitimated by the United Nations. Moreover, Pakistan's defence all of Afghanistan's regimes, stablishment has consistently refused including the Taliban, were led by

to learn lessons since it began ultivating relations with the Taliban ethnic Pashtuns. With the imminent demise of the Taliban, the search is in 1996, the biggest lesson of all: A on once again to find the 'right' rigidly ideological government with a Pashtun-dominated government for Afghanistan partner Nowander Gen Musharraf Muslim Pakistan has a natural had to sideline two of his pro-Taliban interest in seeking a friendly erals, a move aimed at consolidat overnment there. It is ringed by his position

ndia, which is Hindu and deemed hostile and Iran which is Shi'ite fallows two decades of intervention in Muslim and deemed untrustworthy. Afghanistan. This was based on a Pakistan therefore feels that a new policy of picking Pashtun favourites to

Pakistan because it would combine the worst elements of ethnic nationalism with violent religious sectarianism. But it didn't Instead when the Taliban arrives on the scene in 1994 rather unexpectedly, and demonstrated a degree of public support in war weary Afghanistan. akistan leapt into the fray and gave anstinting economic and military support Unfortunately, however, the

Talihan's military successes made then progressively more confident and rigid. hereby diminishing Pakistan's political everage with them. Now Pakistan is being held accountable for befriending the Taliban and being made to count the costs of not ditching them earlier. Where does Pakistan go from here? Since Pakistan is now a Western ally again, its sest bet would be to join hands with the international community to help establish a truly broad-based and decentralised federal government in Kabul in which the various ethnic communities have a great deal of regional autonomy. This would have to include Afghan oppositionists in the Northern Alliance, as well as moderate nants of the Taliban regime and other Pashtun commanders close to Pakistan

Moreover, King Zahir could provide a transitional umbrella under LIN supervision. The new government's job ould be to "clean up" Afghanistan with Western support—meaning, get rid of al Oaeda terrorist training camps and elect a representative governing body for

The Western powers could then ask Pakistan to assist them in the reconstruc-tion and rehabilitation of Afghanistan, hereby giving it a strategic foothold in Kabul, and eventually opening access to Western oil and gas pipelines from Central Asia to Pakistan and beyond. Royalties from the pipelines alone ould swiftly pull Afghanistan out of

its abject economic misery. If this seems like a far cry from the rage and passion of today, and what US officials admit is likely to be a long and difficult conflict, no matter Pakistan's commitment, a least, should be made clear from the first steps it takes in this direction. (Asian Wall Street Iournal)

Naiam Sethi is editor of the Friday Times, an independent weekly based in Lahore, Pakistan

Quality over quantity

the ministry requested an billion or \$90 billion, down before. This will be the first

billion. Japan's overseas aid

budget, the backhone of the country's pacifist foreign policy, was reduced 3 percent in fiscal 2001. Along with the financial pressure—a long recession, record unemployment and rising corporate bankruptcies, Tokyo's aid priorities have also been affected by the global political situation after 11 September. Indonesia, the largest ODA recipient after China, received a pledge of an increase in funds soon after Finance Minister Masajiro Shiokawa expressing Japan's gratitude to President Megawati Sukarnoputri for Indonesia's support of the US 'war against terrorism.' Pakistan is also scheduled to get about \$40

illion as emergency aid as part of its support for the US.

The new ODA budget will emphasise quality over quantity—grant aid, which forms 47 percent of the overall aid budget, is expected to remain intact, but loans will likely be reduced. The repercussions will be severe for China, which has been either the largest or second largest recipient of Tokyo's aid-analysts say Beijing gets 11.4 percent of Japanese ODA. Loans make up the bulk of Japanese ODA to China, which is also the top recipient of technical transfer from Japan, Japan wants aid to be channelled to environment protection and agricultural projects. For south-east Asia, the cuts could mean less funds for expensive infrastructure and more for environmental protection. Advisors also suggest that Japan cooperate with countries such as Singapore and Thailand to provide trilateral aid to poorer countries like Lans and Cambodia. (IPS)

Grameen goes to Venezuela

CARACAS - Mohammad Yunus, who 25 years ago launched the helping revitalise a similar initiative in Venezuela. In late 1999. Hunn Chávez's government created the Bank of the Sovereign People, with credit lines for "solidarity", "women's" and "productive" micro-loans, But the bank granted small loans totalling just \$2.8 million last year, despite \$30 million available capital, and earlier this year the directorate was fired due to poor results and corruption charges. In another anningch. Chavez announced in January the creation of the Women's Bank to serve the population that, in the Grameen Bank's experience worldwide, makes greatest use of micro-credit. The Women's Bank began operating in August with \$14 million in capital and offering loans ranging from \$420-\$7,000 for small-scale development

The Grameen Bank of Bangladesh has over two million debtors, 95 percent women. Over the bank's 25-year history, the default rate has averaged just one percent. Yunus said despite "enormous commitment in the Chávez administration, Grameen Bank evaluations in Venezuela, "micro-credits are not reaching the areas that most need them. Yunus also said micro-credit projects must not involve government entities alone, but also the private sector and civil society organisations, and must be self-sustainable. "It must become a truly commercial banking system," he said. The government has pushed a Micro-Finance Act through Congress and is drafting Banking Act reforms covering micro-loans to encourage private banks to provide such services hemselves. Yunus says that while the Grameen Bank has no intention of opening "branch offices" in other countries, it is willing to teach the system to others, who can then adapt it to local conditions, (IPS)

TERCITY BUS SERVICES

ance budget of just ¥918 from ¥102 trillion the year time in a decade Japanese official development assistance has slipped below \$10

TOKYO – Japan's Finance Ministry has suggested slashing the country's foreign aid budget—the largest in the world—for the next

society. We should be compensated. Has untouchability disanneared after Prime Minister Deuha ordered its end?

Excerpts from an interview with Lal Bahadur Bishwakarma, MP UML

Dalits, as a result of which we have suffered mental and physical problems. We have been excluded from The government announced it but its agencies have not implemented it. Policies need to be implemented The Maoists say they want to liberate the Dalits, what do you think about that?

receive compensation in cash and kind. If the Maoists kill a policeman, then his family gets Rs 800,000 as

compensation. Those injured also get paid. We must also be provided compensation. The state labelled us

You must have been happy being an MP despite being a Dalit...

ou become happy when you become an MP because you are actually

able to work for the welfare of the people. I have realised that if you tackle

igher. People used to say untouchability is something created by the people. I say it is a creation of the state that makes the laws—it is there in

igidly enforced in the army. Dalits in the army are discriminated against.

pattalions stating that untouchability should not exist in the army. If you

a problem correctly then the chances of getting something done are

the courts, schools and police. It exists in all institutions and it is most

After I raised this issue in parliament, the chief of the army wrote to all

raise issues in a proper manner, something gets done. So I am happy

Don't you want revenge for what the state has done to Dalits, how?

The state must compensate us. If someone's house is burnt down, they

The Dalits cannot be free until a social revolution takes place. The Maoist struggle is not a social struggle In fact, it works in favour of the rich. The Maoists have collected a lot of money and their leaders control it. They collect money from business people, who make it up from poor people like us. The money the Maoists collect from schools, is the hard-earned money of people like us. The money paid by government officials comes from the bribes they take from us. The Maoists have increased the burden of the poor.

They say the situation of Dalits will change after they come to power..

We first would like to know what exactly they have done for us Dalits. Just because they say so, should we believe them? Have they ever said Dalits should be provided free education? They too are killing Dalits. How can I believe them?

It is said the Dalits themselves have a caste hierarchy...

Yes, it exists. The caste system is slowly breaking up in other societies but in Dalit society, it is becoming more entrenched. It exists between rich and poor Dalits.

Some Dalits are also taking on Bahun surnames, Why?

There are a small number of people—some in high positions—who do that. They may not like what they are but it is reality. Are they really emancipated after changing surnames?

What do you say to those who think that changes things?

It is wrong. A Kami was called a Kami because he used to do Kam (work), and not because he worked with iron. My forefathers were all Kamis, I am proud of this, It will not help us if we just keep on changing our titles. In fact it would help if we kept our identities and fought for our rights. We Dalits have done a lot. After all we produced weapons and ploughs, jewellery and furniture. Almost everything in use today, has been made by us. We have done a lot for society. We clean the streets every day. Who made the crown that the king puts on, the royal jewels? We stitch the national dress... When others do the same work now they are not

What will you do if some one calls you a Kami?

What will you do in Some che cains you a Kaim?
I would be happy. I will not become small if some one calls a Kami. I have the skills. Just because someone made my family a Dalit 200 years ago, that does not mean that I am a person of a lower standing.

Do you still carry out your vocation?

Not after I became a politician. My father did the same job and taught me this way. We feel proud that we manufactured sickles and ploughs. Just because the upper castes look down on you should not mean that you give up your profession. You should continue doing your work and at the same time fight for equality. Do other members of your party treat you differently?

Sometimes things have happened differently because this is the society we live in. We are there to change society, so these issues do not make a difference. There is class differentiation between us Dalits, definitely it will exist among the other castes too. In fact, untouchability is very prevalent in the Far West.

Is the situation changing?

My party people in my district, Kanchanpur, treat me as they treat everyone. There is no discrimination. But maybe people treat me differently because I am a politician.

It's said you had problems finding a house in Kathmandu after becoming MP, because you are a Dalit? Yes. First I stayed with a friend near my party office in Balkhu. I then started looking for a place of my own. I found many places but could not rent them because of my caste and name. I told this to my friends and they said that because of my caste, people were not renting their houses to me. I did not believe it first but

You still commute by bicycle and not a Prado or Pajero?

Many MPs bought Prados and Pajeros and the people protested against that. Why should an MP from a place where there is no road buy a vehicle? In Kathmandu, you have to live according to your means. Actually MPs can only afford a motorcycle. They earn Rs 15,200 per month. You cannot buy a car with this, unless you are corrupt. I still commute on my bicycle. I was ill and the doctor advised me against using my cycle. Once I get well I will start using it again.

I didn't want to acknowledge as right what my inner self told me was wrong. That's why I opposed the Women's Property Rights Bill passed by Parliament. Rather than opposing the government, I was de-

Ambika Pant, Nepali Congress MP in Drishti Saptahik, 16 October





Man: The day to worship Durga is approaching. I have to finish this statue soon. I still have to mak

Woman: "Stay away. Why are you coming so close...."

Man: "What kind of tradition is this, when I can't worship even the statue I made!"

Bijaya Dashami Greeting Card by a local NGO.

Chasing Maoists The state has to compensate us. Nepalipatra, 12 October

THIS DAGE CONTAINS MATERIAL SELECTED FROM THE NEDALL RESE

Locals from Jorpati village in Dhankuta chased away representatives of the "peoples' government" recently. Uday Bahadur Basnet, formerly of the Marxist-Leninists, joined the Maoists and was made leader of the local people's government. He ordered the illagers to attend a meeting and asked them to provide food for all the people there. That infuriated the people, who chased him away. Earlier in a nearby village, the

residents beat up two Maoist party members, Padam Bhandari and Gopi Lal Giri, while they were holding a public meeting. The villagers were reopening the doors of the Village pment Committee office (which had been shut by the Maoists earlier). The locals decided it was they who had the right to decide whether o not the VDC office should be closed. and agreed that it was not proper to lock up the buildings. The Maoists realised that there was little they could do and are now returning the papers they had stolen from the offices. Then do this at night fearing that the people who will definitely beat them up, might catch them...

Maoists re-organise Jana Aastha, 10 October आस्था

While the government is setting up the Armed Police Force the Maoists an also reorganising their fighting forces. They already had "people's militias" and a regular fighting force going up to the battalion level, in line with their game plan to first capture the villages and then take on the towns and cities These are regular fighting forces. After the party's second convention, the sts realised that they are in for a very long and drawn-out battle with

the royal army and have therefore changed their thinking about the fighting forces.

They are setting up new units, called "Urban Guerrillas." These units will be used for all activities that are to take place in urban areas, from propaganda and publicising the "people's war" to fighting the army. It ing forces are used in rural areas to fight for the establishment of peoples overnments, while the units now eing created are to be deployed in urban battles. Sources say there are undamental differences in the



orking, organisation and goals etween the existing forces and the ne urban guerrillas "The urban units stematise the party's organisation in

The Maoist core fighters are members of what they call a "people" rmy", which functions under direct orders from the Central Military Commission (headed by Prachanda)

UN salaries, tax Deshanter, 14 October

वेदेशकार साम्याद्वीया A 10 percent income tax is deducted at source from every employee working n the organised sector. But people working for the United Nations do not pay income tax. They earn thousands frupees every month but do not hav

to pay any income tax at all. The lay says a 15 percent income tax is navable by every individual who earns more than Rs 55,000 per year, in the case of a family this amount is fixed at Rs 75,000. Under this law. all people employed in the formal sector pay tax. Only Nepalis working in the various UN projects, program and other related areas do not.

The Vienna Convention of 1961 learly states that all local personnel employed by the UN will have to pay taxes in their respective countries The UN, when appointing Nepalis, makes it clear that they have to pay taxes. A very good statement in theory, but in practice it does not work. All Nepalis are taxed at source. The UN does not tax its local employees at source and these employees do not make the effort to

go and pay their taxes. According to the information provided to *Deshanter* by a UN official, 12 UN agencies have office in Nepal. 390 Nepalis and 190 oreigners work at these agencies. Of these, over 150 are of the officer level or higher. None pay taxes.

The salary of local UN staff ranges from Rs 35,000 to Rs 79,000 per month. Yearly incom taxes payable by these people would range from Rs 437,000 to Rs ,148,000. According to Nepali law individuals who earn more than Rs 75,000 per month and couples who earn more than Rs 150,000 are taxed at a flat rate of 25 percent. The truth s they do not pay and the government does not ask them to pay. It is trange that even though more than 150 foreigners are employed by the UN in Nepal, officials have no nformation of them. The chief of the internal revenue department at Patan says the government requested the UN to provide the information last year and there was no response.

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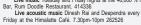
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Images from Bhaktapur Solo photo exhibition by Kishore Kayastha. Until 21 October, 10am-6pm. Park Gallery, Pulchowk. 522307

The Culture and Future of the Internet Lecture by Prof Kim H Veltman, Scientific Director. Maaschrict McLuhan Institute Universiteit Maastricht, The Netherlands. 10.30AM, 19 October, Russian Culture Centre, Kamalpokhari

Contemporary Jazz dance classes by Meghna Thapa. At Alliance Francaise Sundays and Tuesdays 4.30pm-6.30pm, 241163. At Banu's, Kamal Pokhari, Wednesdays 6.30pm-8pm, Saturdays 1.30pm, 434024, 434830

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Nagarkot Escape Weekends in cottages, views of the Himalayas, valleys and forests. Special rates for Nepalis and resident expatriates. Hotel Keyman Chautari. keyman@wlink.com.np 436850

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NEPALI WEATHER

Unlike some previous years, this is not going to be a hile (muddy) Dasain. A glorious high pressure system dominates the tibetan plateau and Nepal. The few clouds that do accompany a retreating monsoon circulation over southern India are being blown off by the newly-assertive westerlies. The storms from central India are being blown off to the east to merge with a cyclone over the South China Sea. Some of these clouds will graze the eastern Himalaya, bringing the first showers of the season. The weakening sun and cloud-free skies will bring down the minimum temperature in Kathmandu to as low as 12 C. KATHMANDIIVAIIFY















Re 350 Durga Ghimire recounts the period between 1970-1972 when she was twice in Kathmandu's omen's jail and once in Biratnagar. In all, she was behind bars for a little over a year for rotesting the Panchavat system and organising a conference to discuss democratic alternatives. imire wrote a diary in her time in prison. This is the English version of the diaries that were oublished in Nepali in 1994

Nepal in the Nineties: Versions of the Past, Visions of the Future Michael Hutt, ed Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001

This collection of eight essays discusses in detail the social, cultural and literary life of Nepal in the 1990s. The authors reflect on the changes that occurred in the kingdom and the circumstances that produced these changes. Their wide-ranging focus is on the social processes that produced these changes.



Beautiful Orchids of Nepal Keshab R Rajbhandari, Sushila Bhattarai Rajbhandari and Bhattarai, Kathmandu, 2001 Re 1 200

> The pace of destruction of the habitat of Nepal's orchids is increasing. Dr Raibhandari and Dr Bhattarai have catalogued Nepal's orchid species—all 101 of them. This volume, printed on art paper, provides short descriptions of all known Nepali orchids, as well as information on flowering time distribution in the world, the nature of their babitat in Nepal, their scientific and local names. Each description is accompanied by a colour photograph

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Excerpts from The Tutor of History

highway, set apart from the others by its tropical vegetation, uncommo highway, set apart from the others by its tropical vegetation, uncommod in the hill regions. Ringed by rich green rice fields and spotted with jacaranda, gulmohar and bougainvillea plants, its bazaar was slightly less drab than most highway barrars. Its narrow alleys were littered with dirt, hits of torn schoolbooks and plastic wrappers, shards of light bulbs, snarls of chicken wire, fallen leaves and stubbed-out cigarettes. Most of the buildings were huddled together in an unattractive clump and there was no view of the himals from here still, it was a good place to live in. It wasn't remote like the villages off the highway. It wasn't a sleepy hick settlement. The bazaar had a police post, a high school, an agriculture office and an intermediate-level college campus; it even boasted a private English-medium boarding school for those who earned handfuls of cash. A few of the shops sold posh city items like handbass, sunglasses, nail polish, and leather belts. Khaireni Tar was a middling kind of town where it was common, while walking through alleys, to enter a twilight of cultures: to hear the screech of Nirvana on a transistor radio while passing a group of women carrying loads of freshly scooped dung. Young men from the town's finest families no longer just joined the British, Indian or Nepali armed forces but went to work as migrant labourers in Seoul, Osaka, Australia and Dubai, From abroad they sent their families a hundred, two hundred, three hundred green dollars a month. Young girls no longer consented to illiteracy but clamoured to go to school. Occupational caste tailors, cobblers, metal smiths and singers rehearsed liberation slogans under their breath. In the bazaar people could be heard speaking Nepali, Gurung, Magar, Hindi, Kumhale—and bursts of English: "Ta-ta, bye-bye, hello

The town's physical structure mirrored its changeling ethos. A new church stood at the edge of the bazaar, near the caves where a Hindu ascetic lived off alms. The newer buildings of the bazaar had firm stone walls, and tin roofs were in demand among the well-to-do. But most of the older houses were made of class and thatch, and their uneven walls and mismatched windows bore prints of the hands that had built them. Some of the town's houses were covered in red clay. others in house paint, while others weren't decorated at all. Some had metal rods on the windows, others didn't even have glass. Some had electric wires, others were bleached at night by the bright white light of kerosene lamps. Each house contained, in this way, an archaeology of its own, its artifacts bearing testament to Khaireni Tar's growth and development.

At the centre of town was a sacred twined-together bar-peepal tree which concealed, with its dense banyan and bodhi foliage, the fumes of the trucks and buses that rolled into the bus stop at all hours of the day. Every morning vendors gathered on the stepped platform beneath the bar-peepal tree to sell seasonal fruits and vegetables, ready-made snacks, candies and biscuits, hair oil and hair threads and aluminum and plastic trinkets. On days when it wasn't raining the Musalmaan bangle seller set up a display of glass bangles of the latest designs. When people got off the buses, all the vendors vied for attention: 'Bananas so cheap they're almost free!' 'Cheeseballs-chips-a-locket-for-your-daughter!' 'Peanuts? Peanuts?' The bangle seller alone waited in peace for her customers, bargaining with no one—Fixed price, baba'—even as people around her haggled, made counteroffers, cried foul and defended their honour.

After the announcement of elections, a few changes took place around the twined-together bar-peepal tree. A few more passengers than usual disembarked from the Kathmandu buses. After looking around uncertainly, the newcomers asked for directions to their party offices. The bazaar thickened each day with unknown faces.

One morning the communist UML party office, which stood next to the barpeepal tree, hoisted a tattered red hammer-and-sickle flag above its door. The next day the party assigned its workers to repaint its sign board so that it could be read from afar: NEPAL COMMUNIST PARTY (UNITED MARXIST LENINIST). From then on, a number of UML workers began assembling in front of the office each morning, some sporting Lenin goatees, Marxist beards, Castro fatigues and Che Guevara t-shirts, and others more ordinary in village homespuns or in ragtag

student uniforms. As more and more workers arrived at the UML office, they spilled into the adjoining crockery store, talking politics in hushed tones among the store's displays of aluminum plates, iron pots, stainless steel utensils and plastic buckets.

Next door to the crockery store was a cloth shop which carried fine Indian cottons and Chinese rayons. The Nepali Congress Party office was eyond this shop, and the current Member of Parliament was often seen in front of this office—till the day the party abruptly announced that it was fielding another candidate. The new Congress party candidate, a tubby Bahun man whom no one had ever heard of—but who was said to be a member of the dynasty that ruled the Congress party-then showed up at the office, constantly surrounded by hordes of young followers he'd imported from

The small conservative Rastriya Praiatantra Party had no following in this electorate, but it had decided this year to field a woman from herebecause the five per cent quota for somehow. The RPP office was located a few houses from the Congress party office, between some fruit stalls and the Himal Lodge Restaurant Bar, But the come to the party office, and the lone



SYNOPSIS The Tutor of History is an

ambitious social saga, a compelling tale of idealism, love and alienation, set in contemporary Nepal caught between tradition and modernity. The events of the novel unfold against the backdrop of a campaign for parliamentary elections in the bustling roadside town of Khaireni Tar. At its heart the hook is about four main characters: Giridhar Adhikari, the chairman of the People's Party's district

a serious alcohol addiction and strange, violent manias: Rishi Paraiuli, a lonely, under-employed bachelor and disillusioned communist who gives private tuitions in history to disinterested middle-class boys; Om Gurung, a former British Gurkha determined to bring love into every life in his hometown; and Binita Dahal, a reclusive young widow who runs a small tea shop and is careful not to demand of life more than the meagre pleasures it brings her. As the election campaign reaches its peak, the crisis in each character's life mounts, and the eventual rigging of the elections becomes a metaphor for the flawed, imperfect choices that ordinary

office guard, nodding off at the door, gave the building an abandoned, dispirited

The blind shopkeeper Shankar's grain store was next to the RPP office, it spacious airy interior displaying stacks of rice, daals, grain, spices and oils, as well as odds and ends like cigarettes, chocolates, biscuits, cheap dolls, plastic earrings and Chinese umbrellas. Next to Shankar's grain store was the radio and watch repair shop, a canvas stall dwarfed by a two-storey yellow house decorated with stucco pineapples. (The ostentation of the yellow house always prompted newcomers to guess: 'A former British Gurkha's house?') For its first two meetings the People's Party had gathered here, relying on the hospitality of wner Om Gurung. No such meeting had been held in the past few years, and the People's Party didn't even have an office in town.

people must make to get by in a world beyond their control. (Penguin)

Beyond Om Gurung's yellow house was a wood mill, and past that, the arid uncultivable plains which dried like dung as soon as the monsoon rains ended, giving Khaireni Tar its name: ashen flatlands.

Inconveniently for all the political parties, Khaireni Tar's Telecommunications Office was located on the north side of the highway, away from the bazaar. All day, political workers were seen scurrying across the highway to this one-room office to place STD trunk calls and telexes. Everyone knew that the operator was efficient at her task: they also knew that her supervisor listened in on conversations rom his rented room above the office, where he spent half the day lolling in his bed with stained vellow sheets. People talked cautiously over the phone:

'I'm calling about that matter.' 'That one or the one before that?'

That one, that's the one I mean.

Gift Helpline

981036433

A little distance away from the Telecommunications Office was Binita's from the shock of her husband's death in a bus accident. When his mangled

before their eyes, from a brash youth to a recluse. The more conservative Chettri Bahun families of the town shunned her for her unseemly decision to continue living alone, with only her little daughter for company till the arrival of her young cousin about six months back. But the more liberally inclined townspeople, and those who appreciated Binita's fragrant milk tea, tended to frequent her shop.

Binita's teashop served no alcohol, and it didn't attract men in search of raucous exchanges to pass the evenings with. Such men went to other places at the southern end of town, shabby bamboo-and-thatch stalls erected overnight by landless settlers from other districts. These settlers' backgrounds were sometimes hard to determine-some had dark southern faces but ethnic Gurung-Magar surnames, while others had rounded features but Chettri-Bahun caste names. They seemed to bring with them no past, and sometimes no qualms or strictures Their radios were always on, their food was cheap and their alcohol strong. Their clients included government employees addicted to card games, bus and truck drivers staving the night, unemployed men, local hooligans, youths who hadn't made it into the army, and boys just out of school. In these dens talk now veered to the elections:

'Let's see who wins this time 'It's UML's turn.'

'Congress won't give up. 'Doesn't have a choice.'

Hah, he'll never win.'

'Did you hear about the People's Party? That party-remember?-of

'Eh them. Are they fielding a candidate?' 'Giridhar Adhikari—the son of Baburam Adhikari.'

In his house in the hills north of town, the chairman of the People's Party strict committee, Giridhar Adhikari, knew that the bazaar was whispering about him, laughing, saying, have you heard, did you know—insinuating, spreading rumours, implying that he'd been fired from the bank due to incompetence, and he deserved it, he wasn't capable . . . There was no place for him in the world. Giridhar's Khaireni Tarwas an intimate one where everyone knew him and talked about him in demeaning ways, declaring him to be a hollow man. The town crowded him out of its space. Years ago Giridhar had been dismissed from his position as bank manager. It

wasn't his fault: there had been civil service reforms, and everyone who'd worked for more than twenty years had lost their jobs regardless of capability, regardless of qualification. It was a matter of regulation. It didn't reflect on his ability. For he'd been an excellent bank manager, hadn't he

These past few years, Giridhar had begun to spend long days lost in the unsteady grounds of his mind, in cracks and crevices that led back past a day's memory, past a week's, a month's, a year's, to areas sown thick with catastrophe. Today he sat despondently on his front porch, looking out at the terraced rice fields below his house. The silver rains of the monsoon had drenched the town these last few months. The fields had turned a succulent green. Giridhar owned a plot of land at the bottom of the hill: its harvest was his only income now. Beyond that plot was the path into Khaireni Tar. He could make out the bazaar from here, a scrapply row of houses along the highway. His friend Om had invited him for dinner tonight. But he didn't feel like waiting till dusk. He wanted to be in the bazaar now, amid its stone and cement and cracked plaster, its spat-on walls and dark rooms, its shifting people, the new faces arriving on buses, telephone messages, the push of bodies, talk of the latest, men whispering—have

Once, Giridhar used to oversee hundreds of thousands of rupees' worth of transactions. He used to know what happened in the power centres of the district: who was spending money for what, and how. He used to know. But now here he was His days embarrassed him with their idleness. He spent all afternoon straying into the past and scrambling back to the present. He did not feel he had the courage to venture onto future grounds-ambitions, achievements-all too recarious to support him.



Manjushree's Rishi

he Tutor of History, the second | forth peasants, artisans, priests, jushree Thapa, is known for her English translations of literature in Nepali, and her critical articles in Nepali and English journals, Her work has all along been focussed on studying in depth Nepal, the people of Nepal, their history and culture, their anguage and literature.

These diverse efforts are critically linked to the compulsion she feels to anderstand herself and her compatriots who are presently passing through a transitional period of tremendous mportance. The schism between Nepal traditional and emergent and its anguished resolution is the essence of ovel. The convergence of changes, social and personal, orderly or erratic.

novel by a Nepali in English, is out this week. The author, ruling class, the newly emergent Nep ruling class, the newly emergent Nepal has thrown up new classes and categories of people. Of these categories the more active and influential ones, both of the old and the new order, have been given selective representation in Iimmawal Baie, for instance

There is a kernel of indestructible

humanity in them, which relentlessly

For us Nepali-speaking readers the Nepali world presented in the novel is

in some senses a given. We proceed to

read the novel with prior knowledge

This, however, should not make us

complacent that we know all there is to

learn about ourselves and our society.

aspect of clinical detachment and so the

neasure, an evaluation of us. A mirror

The novel having been written in

English, a language alien to the community described, assumes the

picture that emerges is, in large

is held to us and the picture that

urges them to reach for fulfilment.

combines in himself with ease his renunciative religion and his worldly desires Then there is Rishi the protagonist after whom the novel is named, an educated but unemployed youth, and Binita, a widow. There is Nayan Raj, a film star standing for elections from Khaireni Tar, the locale of the novel. Thapa's characterisation is excellent—her main characters are typical yet very convincingly individualised. They change and develop, they as we might like it to be. Incidents, remarks and conversa

tions, however seemingly stray or redundant, are organically organised and form parts of a connected whole. Thana has, while writing the novel in English, refused to follow the easier way of catering to the taste of westerners or pandering to their pre-conceived notions. For her, writing is a mission, a sacred covenant between the writer and the Nepali people.

This trait is discernible in the many translations that we come across in the work of Nepali folk songs, proverbs and idiomatic expres her English rendering of these, she has struck a neat verbal equivalence between what translation theorists call the Source Text (in this case, Nepali), and the Target Text (in this case, English). The translations are Source Text Oriented, even Source Language Oriented, yet they are literary texts in the target

Towards the of the narrative, we begin to view Rishi, the protagonist, as a harbinger of a new realisation, a re-affirmation of valuable principles we have lost sight of-that all orisation and practice of democracy, liberty and equality boil down to the actualisation of the 'private dignity of individuals'. Once Rishi dreamed of 'collective liberation'. Now he is a rebel against totalitarian revolution. He is a rebel against various manifestations of social, political and religious mores Manjushree Thapa's accomplished firs novel will not be a one-time hit. She will be a recurrent success story.

19-25 OCTOBER 2001 NEPALI TIMES

Indra Bahadur Rai is the foremost write and intellectual in the Nepali language in India. He is the author of the classic work, Kathaputaliko Man (The pupper's heart). The above review is excernted from a speech he delivered at the launch of The Tutor of History on 15 October in Kathmandu.

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Green Moments Probably the best beer in the world

The ten days of Dasain

fter the monsoon ends and

autumn begins, the biggest thing is the biggest festival of the year. Just saying "Dasain" conjures images of windy days and blue kite-dotted skies, nev clothes, plenty to eat and family gatherings that bring the entire clan together. Celebrated by a majority of Nepalis, the festiviti mark the mythic battles between good and evil between goddess Durga and the demon Mahisasur If he was living today, Mahisasur would be called a terrorist. The only difference is that he had taken on the form of a water buffalo. Dasain probably has pre-Vedic origins in harvest festivals and in a sense it has come a full circle to a cultural festival rather than a purely religious one. The longest holiday of the year provides the perfect opportunity for family reunions, and a time to relax.

Those who criticise us for having such a long holiday at Dasain must remember that

vacations, so this is our holiday season. Dasain comes from the word for ten: ten days during the bright lunar fortnight ending on the day of the full moon—1 November this year.

17 October, Ghatasthapana literally "pot establishing" (and we are not talking here about hallucinatory agents) marks the beginning of the festival. The kalash, water vessel is placed in the prayer room. A leaf plate filled with sand and covered with cow dung is shielded from the sun and placed in front of the image of the Durga. Barley seeds are sown unto the sand block and water from the kalash is sprinkled on it to nurture the seeds everyday during the morning and evening puja. The ritual performed at a certain auspicious moment determined by the astrologers will provide the yellowish green seedling known as *jamara* considered a

blessing of Durga and bestowed

by elders atop the heads of those younger to them during tika. The ame ritual is also conducted at the royal palace in Gorkha. 169km north west of the valley where the ancestors of the present royal family started their

conquest of Nepal in 1801. From the days following Ghatasthapana to the seventh day puias are offered everyday and egular rituals performed. On the fifth day the jamara to be used by the royal household planted in Gorkha palace is brought out and the procession for Kathmandu begins. The procession comes to Kathmandu on the seventh day bearing the Phulpati (23 October). Brahman priests carry the jamara and sugar cane plants tied with red cloth in a decorated palanquin under a gold tipped and embroidered umbrella. The procession also carries the royal kalada banana stalks and sugar cane tied with red cloth and includes Royal Nepal Army men wearing the same attire that Prithvi Narayan Shah's

in Kathmandu the procession starts from Rani Pokhari and ends in Basantanur Hanuman Dhoka Royal Palace where the iamara is placed in the Dasain Ghar.

24 October. Maha Asthami or the eighth day of the festival is the day when the goddesses Durga and Kali have to be appeased. Animal sacrifices of buffalo, goat, sheep, chicken and duck are made all over the country. The night of the eighth day is called Kal Ratri, the dark night. Hundreds of animals are sacrificed in Durga and Kali temples, palaces, and military barracks. Let the feasts begin 25 October is Nawami. The

Taleju temple at Hanuman Dhoka is opened for the public. This is the only day in which the temple is open and thousands throng the temple. Sacrifices are again held at Hanuman Dhoka Royal Palace to honour the Durga. This is also the day when Biswokarma, the god of creativity



No partridges on pear trees, but lots of goats and chicken.

machines household weapons, and these days even computers and iet airliners are worshiped

After ten long days the battle is over and victory has been achieved. good prevails, 26 October is Dashami the tenth day. The day elders put jamara and tika upon the foreheads of those younger and bless them. The importance of Dasain also lies in the fact that this day brings family members and

is worshiped. Factories, vehicles, relatives from far and wide to receive tika from the head of the family. The king and queen too give tika to the hundreds waiting outside the palace thus strengthen ing the relationship. Tika continues for four days and in the last day people stay at home and rest. The full moon day is also called Kojagrata, meaning 'who is awake The goddess of wealth Laxmi is worshipped and people gamble the



SADHUS AGAINST BIN LADEN: Hindu holy men took out a proces-



LEFTIES AGAINST US: Leftist parties took out a counter-procession protesting the US strikes against Afghanistan on Sunday, later George W



SNOOKER WINNERS: Victors in the Surva Snooker Championships pose with their certificates and trophies on 14 October



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Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Lights, camera, action!

ow that every next movie coming out of Hollywood is fearning animals speeking in English, it is a only a question of time before a Bollywood film alled Janwarwill also be released starring a provocatively dressed ow romping around with udders swinging in the parking lot of Swiss recort, while being chased by an el toro in heat from a nearby stud farm, and both being out the duet, "Abo aajas...mein hun prar terz." And if Bollywood stars talking bowines, can Kollywood be farb b-hind?

The fact that most animals are fluent in human languages, can an carcully sing quite well in karaoke bars, and can secretly speak to each other in American English is something that has been overlooked by our film industry for far too long. It is only to be appreciated, therefore, that our producers are carching up with time lost and finally turning their attention to releasing copies of movios like Cars and Todgs, Shrek and Dr Dolithea and creating characters like Mr Tinkles who (if it wasn't for the indly intervenion of a Beagle puppy 007 secret agent named Lou) would have gone on to become the world sonly feline superpower.

So, what's the buzz in the animal kingdom? When are we going to have our own Nepail Dr Dolitelte' The simple answer to these very pertinean di timely questions is quite soon. With a name like that, Dr Dolitelte will have to do little to be an instant box office hir in Gopi-Krishna Hall. It will also not be difficult to find a Nepail Edde Murply lookalite who can understand what animals from all walks of life are saying as he passes them on the street every day. I myself couldn't help but overhear snippets of conversation between members of Kathmandu's non-human citizens this morning while on my way to work, and was pleasantly surprised to note that their concerns mirror the concerns of the human denizens of the kingdom's capital as we prepare to mark the festival season.

mark the restrival season.

Dog #1: "Wow! Bow, wow!

Tenderloin, mountains of tenderloin on my garbage pile."

Dog#2: "That's nothing, look

at the lamb chops and spare ribs I found on mine.

Mfgggnfffnghh...slurp, slurp."

Duck: "Hi guys, how is the garbage today?"

Dogs #1 and #2 (ignoring Duck): "Good thing no one sacrifices dogs in Dasain. Mwahahahaha...harharhar."

Duck: "You don't know what you are missing. I go straight to paradise like Goat here. Right, Goat?" Goat: "Yup. We go to heaven, unlike you carnivoes who are stuck in your mundane, putrescent

Dogs#1 and #2 (snarling): Hey, watch yer mouth.
Who you calling mundane?"
Buffalo: "Hi Goat, hi Duck. I'm off to the Kot.

What's it going to be for you guys this year, the Banepa Bus or the Safa Tempo?"

Goat: "Actually, ahem, I've been booked for the

Buffalo: "Woa, moving up in the world, I see." Dogs #1 and #2 (sniggering): "See bits of you all

here next week, then."

Director: "Cut! OK, excellent. Thank you everyone, and see you all after Dasain."

NEPALI SOCIET

FM's tri-lingual RJ

callers whether they are from

Bhaktapur, Patan or

ulti-cultural, multilingual Nepal needs more radio jockeys like Prabhat Rimal, In the studios of Kantipur FM in Patan, Prabhat weaves seamlessly from Nenali into English and Newari. "I guess you rarely find a bahun ko chhoro who speaks fluent Newari," he says. The Makhan-born-andbred Prabhat hosts Nepalava during which he chats to his callers in Nepalbhasa and plays Newari songs for half

abhat hosts
ya during which he
his callers in
hasa and plays
songs for half
every

V

Kathmandu.
He also hosts Online
Demand, a popular riequest
program for Nepalis abroad.
"It's amazing what multimedia can do. We have

difficult. I'd drop in a word or two of Nepali. But not favourite-rhythm and blues, anymore," says Prabhat iazz rock music of the 70's whose childhood in inner-city and 80. For someone who Kathmandu made him easy grew up listening to Led with Newari language, culture Zeppelin and Bob Dylan, and and food "Practice has used money for school fees improved my Newari," says to buy the latest tapes, Prabhat. Now he can even tell hosting the show is more like by the accents of the phone-in a hobby than a job

The RJ still has a fan following from his Marlboro Music Hour days, a show he hosted everyday for an hour for a year-and-half, switching easily from Nepali to Newari and English. Those were the heydays of FM in Kathmandu He says: "FM was new, people wondered at the persona behind the voice." Six years down the line FM's novelty might have worn off, but its popularity hasn't despite there being six FM stations in Kathmandu Valley. "There's a new generation of Nenalis hooked to it. I think FM has become more informative, responsible, and

There are those who think
FM is too light. But Prabhat

shrugs this off:
"Bill Clinton can go play a
saxophone in a bar, and
people applaud. But if the PM
or a politician did it here, the
Nepali intelligentsia would
frown." Maybe not, if Prabhat
himself became a politician!







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