Sikkim is opening up, getting a new airport, and finding its own identity.

Rs 20

Peace for food

A 25-nation Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on agriculture is taking place in Kathmandu next week in the run-up to the World Food Summit in Rome in June. High on the agenda of both meetings will be the crisis of food security in the world's mountain regions. Chronically fooddeficit hilly regions of the world, including Nepal, are now also being wracked by conflict. This is worsening an already had food situation, says Jacques Diouf, the



head of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). "Mountain areas are home to most of the armed conflicts in the world as well as many of the poorest and least food-secure nonulations " says Diouf. Without peace, we cannot reduce poverty. Without peace, we cannot ensure secure food supply." (see also p 4-5)

Truly Asia

Malaysian Airlines, which has been planning to fly into Kathmandu from later this year is trying to bring forward its starting date to July after Singapore Airlines decided to suspend operations "We want to come in as soon as possible says Subodh Rana, of Marco Polo Travels, local agents for Malaysian Nepal already has some 30,000 workers in Malaysia, numbers likely to grow. Initially, Malaysian hopes to extend two of its 4-weekly Dhaka flights to Kathmandu.

Anti-privatisation?

By blowing up two power houses belonging to the Butwal Power Company, Maoists have sabotaged its privatisation. The repairs at Jhimruk (12MW) alone will cost over Rs 250 million. The powerhouse at Andhi Khola (5MW) is also considerable A consortium of winning bidders had pledged Rs950 million for BPC before the attacks, and are awaiting a damage assessment report.



See-saw war



BINOD BHATARAI

isne Lekh is a thickly forested ridge at 2,500m protected by sheer cliffs to the south. At the western foothills of this range is the Magar village of Thebang, up north-east is Gam, the cradle of the Maoist

Rolpalis have known that the Maoists had a major base up there. The security forces, working on intelligence, had for the first time started probing the western reaches of Lisne from Thebang. A unit of 28 policemen and 72 soldiers were out on patrol at eight in the morning on 2 May. They made contact with a large group of Maoists and reportedly killed more than 100 of them, including Dil Man Thapa, a local commander



prisoner, they then headed further up the

Manists were reported. At about 2:15pm

with their five dead.

mountain towards Gharelidhara, where top

Acting on a tipoff by a captured female

JITENDRA RAUT IN LONDON

awyers representing ex-Gurkhas filed a petition at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on Wednesday charging the British government with discrimination in pay and pensions against Nepali soldiers. If upheld, the 20 cases could benefit over 30,000 veterans and 6,000 Nepali widows. Compensation claims could total £2 billion. The court will decide in the next few weeks if the Gurkhas have "an arguable case".

The Gurkhas are represented by the barrister, Cherie Booth, wife of British prime

minister Tony Blair and prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba arrives in London on Saturday. Due to both reasons, the issue has received wide coverage in the British press. Booth did not appear at the press conference on Wednesday but Phil Shiner of Matrix Chambers told us Booth thinks the Gurkha case is "strong and morality is on their side" There are about 3,400 Nepali soldiers in the British Army. Up to 60,000 have died

in the past 200 years while fighting for the British in various wars. They say that while conditions have improved over the years, they are still not treated at par with British soldiers on pay, pensions and other basic rights.

The ex-Gurkhas, represented by the Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Organisation

(GAESO), say they have an air-tight case. A 1947 tripartite agreement between Britain India and Nepal grants all soldiers equal treatment. But two days after the pact was signed British and Indian officials sat down and agreed to a bilateral deal, which is what governs payments for British Gurkhas today. Nearly 55 years later, the Gurkhas say they want to be treated equally and their sacrifices recognised.

The British government has maintained that although there are discrepancies in pays and penisons which have been narrowed, the Nepali soldiers get extended home leave and other benefits not provided to British nationals in the army. The lawyers will try to prove that the Gurkhas are victims of racism in the military

UNILATERAL

An email message from Maoist leader Prachanda Thursday proposed a unilateral one-month ceasefire effective 15 May. The first part of the statement is a tirade against the United States, and it blames Nepal's "feudal autocrats" for going to Washington to seek help and "invite foreign forces into the country". Prachanda sees a grand American design to "encircle China and weaken India". The statemen blames the United States for "trying to turn Nepal into another Vietnam". Prachanda says his group is even willing to join in future with other parliamentary parties, but warns: "If during the ceasefire period the government continues its suppression, then we will be compelled to launch a fearsome, final war." Although the message does not bear a signature, human rights groups say it is authentic. The email has also come through the same channels as previous messages which have not been refuted. This unilateral ceasefire offer comes 17 days before the present state of emergency is due to expire. There has been no immediate reaction from the government, but a reiteration of the demand that the Manists disarm before any future talks is expected.

us, the scene of the battle had been picked clean, there were no bodies and no weapons but the ground was soaked with blood. The army then advanced further up to the idgeline and came across the Maoists' main base with bunkers, food supply and training grounds, reportedly the hideout of rebel leader Krishna Bahadur Mahara.

They laid siege to the heights, but the Maoists being much more familiar with the terrain, fled along the ridge north-east towards Gam. And that is where, in an audacious counterattack, they stormed an isolated army-police garrison on Tuesday night at eleven o'clock. From there they are believed to have dispersed into Baglung in the east and Rukum up north.

It took only 90 minutes to overrun the Gam base. Many of those who survived were executed. The final death toll is not clear, but 60 of the 140-strong force were said to be outside the base when it fell. Thirty-five charred bodies were found on Thursday when reinforcements finally

arrived. Eighteen injured soldiers, police and a civilian flown to Kathmandu on Thursday afternoon (see pic)

MPs from the State Affairs Committee (SAC) of parliament who visited Rolpa last week described the area as a war zone. "It feels like Lebanon," says Prakash Iwala. "We are convinced the security forces are doing their best, but there is a severe lack o helicopters." MP Hridaya Ram Thani, SAC chairman, agrees. "They need support to make their campaign more effective."

It is now clear that the lack of air support to enforce the cordon around Lisne was a critical factor that allowed the Maoists to break through and flee along the ridge to attack Gam.

The security forces had been expecting a major attack in the area, and the presence of large numbers of rebels on Lisne, they say, was indication they were probably preparing a raid on Libang. This time, they also wanted an atack to coincide with Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's Washington visit. •

 They are allowed to live with wives only for 3 of the 15 years of service, something that does not apply to British

soldiers All soldiers are treated as Hindu. althoiugh there are non-Hindus in the

Cherie Booth to the rescue

Promotions are racially tinged, and

There is discrimination in pension payments GAESO's Padam Bahadur Gurung told us: "All we are asking is not to be treated as inferior human beings. We want recognition that we have fought loyally as British soldiers, and demand only the same rights." Many British citizens seem to agree. A former paratrooper and now Mayor of Ilafracombe, says in the 30 April issue of the Daily Mirror It is scandalous that these people should be treated as second class citizens.

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Wonder if Aung San Suu Kyi knows what's in store for her. After the euphoria of

people in office who will make the difference to the lives of citizens?

economic equality is not possible. The surprising thing was that a

Here, too, there is flippant talk these days about subcontract-

Things are had, yes. And this leads many to the authoritarian

ing this country off to Elder Statesman Lee so he can make us in

the image of his city state. After a couple of chhota pegs others

temptation. Paradoxically, it is a temptation that seems to strike

not the rulers so much as the ruled. Citizens in many juvenile

a relatively easy and (they hope) painless way out, and are nostalgic for the "certainties" of strongman rule. Some Russians

As democracy falters, extremists move to fill the governance

are pining for Stalin, there has been a renaissance of former

communists in the ex-Soviet bloc.

have even been overheard to say: "Someone needs to do a

lot of Filipinos agreed, just as Pakistanis fed up with Nawaz and

Benazir rationalised their praetorian intervention

democracy is over, will she discover like we did that fighting for freedom is in some

ways easier than making it work? Will people power fail its ultimate test of putting in

It's called the Musharraf Syndrome. And it afflicts all who blame freedom for

poverty and political mismanagement. Singapore's Lee Kwan Yew once went to the Philippines and lectured the Filipinos that they remained poor because they were

formative years. Laws and values need to be put into place that will institutionalise

free. In a soft state, he said, democracy needs to be guided—especially in its





Kathmandu is a well-shielded valley, even grief can't get past Thankot.

he mountains aren't grieving. The sky with rage. The sun isn't breathing fire The air is as cool as on any other Sunday morning in Kathmandu. And then over the FM comes the day's headline: nearly five hundred might have been killed in security operations around Lisne Lek in Rolpa. Five hundred? I choke, and splutter into my

the frustration. Since it's impossible to make sense of the clouds hovering over Rolpa, I try to see the silver lining instead_the Maoist insurgency began in Rolpa, and it's symbolic that the beginning of its end should also happen there. Life goes on despite a deep, dull ache in the heart.

A friend suggests that I applaud the ointment of Dr Narayan Khadka as the



vacuume. Foreseeing conflict and anarchy, the people then regard a return to authoritarianism as a lesser evil. It is a search for a saviour that is borne out of desperation and extreme disillusionment with those who have misused and wasted the popular mandate. This is the seduction of authoritarianism: a psychological syndrome to which those who live in decaying democracies are prone. The giddiness with which we greeted the restoration of democracy has long given way to apathy and cynicism. In fact, somewhere along the way, we got compla-

cent and forgot that democracy isn't a trophy to lock up inside a glass cabinet. Democracy is like a rubber band, you have to stretch it to make it work.

But that means having an alert citizenry, a pro-active civil society, a media that flexes itself and takes freedom to its limit. But that takes hard work. It is much easier to point out what is wrong than to do something to set things right. It is a lot less effort to be cynical. All this has brought us to a point where it is now fashionable to invoke Lee Kwan Yew or Musharraf. Such talk is infectious, and it has paralysed us

with low self-esteem and fatalism. When democracy is threatened as it is now by those who want to usher in a dictatorship of the proletariat, we need to strengthen democracy, not dismantle it. If democracy did not work it was because it was misused, not because there was something inherently wrong with it. The antidote to a faltering democracy is its more sincere and honest application, and a citizenry that forces its elected leaders to display more accountability and commitment. At no point is this more important

The heart bows to the coping mechanism of the mind. I begin to rationalise: Maoists had brought it on themselves, the chances of "collateral damage" in the middle of a forest is minimal, or the figures may have been inflated for propaganda value (the security forces badly

needed a victory). I settle for the ever convenient escape of the urban middle class: why bother about things that you can do nothing about? Life has to go on, no matter what. Lenin was right, it's one death that is a human tragedy. Any thing more than that is a statistic. The higher the number.

the more numbing the fact. I plant a Jerusalem Berry in the flower por pluck ainselu from the garden fence, take the dog for a walk, Buy bread, milk, vegetables, today's newspapers. There is a call from BBC World Service, and it is difficult to hold back

LETTERS

sion. Dr Khadka is believed to be a Canadian of Nepali descent, but he has also written at least two erudite books on the politics of foreign aid in Nepal. Given his expertise, he may

understand the present predicament of the

Nepali economy a little better Besides the usual complaints of falling exports, shrinking tourism, burgeoning regular expenditure, the diminishing investment in infrastructure and the resulting lower growth rate leading to loss of jobs, it's the looming debt crisis that National Planning Commis needs to worry about. The government spends more on servicing debt than on education and public health combined. The next budget has already been decided by the ministry of defence. Dr Khadka has his job cut out for

him, and he can start with the debt ledger This government is unlikely to approach

donors for an outright loan write-off. Prime different in Washington: his eyes are firmly set on the promise of \$20 million worth of "nonlethal" arms to fight "terrorists". Then there is the possibility of another \$20 million for development. It's a lot of money, as much as what the South African space cadet paid to get ten days on the International Space Station

Along with VC Khadka, the Singha Darbar nk-tank will have Dr Jagdish Chandra Pokharel, Dr Shankar Sharma, Dr Minendra Rijal and Dr Peakash Sharan Mahar. The good doctors are all graduates of prominent US iniversities, and not even one of them is wha Nepali Congress stalwart Pradip Giri would call an "organic intellectual", these being intellectuals who gain wisdom indigenously and not through their Harvard case studies

As the day progresses, reports from Rolpa keep pushing the casualty figure up. But nandu is a well-shielded Valley, even griel can't get past the Thankot check-post. At a reception at the Radisson in the evening, the uzz is the brand of Hari Prasad Pandey's car. During the cocktails hosted by the management of Kantipur Television, discussion veers effortlessly from Famous Grouse whisky to the diversity of investments in the Nepali media The headache turns into throbbing pain.

On the way back, I find my face wet, and it's not raining yet. The storm is gathering over Chandragiri, lightning flashes and the dull drum of distant thunder from the west. The full impact of the news of one of the worst one day carnages in the history of Nepal hits me between my eyes, right there as I pass over the

Those who died (and are dying every day) may have been killers, terrorists or martyrs. These are labels—affixed by the living on the dead. It doesn't alter that 500 Nepalis died at the bands of their brothers

Maybe the time has come to be a brave ior for peace. To be courageous enough to call for an end to this senseless violence. Do the Maoists have the courage to stop the war? Can the political leadership of the country stand up

Chief of Army Staff's extended

religious ceremonies. What we

readers like is unbiased and clean

journalism. It really doesn't bother

in future and performs kotihom and

me if a Brahmin becomes a chief

mahayaqya.

Maoism in a post-Mao world

newest theory in creative Marxism." So said Maoist ideologue Dr Baburam Bhattarai, in his book Prachanda Path ka Adhar Prachanda Path). Since that treatise came out last year, a lot has happened. It is interesting to try and find a correlation between the assassinations. attacks on elected village bodies, destruction of infrastructure, the latest posturing for dialogue, and Baburam's words.

For revolutionaries, there is an ideological explanation for every event. Everything can be explained by dogma, and the party line has a justification for all outcomes. Through the red-tinted glass of party ideology, there is a rationale for every action. The same is true for the

Prachanda Path. By evoking the Shining Path with the use of the word "nath". Comrade Prachanda has tried Maoist philosophy. to take his movement into the post Mao world and make it a guiding his assessment and analysis of philosophy for Nepal's Maoists. The idea would be to elevate the Prachanda Path to the status of Prachanda Thought, and ultimately a new "Prachandaism" that adapts Maoism to Nepali conditions. That is the logical growth cycle through pundit would the Gita. which revolutionary ideas mature into

cooperative democracy" but Comrade P prefers to call it "new competitive democracy", which is actually quite close to the CPN-UML's "multiparty democracy" What kind of "competition" there will be in the political sphere we don't know yet, but the use of the "c" word is intriguing.

Maoists' mass base, and is totally against Mao's philosophy of proletar ian struggle. Examples like the forcible

recruitment of young boys and girls in Surkhet's Latikoili village and in Dang show that the committee are not only deviating from Mao Zedong thought. but that they have also tried to tamper with the basic ideological underpinnings of Maoism. The Prachanda Path adds to a dangerous fuzziness at the ideological level. Even Nepali communists who idolise Mao have now begun to say the Prachanda-badis have disgraced the Great Helmsman.

Despite some disagreements, Mao's theory of knowledge, the rules for the great leap forward, the "new democratic" system of politics, the 'new economic policy," and the principles of the continuity of revolution are integral to the study of

Mao's tenets on guerrilla warfare, imperialism, and the principles of the Three Worlds are considered astute. Needless to say, those who call themselves Maoists swear by these teachings, many even quote Manages a firm believer in "new

A publication of the United Revolutionary People's Council of Nepal, the embryonic future Maoist state, does mention some economic



Prachanda Path is deviating from Mao Zedong thought.

and social programs. But the papers. which seem to have been plucked from an earlier publication of Baburam Bhattarai (The Politica economic Rationale of the People's War in Nepal), do not explain where and how this "competition" is going to manifest itself in the political and conomic sphere. The Prachanda Path may be really progressive, but until it is expressed more clearly, we just won't know. What we do know

The Prachanda Path also makes a significant departure from Mao's political military strategy. Mao said revolutions in the Third World would be ultimately won through "long-term wars". However, our comrades depart from this doctrine and pin their hopes on a fusion of "long-term war" with "armed rebellion" to achieve their goal in a telescoped timeframe.

for certain is that it is not Maoism.

Prachanda said, "The new

demands a new organisation. If a new idea is imposed on an existing organisation, the old organisation would defeat the new idea". These words appear to be a rationale for an adjusted approach for the Nepali situation in the 21st century. But what it also shows is a desperate hurry to wrap things up quickly.

Maoism's Nepali critics say that Mao waited too long (17 years) before launching his Cultural Revolution, and this is was one of the main reasons why socialism could not take firm root in the mainland. Our comrades ay they have incorporated cultural changes into the revolution from Day One of the insurgency, and learning from the Shining Path experience are confident that they can accelerate this total social transformation.

But what type of cultura revolution are the Maobadi talking about? And what of Comrade Prachanda himself? When he said in an Indian newspaper interview last vear that he had a secret crush on Nepali actress Karishma Manandhar it was a dramatic departure from the communist doctrine that even art forms have a class basis, and matinee idols like Karishma reflect bourgeois decadence.

In contrast the leadership disciplined "deviationists" who they say have undermined the cultural purity of the movement. Two years ago, Comrade Alok (Yan Prasad Gautam) was charged and punished for womanising, purging enemies within the party by murdering them and stealing money. Dinesh Sharma was charged with committing the cardinal sin of surrendering.

The more recent capture of large amounts of gold from the houses of Dev Gurung and Devendra Poudel in

Pokhara show that greed could hav begun to taint the revolution. The Maoist leadership has not yet commented on this episode They abide by a strong "eight-three" moral code, and Gurung and Poudel appear to have broken them.

Prachanda's argument is tha there is no absolute definition of terrorism in the course of the epi struggle between imperialism and proletarianism On this, he may be right—one man's terrorist can be another's freedom fighter, as the saving goes. However, by using and justifying these tactics he is also undermining his own struggle as a political force. Mao said "Put politic in command", but by using terror as a weapon the Prachanda Path ones against this commandment. In the post-11 September world, this also puts Nepal's Maoists in the same

category as the al-Oaeda. By their inability to portray mature political culture, Nepal's Maoists are indirectly helping the cause of the full-intensity war that imperialist forces have launched on communism worldwide in the name of counter-terrorism.

I cannot find a parallel in Mao's books to many of the things that are taking place in Nepal today in the name of the Maobadi struggle Irrespective of whether Mao's doctrines were numosefully dropped because they were irrelevant, or they were worked upon and adapted in the name of creativity, there doesn't seem to be much reason to call this Maoism any longer. To go by Mao's own reasoning, our Maoists by resorting to extremism and terror may be actually helping the imperialists. •

Bumrungrad Hospital, Bangkoi

While browsing through Letters

NEPALIS IN BANGKWANG Is it a curse to be born a Nepali? After reading "Serving life in Bangkok" (#91) and the heartking letter by Puskar KC from Bangkwang, I really feel so There are so many other Nepali citizens across the globe who are mistreated, exploited and beleaguered. The case of Govinda Mainali is the same He has been proven innocent but he still languishes behind bars in Japan. Had our govern ment taken a bold step, he would have come home years ago. Our government may be support to Negalis in foreign ails, but it should at least give some moral support and try to

get them back. Binita J Shrestha, Asar

 As a new reader, I applaud "Serving life in Rangkok" (#91) and would like to make two points regarding Nepali prisoners in Thailand. First, assistance by Christians should never mean "that they have to devotion to Jesus Christ" Jesus came to fulfil unconditionally the prophecy "...to set the captives free" and, although he also said that it is in receivin his word that "...vou will know the truth and the truth will set you free " this is out of compassion the tragedy of injustice and

applies also in Nepal. The sad letter of Puskar KC ("Nima") is similar to accounts by foreigners Nepal jails who, through foolishdrug dealers and receive savage sentences with no foreign embass support or extradition procedures We pray to God through Jesus Christ for justice and mercy for all nrisoners (of which Jesus himself

Dr David I Hill Pokhar I was shocked to read about the condition of Nepali prisoners in Thai jails, I was even more shocked to see that the government isn't

 Denuty Chief of Protocol YN Paudel in "Serving life in Bangkok," #91) says Nepalis in Pakistan iails have already served their terms, but can't return because their families can't afford tickets Me and my friends are ready to form a group to help them get back. Can anyone provide us the name and address of these Nens who are in Pakistan and need tickets to return Nepal?

Dev Rai, USA

Royal Nepali Embassy Islamabad nepem@isb.com.sats.net.pk +92-51-282 8838 HARL AND ARIIN

five times more evnensive than

was one, though totally innocent doing anything to help them.

has factual mistakes. Arun III was a still has no political vision for

Kedar Sharma's profile of Hari Prasad Pandey ("Mea Culpa," #92)

\$1,083 billion project, not \$400 nillion, and was cancelled in August 1995 and not in 1993. Pandey's tenure in the UMI abinet lasted only six months from December 1994 to May 1995, during which he directed a ministry review of Arun III. It showed that on all civil construcion counts the project was four to

Arun III. despite having previ-

ously called them "harmful to

ng this grovelling, the Bank

vere too great for Nepal".

However Pandey is right in

national interests". Notwithstand-

vithdrew support for the project or

grounds that the economic "risks

eeling guilty about not promot

ing alternatives to Arun III during

his tenure: his own subsequent

nvestment in the 3 MW Piluwa

Khola hydro in the Arun valley

(82) makes much more economi

sense than Arun III, and the UML

"Hari the hydro entrepreneur,

states that the economy is the clear loser in the current situation He is wrong. The loser is Nepali innocence, that was so well known throughout the world. The clear and devastated losers are the the private sector rates in Nepal. Nepali people. The economy can Three years earlier, Nepali and will be rebuilt. We have a lot Congress' Basu Risal had taken a of rich friends around the world who similar initiative that culminated will help us with that. However, it will in his unceremonious sacking. not be that easy to re-establish Hari Pandey's audit too was not Nepali innocence. How will we alatable to his LIMI hosses who rebuild trust in each other? This is what this "multiparty democracy" dumped him back in political limbo. It was during his replace-ment Pradeep Nepal's watch that has done for us. We don't need this. Enough is enough. to the World Bank that "we agree o all the conditionalities" on

Bhaskar Tripathy, by email Having read CK Lal's "What Next?" (#92) it seems that he along with the rest of the Negali intellectual elite suffer from this "fatalism (yastai ho, ke game?) mentality. Is this fatalism and apathy an explanation for the current political situation? Or does the answer lie in the belief that all the Nenali nennle will attain hetter karma in their next life for all the suffering they have endured in the present one?

Dipak Gyawali, Lalitpui

Binod Bhattarai in "Free-fall" (#91)

LOSS OF INNOCENCE

The emphasis on karma/ fatalism of our social and religious system has enabled the ruling castes and classes to justify their dominance. Lal espouses a leftleaning material political philosophy, therefore it is misleading for im to propagate "fatalism" as an excuse. It just legitimises the doctrines and values of a fraught system. What is needed is not mor talism, but humanism-the belief that we can chart our own destiny. We must be this-worldly and not

Subarna Bhattachan, Kansas, USA Thank you Mr "Name withheld" for reminding me (Letters #91) that Nepal is a multiracial and multiethnic country consisting of people of different castes, religior and social customs. My gist was

at Afghanistan, Sri Lanka or that CK Lal had no reason to



political philosophy.

However, we cannot be too sure

if the Prachanda Path will follow that

route. Is it a creative outgrowth of

Marxism-Leninsim-Maosim. or just

mooring in revolutionary history for

Nepal's "people's war"? The revolu-

an attempt to find an ideological

tion has now degenerated into

terrorism, especially if you don't

happen to agree with it. If you

disagree, you are a class enemy and

this is a crime punishable by death.

 If the present Nepali govern ment thinks that foreign money and military involvement is the answer to the current problem in Nepal Vietnam before begging and

Dr Amrit KC, Bishalnaga

Pramod Adhikari, Australia

taken different forms over 333 years of history and is a symbol of national unity and integrity. But the role played by the political parties has not exactly promoted this unity and integrity. Now Nepal is facing serious problems with terrorism. It is our had luck that after the restoration of democracy, our leaders have failed us with bad governance, corruntion politicisation and incompetence. In our opinion in this critical situation, it is only the monarchy that can save the country Rabina Adhikari, Sadhana Thapa

Padma KC, Shanta Kumari, Suchitra Thapa, Manohari Sudharshan Chiranjibi, Samjhana, Prativa Students in Canada

 We are worried that Prime Minister Sher Rhadur Deuha is travelling to the United States to meet President George W Bush to ask for military assistance. Nenal needs medical equipment rather than military hardware. We need training to make Nepalis doctors and engineers, not to use modern weapons to spill the blood of our brothers and sisters. Being a Nepal in America I'd like to see the United States helping Nepal with development and investment rather than with arms S Shrestha, Texas, USA

 In your editorial "Absolute compromises in the Manist demands for constitutional change. I think meeting this demand is

ompletely unthinkable and insane The Manists are terrorists and they shouldn't be given the privilege of being across a negotiation table. By recognising them it will mean the government has capitulated, and this will breed more terrorism in future.

Minnesota, USA

 Everyday, I read articles in the Nenali media including on nepalitimes.com, about the actions taking place against terrorists. I compare this to the support that journalists in the US are giving to fight terrorism. In the Nepali media I see criticism hurled at the people's efforts to fight terrorism. Don't you iournalists realise that if Nepalis lose this war against the terrorists. you will have no jobs... there will be no free press in Nepal. Stop

whining. Thanks for the great content. For it to emerge from a Nepali publication gives me so much confidence and hope in the future of Nenal Thanks to all the contrib tors and especially to CK Lal. Puskar Bhusal, Daniel Lak, and Artha Reed, And Kunda Divit for his outstanding editorials Nenalitimes com has been a prime source of news and literature from back home for many of us students and others in the United States. Spending five hours at your website

in the middle of a final exams week

VOYEURS

I was wondering when someone would speak out against Nepal Television's lack of sensitivity in coroses after every massacre, and am glad you did ("Voyeurs," #90). I doubt if anyone in the military or the government who reads your editorial even realises how they are hrutalising society and numbing the people by broadcas ing such explicit video. If they did it would mean they are sensitive and responsible, and if that were the case, we would not be in this (Name withheld on request

These days, the traffic

'rubbernecking' described in your

editorial "Voveurs" can also have ago in Kalimati 27 people watching a bomb being defused were injured when it suddenly went off. While the blame surely lies with the alleged Maoists who planted it, it also seems some of the injuries could have been avoided. Among the reported injured were several "spectators" Spectators? Kathmandu has a rich tradition of impromptu street theatre but remember to everrise caution the next time you see curious onlookers gathering on the city's streets-it may be more than

lan Huntington, Bhaktapur EGRET REGRET Abhishek Shrestha, Michigan, USA Regarding egrets at Keshar Mahal

anymore within the confined nises of the "Garden of Dreams", presently under restora ongoing construction work and to the fact that a number of the old Burrungrad Hospital extends its rees and branches are dead and heartfelt sympathies to the continue to be broken in storms. Lohani family, Losing a loved lowever, if this is any consolatio one is always difficult and we at all: a large walk-in aviary will be certainly understand Mr. Ivoti stablished within the garden Lohani's grief, ("No healer, confines in order to showcase a Letters #91) After carefully

Ludmilla Hungerhuber Keshar Mahal Garden of

THREE CHEERS Three cheers for Kathmandu's

range of rare Himalayan birds.

right here in the heart of



mayor. Let's feature his efforts regret that they are not nesting more often in the press to create awareness and support to beautify John Snyder, Kathmandu

INFORMED CONSENT

reviewing the case, it should be

suffering from advanced cancer

critical. As an internationally-

Bumgrungrad and its physicians

ients before surgery of all

potential outcomes, both positive

and negative. This process is

intended to ensure that the

patient is fully aware of all

urgeries so they can make a

fully-informed decision. Given

the critical condition of the

natient the surgeon acted

responsibly by informing Ma

importance of advising and

in Asia, to our patients.

carefully explaining Informed

Lohani and his family of the risks

Rased on Mr Lohani's input

we have reminded our staff of the

Consent, a relatively new concept

potential risks with major

called "Informed Consent" and is

have an obligation to inform

accredited hospital

and that his condition was indeed

noted that Mr Lohani was

(#92) I was surprised to see the response to one of your earlier articles. Since I did live in Boston until 1995. I am not sure if there is another Anis Bania in Boston. The statistical probability of that heing true is slim I Anish M Bania, live in northern Virginia, and did not write that letter With the ease of the Internet

and the false names that one can assume to get an email account. it is possible that a false name can be used to send any letter Though benign in this case, there is a possibility of malicious intent. Or is it just a coincidence Anish M Bania, Fairfax, Virginia

CORRECTIONS:

is scheduled for 10 May, and not 2 June as stated in the editorial, "The peace prize,

In the review of the Studio 7 production of Mahabharata ("Shanti, shanti, shanti," #91) were wrong, Surva M. Maharjan played Bheesma, and Shree Shrestha played Ashwathama.

Minister-turned-Maoist

Yet another former minister has surrendered to the administration, this time on charges of being a Maoist leader. On 7 May Govinda Nath Upreti surrendered to the Kavre District Administration Office after appearing on a fresh list of Maoist leaders wanted by the security forces. Unreti drove alone in his private car to reach the Kayre. headquarters in Dhulikhel, and was not stopped even once by the

security personnel guarding the highway. The district administration

annulled the provision which required that foreign climbers had to be

recommended by their national alpine clubs or embassies. The new

of the Integrated Security and Development Programme (ISDP) in

districts affected by the insurgency. The NPC is awaiting assurance from the Royal Nepal Army that the security situation is stable

enough for the development package to be implemented in the 13

rules also say that mountaineering activities will be allowed throughout

has taken him into custody for further interrogation.

sion to climb big mountains. The

new regulation has reduced the

royalty to \$25,000 for a team of

under seven members from the

previous \$70,000. They've also

"The food security situation in the western hills has greatly deteriorated."

Nepali Times asked Douglas Coutts of the UN's World Food Programme in Kathmandu about the impact of the insurgency on Nepal's food supply.

Nepali Times: How bad is the food situation in Nepal? Douglas Coutts: It is logical that there would be a problem this time of year. This is the dry season, the food stocks communities build up over time in the western hills and mountains will be down. The farmers there don't have the land holdings and soil fertility to grow enough food to feed themselves. They buy the balance. We do know that the commercial market routes have been severely affected by the conflict, and that there have been many incidents where the military and the Manists have blocked food going into certain areas. I am not talking only about our food, but food blocked by either side from the merchants. In many of the bazars, we have reports of scarcity and rising prices of staples.

How much worse is it than is normal for this time of year? Before you had a scarcity problem. Now there is a new and very serious element. In the past, depending on where you were, how much land you had and how many mouths to feed, you would have a few months of production for your family and opportunities to earn income to buy the rest. The unrest has affected the traditional coping mechanisms of communities. Men used to leave to work and come back with cash or food. Much of that traditional migration is affected. Many of the men are often suspected by both sides when they transit. We gather the fear element is so high many who would otherwise go to find work are just staying put.

Have farming practices changed?

We're getting conflicting reports. Some talk about farmers actually growing less. They worry about it being taken. From our experience globally, in this type of conflict, it is typical that food stores are often plundered by insurgents. We hear from the government that Maoists in many areas are having problems of supply, and are really desperate for

So people are just not growing food?

HERE AND THERE

There is obviously more food insecurity, much more than before. Communities probably also have fewer income-generation activities to earn money to buy food in the markets. The food, again, is not readily available and is more expensive. You add all that together and I think it is logical to say that the food insecurity situation in the hills and mountains in the west has probably greatly deteriorated.

In other countries famines have followed conflicts? Is that nossible

In our business we use the word "famine" very sparingly. It is with great caution that I would even utter the word. Famine is sort of the final sten of a long process. It is a state where people are literally dying on the streets, it means all the coping mechanisms are gone. A full-scale famine is rare. There are many warning signs along the way to famine. Long before a famine you'd have an increase in deaths during the difficult periods-in the west that would be during winter and the lean season. Children, elderly people, others who don't have sustained food supply during the difficult period succumb to diseases that a well-nourished person would recover from. That would be the first

t's Sunday afternoon as I write this, and the prime minister's plane is roarin-

overhead, off to pay homage in Washington and London and court some cast from the paymasters of the war on terror. The few private airlines still flying

end their trickle of passengers hither and yon. It's misty and warm, a pigeon

perches on my balcony, keeping a wary eye on the cat down below. Hard to know what to make of things now that I'm back in the Himalayan

a copy of Samrat Uphadyay's Arresting God in Kathmandu, prominently

Post 11 September, he no longer needs an atlas to suss out all corners of the



warning sign. Those who tend to last longer are typically males in the prime of their life. The young and the elderly, pregnant women, breastfeeding women have higher calorie requirements. That's a key indicator to observe throughout this conflict, or at the end of the conflict or after. The other sign is migration. We are told that there are people migrating even as we speak, it seems to be primarily because of their sense of insecurity, not only food.

Gives us a ballpark figure for the population with shortages of food? It is very hard to define. We have about 45 percent of the population below the poverty line—a government figure of people who consume 2,000 or less kilocalories each day. The highest percentage of that 45 percent you'd find in the areas we are talking about. The people in other places have more options available to them. The poverty issues are the same everywhere, but there are more income-generating access opportunities elsewhere than in the hills and mountains. Then we look at the percentage of people who earn one dollar a day on average and spend 70-80 percent or more of that on food. People die not because of lack of food but because of diseases they develop when they are weakened by less food over a sustained period. We know that there has been an increase in TB rates, that's an indicator of food shortage. TB is an opportunistic disease and affects people who are at risk. We know for a fact that TR rates in the mountains have increased Put all that together, and that would indicate we are getting into a

Can we then say that nearly half of all Negalis face food shortages? This is where we have to be careful. We don't want to look at it that way. Start at the national level. Nepal is technically a food-deficit country, but produces surpluses pretty regularly. The issue for us is not the national food production line. That only tells half the story. The issue is access to food. The very interesting thing about Nepal is that access is determined by income and geography. It's no sin to not produce enough food to feed your people, lots of countries don't. But they have cash to buy food. Here people's access is critical, and further complicated by geopgraphy, which is why we came with "food for work". The people we target are the poorest of the poor in the hills and mountains, the most food-insecure and most affected. They have no interest in working for cash because they have to buy high-priced supplies. That's how you know we are targeting the right communities. People up there are spending so much of their income on food anyway, and are interested in such kinds of

All things considered

Unlikely as it may seem, there's been

some well-informed debate about

Nepal on American airwayes.

Security

Imost one in four Nepalis will go to sleep hungry toda The same will happen go to sleep hungry today. tomorrow, and the next day. That makes Nepalis, in terms of propor tion of undernourished, the hungriest people in South Asia. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) says Nepal adds 400 more people into this category every day, 150,000 more hungry people every year.

These figures are based on statistics several years old, and food security experts say the situation is sure to have got worse since then because of the widening insurgency especially in the chronically fooddeficit mid-western region.

The production, distribution and storage mechanisms simply aren't working, and hunger is spreading at an alarming rate. Ten years ago, there were 3.5 million underfed people in Nepal, 19 percent of the population. Today that number is five million, 23 percent, according to the FAO's latest global food insecurity survey.

The FAO will be holding its Asia-Pacific regional ministerial conference in Kathmandu 13-17 May, where the country's worsening food security situation is expected to be highlighted. If the insurgency is not brought to a rapid resolution, and if farm productivity is not improved Nepal is moving towards having one of the most serious food

Our food production has remained more or less stagnant, though there have been occasional surpluses. The problem is, these increases, when they occur, do no translate into more food per head. The terrain doesn't just make growing food difficult, it impedes government's ability to move food stocks around the country. That was the situation before

emergency and the escalation of the conflict in November last year. The FAO maintains that widespread poverty and slow food production which is not keeping pace with the growth in population, are the reasons for the increase in hunger in Nepal. Even before the conflict

intensified, 39 of Nepal's 75 districts suffered chronic food shortages Sources who have recently over-flown mid and farwestern districts told us that terraces are fallow even in the districts that should have begun cropping. With the violence spreading across the countryside and the general sense of insecurity, many have fled their villages. Of those who remain, many don't have the manpower to continue farming or have eaten the seeds. Others may have just not planted this season's wheat since they think it will be looted by insurgents anyway. In remote mountain areas like

Humla, local food production is

sufficient for only four months o the year. The people of the district also have few opportunities to earn money to buy food. The result is that every household in the district has to rely on some alternative. largely the food flown in by the rnment, itself plagued by poor gistics, disrupted flights and now the Maoist insurgency, Says Maya Lama, a resident of Torpa in Bargaun VDC in Humla, "We have not seen a plane in some weeks now. Last year's grain is finished, this year's hasn't been planted yet. It is not unusual to see people waiting in long queues at the food corporation offices at the district headquarters for coupons to obtain subsidised food. The local produce-potato, barley, buckwheat-

barely lasts a few months. "The increase in household food insecurity is worrying," says

and food security

Nepal is the only country in the region where hunger is increasing. Now factor in the insurgency.





Gyan Prasad Sharma, an agriculture expert with the National Planning Commission. Once a food-exporting country, Nepal today imports close to Rs 6 billion worth of grain and other foodstuffs every year. People are still going hungry because there is not enough food in many areas where it is most needed, because people don't have the money to buy it with, or due to transportation and distribution problems.

"What's missing is a synergy between government, NGOs and private institutions to create an enabling environment to increase food security," says Tek Bahadur Thapa, regional director of the Department of Agriculture for the Central region, "Now, the security situation has made matters worse

food flights to the mid and farsuspended its food for work Maoists looted stores. This has the poorest districts in the country from vital food supply. The WFP says some 15,000 people are directly affected

"The implications are most unfortunate," says Basant Raj Gautam, program manager of the Rural Community Infrastructure 10,000 people have lost their growing in the fields."

The food corporation stopped

allow fields in the mid-west

tive farming in their strongholds, but everyone is too busy fighting to tend to farms," says Tulsi Gautam of the Agriculture Department Market Development Directorate. Even so, there are some in

overnment who do not completely agree with the FAO's projections. "The FAO doesn't ake into account Nepal's food habits and consumption, the indigenous varieties of food, and local preferences," says one official who did not want to be named. "You can't base a report on rice, maize and wheat alone

In general, Nepal's food grain production has been increasing in recent years, thanks to good monsoons and improved services. But food production is not keeping pace with the increase in population. Between 1990-2000, Nepal produced more rice wheat maize and millet. But barley production has fallen every vea since 1995. For many mountain communities, increased rice production doesn't really matter. barley is their staple.

Jivan Bahadur Shahi, chairman of the Humla DDC, says the focus should now be on promoting indigenous cereals such as barley and millet, and encourage ing crops like potato, pulses and

11 - 12 May

Trying to climb high value and to enhance farmer Desperate to attract more mountaineers, such as those now choosing income, "We get technicians who to climb in Pakistan, where the fees are cheaper and there are no are knowledgeable about rice, but Maoists, the government has don't have an inkling about made changes in the royalty buckwheat or barley. I've often structures and simplified the told planners, give us water, good procedure for obtaining permis irrigation systems, not rice.

.

Shahi is optimistic that a roac being built in Humla, under the WFP's Food for Work Project, will allow villagers to exchange local produce like apples, walnuts and medicinal plants for rice from the plains.

reached our production potential,

could be implemented properly, the

growth rate of 4.33 percent. This

percent. What is now clear is tha

channels are clear, there won't be

Mandala House

year it has dropped to 1.71

even if the food distribution

enough to distribute.

food availability.

says Thapa. "But even if we increased the yield, where do we

It is clear that although the The regulations also display a new sensitivity towards Nepali who security situation has made the work on expeditions. Youth under 16 will not be allowed to climb, and all support staff on expeditions will have to be provided accident food situation worse, even if the conflict winds down the strucinsurance. Finally, in response to numerous complaints, the governtural problems with Nepali ment-designated liaison officers will no longer be required to accomagriculture will persist. Nepali pany expedition teams up to base camps and will have their allowarmers are already hurt by their ances cancelled should they stop working with an expedition. inability to compete with the economy of scale of Indian ISDP worries products. The open border has The National Planning Commission is reconsidering the implementation allowed a backlog of cheaper India rice to enter Nepal. "We haven't

store it, how do we distribute it, worst affected districts. During his appearance at the parliamenhow do we market it. We don't tary committee for state affairs earlier this month Chief of Army have these mechanisms in place." Staff Prajwalla Sumshere Rana requested the quick implementation Some years ago, the governmen of the ISDP. opened grain exports to Bangladesh The government had selected Gorkha, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan Jajarkot, Kalikot and Pyuthan for first phase of the ISDP, but implemenin the hone that it would get support for a long-term agricultur tation was suspended following the declaration of the state of plan from the ADB. Before that emergency in November. The programme was implemented in Gorkha

on a trial basis one year ago. government reversed its decision. The ADB-backed 20 year Finally, some good news Agriculture Perspective Plan hopes Nepal has done well in recent years in the areas of child survival. to improve irrigation, fertiliser,

family planning and fertility, said USAID director Rebecca Rohrer at the markets and roads and targets a five launch of the 2001 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey. The survey percent growth in agriculture, reveals a marked reduction in the average number of children born to a argely cereals. It hopes this will Nepali woman. The decrease, 0.9 less than the five 15 years ago, reduce poverty to 14 percent, and represents a nearly 20 percent drop in fertility. The main factor narrow the regional imbalances in contributing to the decline is a doubling in contraceptive use among non-pregnant women between the ages of 15-49, up to 39 percent But this appears unlikely. Las from just 15 percent in the late 1980s. year, the agriculture sector saw a

Infant mortality rate has also come down significantly-from 103 to 64 deaths per 1,000 live births. This goes together with advances in health care. Five years ago, just over one in three children were fully immunised, today 60 percent are. Vitamin A supplementation now covers 81 percent of the under five children

But it is still probably too early for celebrations. There are other problems in our health sector that could easily drag us back-87 percent of deliveries take place in the absence of trained birth attendants, and less than half of all women are immunised against tetanus. Over half of all Nepali children are shorter than the normal height-forage, and a fifth are severely malnourished, says the survey carried out by New ERA for the Family Health Division of the Ministry of

At the same gathering Health Minister Sharat Singh Bhandary said the figures would be taken seriously and promised the following: a gender sensitive approach to health care delivery, decentralisation of public health service facilities, and increased participation of communities, local governments and private sector to improve the overall health scenario in Nepal. If only it were that easy.

flying subsidised food to remote

village depots in Mugu last year

owing to the security situation.

Remote and arid Mugu is a food

deficit area at the best of times, and

this suspension has affected at least

5,000 residents. "Not a grain of rice

has been flown into the villages this

through Manist-infested areas.

tubers," says Shahi

"People are foraging for roots and

It is difficult to obtain an

affected areas. "One does hear of

the Maoists carrying out coopera-

accurate picture of the state of

agriculture in no-go Maoist-

year," says Mugu MP Chandra Bahadur Shahi. "But the number of consumers has gone up-police, security forces, the Maoists." The district's quota of 3,000 quintals of rice has been delivered to the district headquarters, but villages to the district headquarters have been destroyed, people can't collect rice-unless they swim or go

The conflict has already affected western mountains. Last month, the UN's World Food Program (WFP) projects in Jajarkot and Mugu after deprived the poorest of the poor in

Works under the Ministry of Local Development "In Jajarkot, at least source of food for 60-90 days. And this is a time when there is nothing

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kingdom. Being abroad, in North America and Europe, meant logging onto the Internet—everyday—and checking out nepalnews.com to read this paper and all the others. Another reminder of our yam-like status between the two boulders was displayed in my local book super store. I bought it to read on the plane home.

It's probably a good thing Prime Minister Deuba is meeting President Bush this week in Washington. The CEO of America Inc was infamously the man most gnorant about foreign affairs in the run up to the presidential election in 2000. world. He even knows about our troubles in Nepal and is investing in ways to resolve them. Forty million dollars and counting, unless I'm mistaken, with at least half for the military. That's an interesting intervention at this point in the struggle and one that I'm worried isn't being properly examined and It is in America though. A ringing telephone in my father's kitchen last week turned out to be a producer with National Public Radio, America's superb listener-supported alternative to the dreck of mainstream media. Somehow, "Talk of the Nation" had tracked me down in exotic Uxbridge, Ontario, Canada and

this week, the listeners were getting all they may have ever wanted to know about Nepal and the Maoists. I was there as a journalist, so I refrained from offering ons, but the surprisingly well-informed listeners didn't. Maoist insurgency. That's what they felt the White House was doing with its To a person, they all goved fear that the Rush administration was being to equest for extra military assistance for the authorities here, and they didn't like it black and white in its widening of the war on terror to include Nepal and the pointed out that the official American line, that democracy is under threat and

must be supported, has more than a ring of truth about it. But people like Professor Catherine Marks, a Nepal expert from Cornell University, and a listener named Ursula, calling from Providence, Rhode Island, were having none of it. "Our money," Ursula said, (she was a former Peace Corps volunteer who'd roamed all through the Kamali area over the past two years) "shouldn't be spent on furthering war and violence. It should be spent on making peace, encouraging institutions like the courts, parliament and human rights groups. We have spent decades providing weapons to developing countries and all that happens is the enriching of shareholders in American defence firms."

A forceful point, probably made from a left-of-centre ideological perspective, but a thoughtful one nonetheless, especially coming from an rmed source and from a nerson who clearly loves this country. She deplored the Maoists and their violence but wondered about the rural verty she'd seen, the alienation of remote valleys cut off from the osperity so prevalent—until recently—in Kathmandu, Professor Mark concurred. She too is widely travelled in the far-west, far more I dare say,

than many of the elite in this city, certainly more than I. Debate is the key thing here. No side is absolutely right, no one is utterly wrong, save those who urge violence and only violence as the answer to our problems. People need to start talking about how to resolve those woes, they need to disagree and then move towards common ground. That's democracy, that's pluralism, that's the only way forward. That American phone-in program needs a version in Nepali, and it needs to be broadcast

nation-wide as the people of this fine, troubled land have their say.

By the way, Professor Marks and Ursula from Rhode Island both speak fluent Nepali and are more than willing to share their opinions with

(www.npr.org, Talk of the Nation Programme, 29 April 2002)

Foreign hands

eaders flay foreign interference", "Polity capable of accommodating all", "Joint action urged to tide over economic woes". Newspaper headlines mirror the magnitude of the nation's political and economic turmoil. Commentators call on forces within the political system and outside to sort out their differences internally. There is growing apprehension that deepening domestic differences would give foreign hands wider legroom in Nepal.

Amid such a tense atmosphere in January 1990 a communistsocialist brigade arrived from New Delhi to address a political conference in the centre of Kathmandu. The moral support Indian political leaders from across the spectrum extended to Nepal's banned political parties infuriated the panchayat government, already reeling from New Delhi's virtual trade and transit embargo. Nepalis, fed up with decades of enforced silence and months of economic hardship, had no time for the patriotic pleas emanating from the official media

In a matter of weeks, the 400,000 foot soldiers the partyless system bragged about disappeared without a trace. The term "people's representatives



ticity. Even the most die-hard includes everything between defenders of the panchayat system political words that injure and acknowledged that Nepalis were conomic policies that cripple the desperate for democratic change True, the Ranas were tricked What troubled many was the return on investment some foreign benefactors might

into signing the 1950 peace and friendship treaty through false promises of political protection But you can't blame India for completing a diplomatic assignment with such flourish. If Nepali politicians in the 1950s felt ompelled to publicly express their gratitude to every official visitor from across the southern border, they were only reflecting

As long as we retain our capacity to rail against foreign meddling, the outlook for the nation remains bright.

changes of 1951. The closed nature of the panchayat system granted its diplomats greater room for manoeuvre. The Kalapani controversy and the secret 1965 accord with India governing arms purchases ounctured the myth of the panchas' unwavering patriotism an entire generation of Nepalis were raised on. But a fairer debate would

have to probe how the withdrawal of Indian military checkpoints bolstered the palace-driver offensive to assert Nepal's independent identity. It is easy to denigrate Nepali nationalism as a direct manifestation of anti-Indianism But when you start detecting varying bues of a purported persecution complex in the other five nations of South Asia, there is a need for a more exhaustive evaluation. (Loften wonder, though, how the nationalism debate would have been framed if we had an open border on the north and all of our rivers

troops have entered a country flowed in that direction) either looking for those who Critics of foreign interference invited them or have ended up as today overlook how drastically permanent guests. The peace that follows the thuds of foreign the rules have changed since

jackboots cannot be placid. But if external military support is what you need to regain normalcy, its probably not a bad idea to involve more than one country. The experience of Lebanon, which has more fault lines than Afghanistan,

allowed into places like Rolpa descended on the Maoist front side. As long as we retain our capacity to rail against foreign meddling the outlook for the nation will remain good. In the to ward off external hazards where we can. A new study has found that soiled Indian India could spread chronic tonsillitis, pneumonia and time our government required shopowners and cabdrivers to return the change in Nepali

..... the inherent character of the 1990. Many who rejoiced at

ment has been designated a vital

President George W Bush's new

approach to foreign aid has made

poverty and terrorism. (Consider

ing that last fall's attacks were led

multimillionaire Osama bin

Laden and carried out by people

of privilege, however, this premise

right to self-defence from shad-

owy non-state parties has

redefined the approach to

democracy, human rights and

non-interference. How could one

of the poorest countries of the

world not have become a play-

ground for external elements?

In modern times, foreign

night need further testing). The

a direct connection between

threat to affluent societies. US

Augusto Pinochet's detention in Britain on a Spanish warrant for the killing spree he presided over as president of Chile several year earlier missed the finer points of the internationalisation of sovereignty. After 11 September, could prove instructive to Nepalis. 2001, poverty-induced resent-Our legislators complain that

foreign military advisers are being and Gorkha that are off limits to Nepalis. It's probably meaningless to argue that aliens wouldn't have lines if our MPs had spent more time in their own constituencies So we have to look at the bright meantime, we probably should try banknotes circulating in northern tuberculosis. Don't you think it's

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Running on empty ust over a year ago it seemed as if Kathmandu had finally figured

battery-run electric vehicles (EV) and welcomed the banishment of the diesel engine three wheelers, among the worst polluters. In 1998, when the electric tempos first came to Kathmandu, there were only ten. Today, there are 600. But almost a decade after the Global Research Institute designed an EV suited to Nepal's roads, the industry is still struggling. With this kind of early-mover advantage and the new regulations Kathmandu should have been the EV capital of the world, and other cities in the country should have also adopted the system. The failure of the industry to grow is a classic case of how the inability of the government to implement its own policies, and the internal wranglings of the private sector, can sour the bright prospects of a

out how to deal with one of its largest, most obvious problems-air pollution. The city would get a modern public transport system that would decrease pollution, and also be safer and more comfortable. Valley residents happily leapt on to the microbuses and the three-wheel

The EV is internationally recognised as the least polluting of all modes of transportation. Its speed and range-of-travel restrictions don't matter in Kathmandu, given the relatively small size of the city and the slowness of its traffic. EV's run on rechargeable electric batteries, which means that the industry, with its over 600 vehicles, is potentially an excellent customer for the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) during off-

When the pollution row was at its height, the government was forced to give customs and tax breaks to importers of EVs. It did that, but very little else. More than 600 electric tempos, each of which has batteries that need to be charged for up to eight hours every 130 km, only have 36 recharging stations. Constantly changing traffic regulations and enforce-ment left to the whims of individual traffic policemen mean that there is no parking space for the tempos in the city, except outside the RNAC building. As a result, the 16 routes the EVs now ply could be reduced, is the vehicles are forced to keep to just inside the Ring Road, and

Bimal Aryal of Martin Chautari, one of the main advocates for the bringing more EVs into the city, says he isn't surprised things have come to this pass. "The government does not show any special concern towards the development of this potentially enormous industry. We have been trying very hard to show the comparative advantages of not just encouragng this sector but also investing in it and yet the government gives a blind eve." he says. Ashok Pandey of the Nepal Electric Vehicle (NEVI) has another complaint, "Why can't the government have one policy. They seem supportive, but then the Finance Ministry imposes new taxes every year.

The private sector hasn't exactly displayed entrepreneurship or vision either. The recent shortage of batteries and deterioration in their quality.



discouraged many EV owners from further investment. This in turn was a disincentive for manufacturers to pay attention to research and develop ment. Most industry insiders say that all of this could be taken care of if there were appropriate regulations in place. "But for that," says Hridaya Narayan Manandhar president of Negal Flectric Vehicle Charging Association NEVCA as well as the Electric Vehicle Association of Nepal. the umbrella organisation, "we need to lobby with the government, and you can't do that if you aren't financially strong. We aren't in that

Both sides want the other party to break the deadlock. While they wait Valley residents are slowly bidding goodbye to the idea of a modern city centre with cleaner air .

UML's prescription

FCONOMY

United Marxist-Leninist economists this week revealed their cure for Nepal's budget blues, stressing that government should not let recurrent expenses orces Rs 52 billion. "We cannot let expenses gallop ahead in the name of security," Bharat Mohan Adhikary told reporters. "There's also reconstruction to think about." For the time being, the UML wants government to show that it is serious by reducing its oversized cabinet, curtailing foreign junkets of ministers and public officials, and even lowering salaries of ministers, MPs and public employees. Government estimates that economic growth this year may be around one percent, forcing it to borrow heavily just to meet the recurrent spending.

Terrorists scare away tourists

The gloom and doom in the tourism industry is getting gloomier. Tourist arrivals continued to dip in April and unlike in past years, the Nepal Tourism Board's numbers now show just how badly Indian arrivals have plummeted. Overall arrivals were down by 46 percent by end- April, which included a 35 percent drop in Indian tourists and a 49 percent dive in the arrivals of non-Indians. April, marred by the five-day Maoist strike, saw arrivals drop by 49 percent. Arrivals from the main markets-the US, the UK, Japan and France-are already down by about 50 percent on average. The Japanese seem to be the bravest, their arrivals have fallen least steeply, "only" by 34 percent.

Railroad talks

Officials from Nepal and India met 1 May to talk about a long-overdue rail agreement, but failed to find a way to get the rail-link between Raxaul and the new Inland Container Depot at Birgari operational. The ICD at Birgani, built with a World Bank loan, was completed early last year, but Nepal has been unable to use the facility due to delays in getting the rail agreement finalised. The two sides decided to keep talking.

The Confederation of Nepalese Industries (CNI)—a group which claims to champion the cause of "real" investors—announced its formalisation last week. Binod K Chaudhary chairs the group, whose membersecretary is Vijava Shah

One-vear-olds

The Nepal Life Insurance Company (NLIC) entered its second year last week and is set to expand operations in Biratnagar, Birgani, Pokhara, Nepalgani and Butwal. NLIC says it has enlisted 8,600 customers, who've paid up over Rs 72.5 million in premiums. The value of the policies sold in the first year adds up to over Rs 1.25 billion. The New Business Age, also completed its first year of operations last week, after splitting from the parent magazine that publishes without the "New" prefix.

Two-syllable noodle names aren't exhausted yet. A Pokhara-based company last week launched Jo-Jo, the latest Ramen brand. Jo-Jo claims it is manufactured by a Nepali made manufacturing unit crafted by sister-concern Pokhara Machine Tools. This is one of the companies owned and run by Hari Prasad Pandey the "Gandhian communist" who made headlines last week by courting arrest for bribery (see "Mea

Suidonana Shan, a rainled madnematician, owns and runs Formation Carpet, a successful exporting venture. Shan is also general secretary of Rugmark Internationi, which campaigns for good business/ production practices. Nepall Times spoke with Shan on her business values and the state of the industry.

Nepali Times: Is today's carpet industry different than what it was about a

surroundings, environment or child labour issues. Now they've realised that

social responsibility is something that businesses have to be concerned

meter rates navment to the cost of living index. We gaid more than what

others were. I learned a lot during the first ten months. We also introduced

health insurance and made it mandatory for younger children of workers to

Though there were ups and downs, our company kept growing. 1999/2000

was a very good year for us-though everyone was closing, we did well. I

believed in the quality of our work, and our customers. My customers are

my partners I don't take them as just buyers. I always tell our workers that I

am not their employer, the customers are. I am just a manager between

them. It took ten years, but I have achieved a lot and my different ways of

about. When we started out with Formation, we pegged our per square

Business wise, the early days must have been much betterÖ

be in kindergarten and older ones to go to school

Sulochana Shah: Earlier people were not concerned about the work

ECONOMIC SENSE

Enough is enough

Why the suspension of the Singapore Airlines flights isn't surprising

he Beed is depressed. 1 June has not been a good day for the tourism industry Last year's aravanhiti incident led to the unfolding of a series of complicated vents. The fallout has been wide spread, and we'll see an instance of it a ar to the day much of this began. ingapore Airlines is suspending ights as of 1 June. For an industry eady reeling under local problems and the global aftermath 9/11 this rould not have come at a worse time We have talked to the press

ough, ensured that big names are uoted in the media sharing our woes and perhaps meeting concerned airline authorities. We still haven't heard from the government or the Nepal Tourism Board. For the chattering lasses it's yet another chance to do what they do best-pontificate on it like doomsday prophets after the second drink.

mpact of the suspension of SO flights What will happen to Nepal as a stination? Lufthansa is gone, even other European carriers are not flying egularly. When a potential tourist in forth America keys in "Destination Kathmandu" on a travel website the nly option that will show up is Thai eople are busy, their lives run to perfectly calibrated schedules. They eed more options to seriously nsider Nepal as holiday spot. Barring places such as Patagonia, the credibility of a destination depends on he credibility of the carriers that fly here. With Singapore Airlines flights one indefinitely. Nepal is isolated on

the tourist map. If we were doubted the gravity of the situation, it is time we woke up and smelt the rot.

It isn't simply the low loads or the technical problems of landing larger aircraft at Nepal's only internationa airport that have led to international arriers pulling out. Nepal has never been a very profitable destination for any airline, given the unpredictability of the weather and the seasonality of travellers. For large airlines Nepal operations have always been losers. As r technical issues, flights to popular destinations tolerate hurricanes and even dubious equipment. There's

more to this than meets the eye. Most carriers have been complain ng for some time of the high price of landing and steep ground handling charges, coupled with inefficient management. The services provided at the airport are poor—carriers find it difficult deal with the staff stationed rhere for the express purpose of assisting them. Fuel prices are high and quality has been a problem. Many carriers have been raising these issues

We still have not gauged the for a long time, but the lackadaisical attitude of our beloved government gencies and authorities ha

whether there is any point at all flying their flag in Nepal.

The tourist industry—all of it, all

its multifaceted multi-specialist associations-needs to stand up and show their solidarity and help get Singapore Airlines flying again soon As we know, the government will wish to wait for a donor-funded consultant to tell them that this is a serious matter. This Beed overheard that there is a team being put together by the tourism industry to make a case and convince Singapore Airlines to reinstat flights. But for that to work, govern-

ment needs to wake up We boast of 50,000 MW of potential power and have developed one percent of that. We have agreements for more than 60,000 aircraft seats per week, but end up utilising a minuscule portion of that The Reed knows how frustrated this column sounds. But does the NTB ever consider what its role would be if then were no tourists? Would they be happy simply providing full-page ads

Readers can post their views a atthahevel@vahoo.com



"The only way to survive in business is by being ethical."

doing business have obviously made a difference. Today we have almost 300 workers employed in four factories. Now I am also actively involved with neglect them.

What is Rugmark?

जोजी

Rugmark is an international trademark registered in Madrid. It certifies that a carpet is made without using child labour. There are six board members representing the producing and importing countries. At the moment, the importing countries are the US, the UK and Germany, and others are in the process of coming in. The exporting countries are India, Pakistan and Nepal. I am also general secretary of Rugmark International.

Are the changes taking place in the industry helping some bring some

It will certainly come back to life, but not with the approach the industry had before. People are more conscious about quality now, and I'm happy about that. In the past there were hardly any carnet industries that had day care centres. We had one in our second year. Today, according to Rugmark, there are at least 15 different companies that have day-care facilities for workers' children. You have to share your income with your workers, you have to be ethical, to survive.

How has Rugmark helped the industry in Nepal?

Runmark International has certified about 400 carnet factories in Negal which means they don't use child labour. Rugmark has helped put a stop to this to some extent. More than fifty percent of carpet factories in Nepal don't use child labour, but there are still some who want no part of this. These are days when even businesses have to help in the overall development of social rights by running ethically, by respecting human rights. labour rights, and the environmental impacts. I've practised corporate social philosophy since I started this business. Now it is slowly catching or in the industry. Those who incorporate similar approaches will survive.

What can government do to help the industry?

The government should be very particular when registering factories. The government or the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) should continuously analyse the world markets. Eighty percent of our product goes to Germany, but if we send twice their demand, how can they consume it? The Nepali mentality is to copy whatever is successful. The carpet crisis didn't happen only because of child labour but due to over-production. The government should be strong in enforce ment and continuously monitor markets. When the world is talking about

labour rights, child labour and the environment we cannot afford to

What else do you do?

We registered Lotus Holdings in 1998. We started by investing in companies that were weak financially, and helped in their management Our first investment was in Lotus Papercraft. We invested 50 percent, so we wouldn't dominate the business. We work in tourism, agriculture, education, power and infrastructure development. We haven't been able o invest in all areas, but we will soon. We are trying to form a development policy the private way. The dividends, when they come, won't be much. But we don't give up. We pick investments if they follow rules and regulations, have proper documentation, etc. We have 12 people in Everest net, which we've invested the most in, six are MBAs, smart, young and creative. You have to create a new system. We are very ambitious we have a thousand dreams at least we'll realise a hundred.

Youire an academic now doing business. How did this hannen! got two Master's degrees in mathematics, from TU and from Germany, in 1971. My husband and I studied and worked there until we met some high-profile Nepalis who asked us to come back and work for the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST). We came back and started working at RONAST but soon found that people were unwilling to accept our new ideas. RONAST had the cream of the country—the medical doctors, the PhD's, the engineers—but they didn't care about Nepal. That hasn't changed. It was frustrating, and after three

In 1987 I started working with the Organisation for Participatory Development, but on a voluntary basis, as I'd just started my mushroom farm with a small loan from the Agricultural Development Bank. The NGO sector was equally frustrating. Some years later, a German friend asked if I wanted to start a carpet business. The industry was facing a lot of problems with child labour then. My mushroom farm was doing well, but still in 1991 we started Formation Carpet. The idea was that my German friend would do the marketing and I would oversee production How difficult was it get into a business with already a bad name in the

market? Carpets were the biggest source of export income for the government. I took the bad reputation as a challenge. We started with Rs 500,000 and five workers. The crisis had already started and I wanted to save the



JANAKI GURUNG 903, a time for intrigue and explorers, Francis Younghusband, in his obsessive quest for Tibet, makes the journey from Darjeeling into Sikkim, dressed in Marching Orders: "breeches, gaiters, brown boots, flannel shirt, khaki coat and forage cap".

Just to get to Rangpo, now a bustling little border town between West Bengal and Sikkim that does a thriving trade in cheap petrol and cheaper booze, he must cross the Teesta by a none-too-reassuring suspension bride and make his way through the dense forests of the Eastern Himalayan foothills, all the while worrying about "a haunting suspicion of fever".

He arrives in Gangtok three days later, crossing a cantilever bridge and cutting through bamboo and elephant creepers, enchanted by the sight of untold varieties of

orchids. Further charm awaits him in the Sikkimese capital in the form of the Chogyal's brilliant and beautiful second wife, Yeshe Dolma, "an uncommonly slim little thing". Younghusband, who was, after all a bit of a lunatic about Tibet, steeled his heart against her alluring ways and moved up towards Nathu La, one of the two main passes to Tibet, now more notable for its connection with the 1967 war between China and India, than as a 4,392 m high hiccup on the old

in our own capital), and there are

ate-a four-seater chopper Lhasa-Kalimpong trade route. already flies once a day between Gangtok and Bagdogra, an airport Younghusband could make that iourney in four hours by car today. with connections to Calcutta and Come 2005, he could even land in Delhi Bagdogra will mean a Pakyong, 35 km south-east of many-fold increase in Sikkim's Gangtok, on board a regular flight tourist arrivals, which currently The overwhelming army presence in stand at 30-50,000 foreign and Sikkim, particularly as you go up 300,000 domestic tourists north towards the popular tourist annually, and rising by something site of Yumthang, is a little like 20 percent every year. There is only one direct, open surface disconcerting (though no more than

airport, and finding its own identity. plenty of restricted areas that require more paperwork in triplicate than you'd imagine, but an airport here will almost inevitably result in a real boom in tourism Bhutan is expensive, and as for Nepal, well, last month in Gangtok we met more than one foreign tourist who'd cancelled a planned

route between Sikkim and the

mandatory noises about defence and foreign hands, and ignore for a moment his real passion for what he calls "radical humanism" (See also "India is integrating with Sikkim, and not the other way trip here in light of their embasaround," #89.) You hear him loud s travel warning, and gone and clear. First, he points to that instead to Sikkim falsetto line in the Indian national For the wealthy—or desperanthem that goes "Punjab, Sindh, Gujarat, Maratha," and says with the wild-eved conviction of a man who knows he is tilting at windmills: "It is a matter of great offence that Sindh, which is an inalienable part of another country, is mentioned in our national anthem." He believes it should be replaced with Sikkim. He has another, more modest suggestion. At least alter the Indian rallying cry of "Kashmir to Kanyakumari" to "Kashmir to

hesitate in still calling it a

kingdom (as in flower kingdom).

has in two successive elections

a man with a couple of pet

peeves. Cut through all the

Kanyakumari to Kangchenjunga.

voted to power Pawan Chamling

This, after all, is a state that



When in Sikkim. be sure to: ugly form of Siliguri—the National Highway 31A, a splendid effort by the ubiquitous

The roads built by the BRO

The airport is little more than

Drive up to the stunning, mirror-like Tsomgo Lake at 3,780 m and three hours from Gangtok, get yourself photographed in Tibetan dress atop a yak sporting a carpet that says, to make certain you are absolutely sure: "Welcome to Tsomgo". Marvel at the fact that electricity is taken for granted even at this height, and that a light tch can turn on more than just one 10 W bulb.

 Drive further up to a curious little shrine a little lower than Nathu a, dedicated to one Harbhajan Singh, in life army man, in death baba. housands of Tibetans arriving everyday across one of the passes risible from this road in 1959. Some Tibetans who live in Sikkim say ne route is still used by people fleeing the Tibetan Autonomous

If you really, really want to, get permission in Gangtok and drive up five hours to the border at Nathu La. But if it has rained in recent days lower down, be sure to hire a vehicle with snow-chains, or the rsnickety Sikh army men will tell you, with a crinkle of their sunburnt faces and a twirl of their moustachios, that they can't allow ou up for fear you'll be stuck there and they'll have to carry out yet another rescue. Once on the pass, possibly the most amusement is derived from the sight of dazed-looking Indian tourists, mostly Bengali, who can't believe they are at the border with *China*. And that they have just shaken hands with a member of the People's Liberation Army. Too thrilling for words.

Notice that on this drive, as on any going north in Sikkim, as the vegetation changes from subtropical bamboo to alpine rhododendron and then grasslands, so too do the composition of the scattered buildings and the population. Huts with the regulation filthy snotnosed children playing outside give way to brilliantly-painted, aluminium-roofed army barracks with the boys in green industriousl parading, fixing the water pipes that clog up every night, playing volleyball or, if you are a woman, dropping everything to ogle you

with undisguised longing.

Alternatively, you can drive half-an-hour from Gangtok to any number of wonderful vantage points such as Ganesh Tok in the morning for breathtaking views of Kangchenjunga. A 13-day Kangcheniunga trek would be well worth your while, shorter than on the Nepali side and by all accounts, Maobadi-free. So would a slightly longer trek along the Śingalila ridge that separates Sikkim from Nepal The latter takes you through rhododendron forests and past water-falls and mountain lakes, and offers view of everything from Everest to Chomolhari, ending right across from Kangchenjunga.

▶ A trip to Yumthang, at 3,782 m in northern Sikkim, requires dedication and patience, but any travel agent in Gangtok can arrange a trip to this place of green, flower-carpeted meadows with yaks everywhere and snow peaks strutting their stuff. En route to Yumthang is Kabi Longsok, where Sikkimese history began in the 13th century when the Lepcha and Tibetan chiefs signed a treaty of hrotherhood

Imagining the intrigues at the Rumtek Monastery is another worthwhile exercise, especially when every third person gives you a different number of competing Karmapas and feeds you stories of thousand-car-long processions in favour of the Sherpa Karmapa. Or something like that—there are far too many stories. For other, more spiritual experiences, there are any number of monasteries, some very old and venerable indeed- Phodong Monastery is supposed to have been blessed by the Guru Rinpoche and Tashiding was built back in 1717. Pemagyantse is devoted to the Nyingmapa order of Tibetan Buddhism, the "red hat" sect founded by Padmasambhava. Drink Temi tea. Kilo for kilo, the highest grade of Sikkimese tea is more expensive than Darjeeling. It is grown at a higher altitude and on a much smaller tea estate that only cultivates the Finest Tippy



Sikkim Seven Years at a Glance

The last seven years have been good for Sikkim. This has been a time of high achievement for the state that became part of the Indian Union in 1975. Following are some of the numerous strides the state has made in the social, economic and environmental sohere:

- . The crime rate in Sikkim is the lowest in the country and the Union Home Minister has declared Sikkim the most peaceful state in the
- The Sikkim Planning Commission has been constituted to give a new lease of life to the planning process in the state.
- The Sikkim Human Development Report 2001 and Sikkim: The People's Vision have been published
- We have set a target to increase Sikkim's growth from 12 percent to
- Sikkim has been included in the North-eastern Council as its eighth Policies are in place to spend 70 percent of the total plan budget to
- Chief Minister Pawan Chamling was voted the Greenest Chief
- Minister in India. A new law is being enforced that requires all official papers and
- documents to also list the mother's name. Reservations for women have been introduced: 33 percent in
- Panchavats and 30 percent in government jobs. For the first time, a woman has been inducted into cabinet and the SDF has appointed a woman member as Speaker of the State
- Assembly, Zilla Adhyakshyas, Upa-Adhyakshyas and chairpersons of different government undertakings.
- We have set a target to improve the literacy rate to 85 percent from the present 70 percent during the Tenth Five-Year Plan. The foundation stone for an airport was laid in Pakyong by Indian
- Vice President Shri Krishna Kant in Anril 2002 Scaling of Mt Kangchenjunga and seven other sacred peaks is
- One tourist centre is being developed in each Gram Panchayat Unit
- in the state. To develop tourism in Sikkim, we have started consultation with national- and international-level industrialists and non-governmental
- Sikkim hosted the South Asian Conference on Eco-Tourism in
- January, 2002.
 The transport system has been modernised with the introduction of a helicopter service. Eight more helipads are under construction.
- An MoU has been signed for a five-star hotel in the state.
- Airstrips are being constructed.
- Projects are underway for better connectivity in the state through district and village roads.
- . The concept of a Model Village was developed and work started to promote village tourism. These villages will have all modern amenities such as water, electricity, road links, CC footpath, PHSC, school, VLW centre, VLO centre, cooperative societies, bookstall, cafeteria, stockman centre
- Devolution of power—10 percent of the state's annual plan budget
- goes to the Panchayats.
 The government has exempted people from paying tax on timber from personal holdings.
- Efforts are being made to exempt Sikkim from Direct Taxation Laws.

 We have completed an economic survey of Sikkim and the Vikash
- We have already decided to close down the Rathang-chu Hydroelectric Project and set up a cultural spot there, considering the
- eligious importance of the place Raiva Van Samrakshan Evam Parvayaran Puraskar was constituted
- to encourage preservation of nature.

 For the first time, a Sikkimese has been appointed to the position of Advocate General by the Sikkim Democratic Front government.
- Sikkimese people have been appointed to constitutional positions such as Ambassador.
 - Efforts are on to have Sikkim's Limbu and Tamang people included in the list of Scheduled Tribes Equal respect and tradition for Sikkimese cultures and traditions.
- Demands for the inclusion of Bhutia, Lepcha and Limbu languages in the Fighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution
- Tamang, Gurung, Rai, Sherpa, Mangar, Newar and Sunuwar languages have been recognised as state languages.

 Arrangements have been made to teach Bhutia, Leocha and Limboo
- languages in all schools up to college level. Gurung, Tamang, Newar and Sherpa are taught up to school level.
- We have been successful in granting the status of Other Backward Castes to Jogis, Thamis and Dewans.
- 10 percent of seats are reserved in higher education to the Chhetri, Bahun and Newar communities, who are not included in the list of









Hindu Marriage Act Court

Consumers' Court

 A Single Window System has been launched in the state We have created a new Information Technology Department for

Chief Minister Self-Employment Scheme launched: Three-year

interest-free loans and two-year interest-free loans will be given

to educated unemployed women and men respectively, with up to Rs 100,000 for graduates and up to Rs 50,000 for class XII

- Sikkim has been a frontrupper in India in the field of telecommuni
- Forty information centres have been set up across the state.
- We have prepared projects to give highest priority to Information
- We have launched a number of websites on Sikkim. (sikkim.nic.in, www.sarkaritel.com/states/sikkim)

 Free medical treatment and facilities to people and all government
- Small Family Scheme has been introduced.
- There has been an unprecedented increase in pay and salaries of government employees under the Third Pay Commission. Wages of labourers and Muster Roll employees have increased by 100 percent.
- Poor women labourers employed by different departments are
- now entitled to get maternity allowance and maternity leave.
- Milch cows, piglets nad quality seeds are distributed free of cost to poor people to help them become self-sufficient.
- Senior citizens travel free on buses
- Senior citizens who do not receive old age pension benefits are
- given 10 kg of rice.
- The government provides land to the landless and provides an outright grant of Rs 20,000 to homeless people to assist them to construct houses under the Rural Housing Scheme.
- Subsidised rice is provided to poor people
- · Poor farmers are exempted from paying toll tax for their products
- brought to the bazaar for sale. Rural households get 50 percent rebate on electricity.
- The cooperative movement in the state has accelerated, to observe 2002 as "Cooperative Year". An Apex Cooperative Bank
- has been established.
- · All children are vaccinated against Hepatitis B.
- Children in schools receive a mid-day meal. Education has been made free until the college level.
- Textbooks and exercise books are being distributed free of cost
- School uniforms are distributed free of cost every year until
- Compulsory computer education has been introduced in schools. Environment education is being introduced.
- An engineering college, a medical college, and a science college have been established. Efforts are being made to establish a
- Study series for an authentic study and research into all spheres of geography, history, culture, environment and society of Sikkim
- have been set up. The government has constituted various state awards carrying Rs 100,000 each under categories such as literature, social
- service, performing arts and sports.

 We have accorded due recognition to our rituals of DhamiJhankri, Bijuwa, Phendangba, Bhungthing, Janapa etc, based on
- animistic traditions A gumpa and guesthouse have been constructed at Bodhgaya. . Work has begun on the installation of a huge statue of Guru
- Rinpoche at Shamduptshe. We have decided to install a 108 foot-high statue of Lord Shiva at Solanhuk Dara, Namchi,
- . Work has begun on the construction of a ropeway at Gangtok,
- from Deorali to Tashiling and Namchi to Samdupsi Dara.

 The city bus service has been introduced as a cheaper means of transport for the public in general.



Past imperfect



The US believes the Old World's entrenched anti-Semitism is showing once again

WASHINGTON - European criticism of Israel's military offensive and National Front leader Jean-Marie le Pen's surprise second-place in the first round of French presidential elections are fuelling anti-European opinion on the eve of the semi-annual US-EU summit here

Right-wingers in and outside President George W Bush's adminis tration have seized on le Pen's victory over Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin as evidence of an anti-Semitic resurgence in Europe, and the Old World's moral hypocrisy in pressing Washington to be more even-handed in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Neo-conservatives, particularly influential among the political appointees at the Pentagon, charge that

story have been omitted to protect his safety.

and what they write, put others at risk?

European criticism of Israeli policies is motivated by anti-Semitism. "We are seeing pent-up anti-Semitism, the release-with Israel as the trigger-of a millennium-old urse that powerfully infected and shaped European history," writes syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, a leading neoconservative close to the Pentagon and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Likud Party

The charge has also been used to se the mission of a European-led UN delegation to Jenin, the refugee camp devastated by the recent Israeli offensive. It also appears intended to stiffen the administration's resistance to European entreaties on a range of issues, especially the Middle East, that have widened the gap between

Washington and Brussels since Bush took power 16 months ago. With the disappearance of the

Soviet threat, old tensions between th US and Europe—particularly on Washington's unilateralism—have resurfaced, and become acute under Bush Transarlantic relations came under strain in Bush's first year in office when he rejected the Kyoto Protocol on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, assailed other international arms-control instru-ments, and refused to abide by the neva Convention in his treatment al-Oaeda and Taleban prisoners

Bush's "axis of evil" speech in late January, in which he named Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as possible

who stay behind?

Parachute journalists

Children by numbers

originally scheduled. Investments in education and health. and their role in contributing to global peace and stability, will be the focus of the UN

made things worse. Chris Patten, EU

publicly denounced it, warning that

Washington's unilateral instincts and

military ambitions were misguided. "

said German Foreign Minister Joschka

Fischer in February "But even with

all the differences in size and weight,

alliance partners are not satellites."

US decision to slap steep tariffs on

imported European steel has been

House's refusal to denounce Sharo

as he unleashed his latest military

offensive in March fuelled the fire.

Washington Poetcolumnist David

Broder, whose opinions often defin

conventional political wisdom here

ready to fight the tariffs and were

beyond. Amid public appeals by

Sharon, the EU began considering

trade sanctions against the lewish star

most pro-Israel of EU countries, cut

And it isn't just the neo-

Conservatives and Christian Right

Return of an Ancient Hatred", the

New York Times insisted Israel

should not be above criticism but

added: "Guilt over the Holocaust may

be salved with the thought that lews.

extracts from a recent denunciation o

anti-Semitism in Europe by Italian

journalist Oriana Fallaci and German

journalist Heribert Prantl, who wrote

"Because many people believe the past has been conquered, 'the Jews' can

once again be held, powerfully, to

blame." ♦ (IPS)

They jump in, cover a story, and get

the hell out. What about their sources

singled out could put them at risk of being watched, followed by police intelli-

nce, or being detained without trial. The government closely monitors the

Malaysian press. Surin said that the government controls the newspapers and

The next day the Associated Press cited her in a report as a spokesperson for

the group, and falsely stating that she was on strike to protest media constraints at

promised to run a correction. Surin didn't lose her job, but the damage had bee

done. "This is on record," she said. "Some [intelligence] officer is going to have a

copy of this, and not the updated version, and it's going to go into my file."

Joel Simon, deputy director of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a

freedom group, said he didn't think cases where a journalist endangers

others through his or her reporting were common, but added that such instances

are hard to document. "Everyone knows those who stay behind are more vulner

her paper, which is owned by an ethnic Chinese political party in Malaysia's ruling government coalition. Surin feared she'd lose her job. The AP reporter

could notify editors, who in turn could punish striking journalists.

too, can act with cruelty." The Washington Post has featured long

invoking the spectre of European anti-Semitism. In an editorial entitled "The

off arms sales

wrote from Paris that Europeans were

shocked by Bush's determination to

widen the war on terrorism to Iraq and

European leaders for Bush to rein in

Even before the Israeli offensive

another problem. The White

do not support anti-Americanism,

commissioner for external affairs.

According to official figures compiled by UN agencies Infant and under-five mortality, which was to be reduced by one-third under an action plan adopted at the 1990 summit, actually

. Some 175 countries succeeded in eradicating polio by 2000 but the disease remains endemic in 20 countries. Deaths from diarrhoea have gone down by 50 percent as

Nevertheless, more than 10 million children die every year of out of school; 250 million work; and 600 million live in extreme

Advocacy groups like Human Rights Watch insist that the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly in 1989, be taken as the basis for setting goals. Unless children's rights are acknowledged and investments in their welfare treated as a matter of rights, these groups have said, governments' commitments will remain weak. To date, 191 countries have ratified the Convention. The United States and

The new economic giants

and Central Asia, former members of the now-defunct socialist bloc, were among the world leaders in growth in 2001. The economic growth of Eastern Europe and Central Asia surpassed that of the rest of the countries belonging to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), whose 55 members include Western Europe, United States, Canada and Japan. ECE executive secretary Brigita Schmognerova said the economic outcome in 2001 for the 27 FCF transition economies was

But the top prize went to the group of countries that form part of the Confederation of Independent States (CIS), created after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The overall gross domestic product (GDP) increase of the CIS countries was 6.2 percent, and half of those economies experienced nearly nine percent annual growth. Schmognerova highlighted the success of Russia, "an engine of growth for the rest of the CIS countries." From 1999 to 2001, Russia's GDP climbed at an average annual

The ECE analysts attribute this strong performance to two factors: the sharp depreciation of the rouble after 1998 and the success of the energy sector, which benefited from favourable market prices. But the report also recognises the merits of the Russian authorities, who made "a considerable effort to accelerate systemic transformation and market reforms." (IPS)

The US and war crimes

creation the first nermanent international war crimes tribunal Ambassador Pierre-Richard Prosper said this morning. President Clinton signed the treaty in 2000 but Prosper said the US has no intention of ratifying and now considers itself "no longer bound in any way to its purpose and objective." Democratic Senator Russ Feingold, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he was dismayed by the withdrawal from the treaty. "Beyond casting doubt on the US commitment to international justice and accountability," Feingold said, "these steps actually call into question our country's credibility in all multilateral endeavours." The LIS says it fears the court's notential impact on Americans abroad arguing that safeguards against politically motivated prosecutions of US soldiers and officials are insufficient. Most of Washington's major allies, including Canada and 14 of the 15 FU nations, have signed and ratified the 1998 treaty and are strong supporters of the campaign for a codified system of international justice. The United States says it prefers to rely on ad hoc arrangements for particular conflicts, such as the case-by-case tribunals created for Rwanda and Yugoslavia. (The Nation)

UNITED NATIONS - Special talks on the status and future of the world's children began here Wednesday, having been postponed following last September's terrorist attacks in the United States. More than 350 child delegates from around the world began discussing child rights and development Sunday, marking the first gathering of children at the UN General Assembly, More than 70 heads of state and government attended the three-day session.

follow-up to the 1990 World Summit for Children

has increased in 14 countries, nine of them in sub-Saharan Africa

targeted; breast-feeding has gained in popularity after decades of

preventable causes: 150 million are malnourished: 100 million are poverty. Half a million children, more than the population of Luxembourg, have died of AIDS. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said in a report: "The world has fallen short of achieving most of the goals... largely because of insufficient investment." By some estimates, meeting the goals set in 1990 would require some \$70. billion per year in funding for health and education alone.

Somalia have yet to ratify it.(IPS)

GENEVA - Russia and the transition economies of Eastern Europe "surprisingly good", with an average growth of five percent.

rate of 6.5 percent

The United States renounced formal involvement in a treaty



BANGKOK-Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's release Monday after 19 months of house arrest breaks the political deadlock between her and the military junta. but its real impact in prodding the country down the road to democracy remains up in the air. The release of the Nobel laureate, whose party won the 1990 national polls, does not necessarily mean the generals are now In her first public statement after her release, she said, "My release should not be looked at as a major breakthrough for democracy For all people in Burma to enjoy basic reedom—that would be the major breakthrough." But activists on Burma issues and Burmese academics and exiles interviewed by IPS say it is a confidence-building measure that can at least help create a more conducive environment for real dialogue to take

place. "Not everything is okay, but for

sure this is a new chapter. I don't

know how to describe what we feel.' said one exiled journalist, one of thousands of Burmese living in exile in Thailand.

"There are no restrictions to my wement, I can go anywhere I want, Suu Kvi said, mobbed by throngs of people as she emerged from her eside home in Rangoon. The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), as the government is known, indicated that she could resume her activities as the head of her party, the

Aung San Suu Kyi is free. What are Burma's chances? her freedom may "trigger the public to come out in large numbers to

military rulers have freed Suu Kyi

from house arrest. Her first confine

ment was from 1988 to 1995, but

release from that The SPDC placed

her under house arrest a second time

in September 2000 after she defied

Rangoon. Many Burmese exiles were

keeping watch on what conditions are

attached to Suu Kvi's release. She say

Although it sets the stage for both

sides to continue to talk, the road

ahead will not be easy, smooth or

clear activists our

the junta's ban on her leaving

virtually no reforms followed her

support her?

over power to despite its victory after the 1990 poll. "We shall recommit ourselves to allowing all of our citizens to participate freely in the life of our political process, while giving priority to national unity, peace and stability of the country as well as the region." read the statement made public through government spokesman But despite Monday's heady events—one that many Burmese dissidents have been waiting for-there are worries about what lies ahead. Suu Kvi's release addresses the thorny issue of her freedom, but many are

confidence-building-it creates a more

democratic setting that acknowledges

remment do not need to be put in

that people who disagree with the

there are none, and that could mean anything from there being no wondering about the bigger question of whether Rangoon is ready to talk about discussions apart from that about her own freedom, to discussions being underway but kent secret. For democratic change "At the very least it's a public acknowledgement of he instance, there is the question of the mportance in the process, that she is relationship between Suu Kvi's release indeed a political figure," Tin Maung Maung Than, a Burmese researcher at and what gains have been made in the talks ongoing between her and on, underway since October the Singapore-based Institute of South-east Asian Studies (ISEAS), said in an 2000 through the efforts of UN interview at the sidelines of a conferspecial envoy Razali Ismail. On ence on ethnic conflicts here Monday, Suu Kyi declined to give Indeed, this is a far cry from the details about the talks or their past, when military rulers refused to direction from now on. But she said even acknowledge Suu Kyi and used to refer to her as the wife of her British is over and "we look forward to professor-husband, whom they refused moving ahead." Another Burmese permission to visit her just before he exile conceded that "in many ways he died of cancer. "It's a success in release does not really solve anything

prison." Than added. "But one must There are several issues apart not have unrealistic expectations." from democracy-such as the "Her release is good news, but we complex matter of Burma's ethnic have to wait and see what this translates unrest and resistance against the state—that go beyond the issue of a to," said Debbie Stothard of the Bangkok-based Alternative ASEAN dialogue between the NLD and Network on Burma (ALTSEAN), "The Rangoon, Some Burmese dissidents nternational community has made it have felt ethnic organisations are often clear that Suu Kyi's release must be left out of the opposition movement without conditions and then there has in Rurma and are looking how Suu to be more progress on the talks for Kyi will navigate this issue, especially since she has not fully said how she political reform and the political prisoners freed," said Stothard, who proposes to deal with it. Sun Kvi once

added that the SPDC was worried that said that the time to tackle the ethnic issue is later, because the first task of the day is to get democratic political rule back in Burma This is not the first time that the

"Very few people in the opposi-tion have really considered it," Than added. He said that Suu Kyi's secret dialogue with the junta has to make room for the ethnic groups' restiveness that experts have traced to past state policies. "The first problem is the military and the lack of democ racy," the exiled Burmese journalist explained "The second is how to respond to the ethnic groups' spirations." He said ethnic groups know Suu Kvi will listen more than the SPDC. "All in all," said Than, problem of ethnic relation confronting the ruling elite, the democratic opposition led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the ethnic ins must be resolved before meaningful and lasting democracy car be installed in Myanmar."

Burma has been ruled by the military for 40 years, following a coup in 1962. During this period the country has gained notoriety for its appalling human rights record. The SPDC has shown little inclination toward letting the NLD commence its rightful role, says ALTSEAN's Stothard. "The military is not going to make easy concessions and give up its grip or power easily."

Kyaw Yin Hlaing, also of ISEAS, says that perhaps time has allowed both the junta and Suu Kvi to find a way to genuinely talk in a way different from the hardline position that yield little results. Some say tha Suu Kyi has "become more and more diplomatic and strategic, so maybe she will go for evolutionary change rather than an abrupt one," he said. Others guess that the military leaders are perhaps "looking into the future and looking for a graceful way to exit' rather than holding on to power indefinitely. Kyaw Yin Hlaing added, We just have to be patient." \((IPS)

A "whole" new people's party

BEIJING – Newly-rich entrepreneurs, despised as exploiters for much of China's communist era, have become the new role models for the Communist Party which once defined itself as the "political narty of the proletariat " Marking Labour Day on 1 May China canonised private entrepreneurs as "model workers"—an honour reserved in the nast for state sector workers. The All China Federa tion of Trade Unions awarded Labour Medals to four private

businessmen, and declared another 17 entrepreneurs in the north-western province of Shaanxi 'model workers". The move underscores the Communist Party's efforts to enlist businesspeople as members. President Jiang Zemin formally opened the party to private entrepreneurs last July, acknowledging the increasing role 1.5 million private firms are playing in supporting the economy and absorbing workers laid off from ailing state companies. Jiang's Three Representatives theory, which olds that the party must represent the foremost production forces, the most advanced culture and the broad interests of the masses, aims to broaden the party's base by transforming it into a "party of the whole people".

As it does so, the Communist Party is being forced to compromise some core maxims of communist ideology, including the "class struggle" so beloved to Chairman Mao. A new

official study made public in December unveiled a new class mode of China-with 10 classes instead of the orthodox three communist classes of workers, farmers and intellectuals. Conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and supervised by academy chief Li Tieying, also a member of the party Politburo, the study openly admitted that class theories developed by Marx and Map for bygone eras were no longer applicable to China's fast developing





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Surin has personal experience—last year, after several Malaysian opposition leaders were detained without trial, a group of journalists staged a hunger strike to

protest the law that allows for such detentions. The reporters prepared a press statement, listing the names of the journalists striking, explaining their mission, and including some quotes from striking reporters. Malaysia's government is a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarchy. The group asked foreign reporters not to quote any one striker as spokesperson or organiser. To be

developed a negative reputation in her country. "We call them 'parachute journalists'," she said. "They come in, and either get the factual information wrong or colour things in a way that is really inaccurate."

hmat Khan only had time to grab two shirts, two pairs of trousers and

suff them in a duffel bag before he fled his home in Atghanistan. Juss a few months ago, Khan was a successful businessman in Kabul. He and his wife, pregnant with their second child, lived with two dozen of his relatives. But

dramatically changed. Khan is not his real name, and certain details relating to his

hold of sensitive documents through a looter, who'd stolen them from an

abandoned al-Qaeda house. They were filled with valuable information, such as names of al-Qaeda members, according to Wall Street Journal reports. Having

such information put the journalist's life at great risk, and he quickly left the

country. The reporter fled, but what about those in Afghanistan with whom he

had associated? Soon after the Journal reported its findings, armed men began

told him. Newspaper reports of the discovery never mentioned his name, but certain details inadvertently associated him with the event. Khan said.

showing up at Khan's workplace, asking questions about him, Khan's colleagues

The strange men continued looking for Khan for several days. He slept at a

different location each night, until finally, though he'd never been away from his

family before Khan decided to flee Around the same time in Pakistan Wall Street

Journal correspondent Daniel Pearl was kidnapped and murdered. It's unclear

whether the two events were related. Pearl's death sparked a great deal of debate

about the dangers of working as a foreign journalist. But what about those who are sources for, or who work with, foreign journalists? How often do journalists,

Jacqueline Ann Surin, a Malaysian journalist who works for an English-

language daily in Malaysia, said that over the years foreign journalists have

Late last year, Khan's acquaintance, a Wall Street Journal correspondent, got

able," Simon said. "I think in most cases, sources understand that there's a risk. suppose there are misunderstandings about how they want to be identified." • (Jennifer Bauduy is the associate editor at TomPaine.com)

In the early eighties, Sachchidananda Vatsvavana led a

the legend of Janaki, Janakapur being one of the most

Jan Janak Janaki to mark what he called Janaki Jiwan

group of Hindi littérateurs to all the places associated with

prominent among them. Later, he edited a lyrical travelogue

Yatra. In his preface to the book, Vatsyayana writes that to

unearth the nurnose of a journey can be the very nurnose of

it. The Mithila Yatra of a group of eminent Nepali and Indian

ART REVIEW

Harvesting death

"They didn't bury the bodies properly," a local from Thulo Sirubari said, exasperated. The whole area was recking with the stench of the decaying bodies of insurgents killed in the recent fight with the security forces. It's normal for villagers to be curious about strangers visiting their village. The man said he'd heard about our arrival and wanted to meet us.

Thulo Sirubari has been deserted since six residents were killed in a recent confrontation with security forces. I imagine all the villages that have been savaged by death and terror share the same fate. Security forces claim to kill terrorists, but locals are not convinced. They are not ready to accept that their neighbours were ever involved in terrorist activities The country has turned into a battleyround. Earlier, a day was noted for 10

or 20 deaths, now 500 or 600 is becoming the norm. We are harvesting death some die like mountains, others die like dogs. Every death is different from the other—some might be taunting those who died of diarrhoea, others might feel lives being are wasted for the romance of revolution.

Dead bodies are scattered all over-bodies brutalised by guns and ammuni tion, bodies gashed with khukuris, bodies bastardised. We are the brave race, we cultivate death, as poet Bhupi Sherchan wrote: we are stupid, for we are brave/ we are brave, that is why we are stupid/ a Nepali is born not to live, but to die/ either he dies in a battlefield, or he dies in a forest Death is common and usual for a Nepali, because there is death in our

blood. Life in the hills is difficult, and this commonplace difficulty might well have prepared us to kill and to be killed. The British must have sensed our fighting prowess and created conditions for us to join their army. Negalis have battled as part of the British army, as part of the Indian army and in the national army. Nepalis have died in Kosovo and Kargil, and they have died in Lisne Lek and Sangranti Bazar. Death has become common and usual for us

Death is inevitable in a war, so the death of a Nepali soldier fighting for a foreign army was easily accepted. It has become common sense in our minds that one can be killed fighting a war. The Maoist war has deepened this, and after the imposition of the state of emergency, every Nepali has learnt that death can happen anytime, anywhere. The fresh groves of Shive Heri Coursm and Tike Dorre Dulel in Thulo

Sirubari are reflected in the faces of the villagers, in fearful expressions. What will one Shiva Hari gain out of this even if they win the war, other than this untimely and unjustified death? Every village has been victimised.

Biswesora Dahal, widow of Ram Nath Dahal, who died in the Ihana Andolan, once said that those who die are the losers, that the winners are always those who live. Those who died were erased from memory, but their comrades in the Ihana Andolan reached the summit of power. What would those who died in Thulo Sirubari and Lisne Lek gain from the death they took on?

The 67-year-old father of Shiva Hari is devastated that he is mourning his young son. An unimaginable situation has arisen—aged fathers are mourning the deaths of their young sons and awaiting their own deaths in desperation.

Until a year ago, terror was not so prevalent in Thulo Sirubari. The people there were making a garden, they had just completed a drinking water project.
Rastriya Prajatantra Party worker Tika Dutta Dulal, 70, was much respected by the villagers, and was leading the project. Dulal, who was later pressurised by the Maoists to become a member of the Jana Sarkar ("People's Government"), used to address the Maoist cadres as "comrades". He slipped up once and also called the RNA soldiers comrades. This innocent mistake cost him his life.

An incompetent political leadership is creating an environment in which more innocent villagers will fall for the Magists' idealism. Tika Dutta was full of zeal for social work. The fear of death did not linger on his face. Despite the government appeals that people like him surrender, he remained in the village, probably under the pressure of the Maoists. He probably never imagined that such a death lay in store for him.

When the government and the Maoist leadership were having their rounds of talks at posh hotels and resorts, the Maoists were actively declaring Jana Sarkar in villages. The simple-minded villagers probably thought the Maoists had already won the war, and willingly participated in the local Jana Sarkar. The reality is that

THIS PAGE CONTAINS MATERIAL SELECTED FROM THE NEPALL PRESS villagers belong to nobody they belong to whoever is in power. When the overnment was strong, they belonged to either the Nepali Congress or to the CPN-UML. As the major political parties became less active, the villagers came under influence of the Maoists. To break the spell of Maoists, those political parties that are aboveground should intensify their activities.

As the mainstream political parties abandoned their activities, villagers probably had the impression that Maoists had already won the war, so they accepted the Maoist leadership under pressure and fear. Isn't it true that "every Nepali was a Pancha, and every Pancha was a Nepali" when the panchayat system was in place? Instead of hunting for terrorists by looking at the faces of the villagers, political parties should work to change the politics in villages

"What would vou like for breakfast?"

रपेतराहम देनिकः

Transcript of an alleged phone conversation between Jamim Shah of Space Time Network and then Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Information and Communication, Prabhakar Adhikari. The tape was presented by Shah at the parliament's Public Accounts Committee. The transcript indicates that Shah is deliberated taping the conversation and asking leading questions about his satellite uplink license deal, and that Adhikari falls into the trap. Adhikari, who had been made acting secretary, was last week removed from office on the recommendation of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority. He does not deny speaking to Shah, but says the tape was tampered with.



Jamim Shah: Hello! Adhikari dai, how are you? Adhikari: Hajur, what can I say, I am sitting, doing nothing. What can one do people don't take care (of us), you don't care (about us).

Shah: How have we stopped caring?

Adhikari: I called yesterday. Sorry, I had to go elsewhere on Friday. You had

called, but where can I go taking that. You know well how it is.

Shah: Yes, what happened? What to do? You have to check, right Adhikari: The file is with the minister.

Shah: What? Adhikari: I have already told him that I don't know anything about satellite. Shah: Really, then why are you in that office?

Adhikari: Am I a communications expert to know everything? Can Shah become an expert (in journalism) just by running a newspaper?... Adhikari: You are someone with access, but you still keep reprimanding us Shah: I don't have access.

Adhikari: How can you get work done without access?

Shah: How can I have access? Adhikari: Use your influence where you have it. Those who are your followers, those who've taken your handouts. Isn't that right? I am aware of all that, Nepal is a small country.

Adhikari: İsthat not so Shah: Yes, ves, ves,

Adhikari: How can they take handouts and not deliver? Shah: Yes Yes

Adhikari: Why don't you ask them and find out what they say?

Adhikari: Instead, you blame me Shah: Yes, yes

Adhikari: I have not had breakfast for many years, now I need to. Shah: Yes. What would you like for breakfast? At my place. Adhikari: Why not?

Shah: I called you, but you did not come.

Adhikari: Come on! At 8 o'clock, I had a meeting at the Development Shah: We had that talk at the restaurant. You said you would come in the

Adhikari: Yes. But I rang to tell you. I was held up at the Development

Committee Vesterday, the day before. Loontacted you three or four times Yesterday you were busy. Shah: Yes, yes. Adhikari: It now looks like there are few friends left, it's finished. You used

to do something (for me). But you too seem to be ending that. Shah: Why? I said the day before that I would give. Adhikari: I must you

Shah: Yes Adhikari: Yes.

Shah: Theo?

Adhikari: I had also promised you here. Other things, political matters, I don't know much about that

Shah: Now leave aside other matters. We will take care of political matters. Is that not the way to so? Adhikari: Yes, that's it.

Shah: Tell me one thing, how much do I need to do for you? Just tell me.

Tell me one thing clearly. No doubletalk.

Adhikari: Me, and what I had saved earlier, seven

Shah: What seven? Adhikari: I have saved that much for you

Shah: How much? Adhikari: Seven in lakhs.

Shah: Ok. ok Adhikari: That is what I saved for you Shah: So you want all of that seven?

Adhikari: I am not saying that. You use your judgement. I never did that to you I never bargained I am only informing you that I exceed this much for ou. I did save for you, Ramesh helped me in that.

Shah: If I do that, will my work be done? Adhikari: Am I saying that? ...

Adhikari: Seven-seventy was saved, that was saved (by us). We have never been negative towards you. This is the first.

Shah: So you need the seven-seventy? Just tell me clearly dai. Adhikari: I am not making any demands. Like I said, we've never

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"To save the Nepal Banijya Bank, the governor should be imprisoned."

Shivaram Paudel, chairman of the Financial Corporation Employees' Association in Drishti7 May



Box: Submit heads here Man: It's definitely a head, sir, but it looks like a goat's ...!

Budhabar, 1 May

Thawang's slow, steady, complete disaster Maoists are bearing large losses in Pradeep Gvawali, UML MP. Satarbariya, Murkatti, and Lisne, But it's also clear that the Maoists

who captured many weapons from the 2rd Battalion, will continue

making trouble for a long time,

taking advantage of the difficult

and the two-faced Indian rulers.

further back these areas will be

a standstill for nearly six years,

education has been disrupted, the

huge losses in production, land has been left barren, houses are

youth are fleeing, which has led to

mountain terrain, the open border

It is also perfectly clear that

the longer this war rages, the more difficulties the people will face, the

pushed. Development has been at

in Dristi, 7 May

I was hearthroken when I visited Thawang on 5 May as part of survey team from the State Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. ... The villagers' eves are darkly veiled with doubt and fear. They fear that the Maoists might take action against them for letting the army stay in the village, or that the army might give them trouble them for having sheltered Maoists in the past.

Poor Thawang, a two-day walk rom the nearest roadhead. Flectricity and telephones are dreams here. There's a school, but children can't study. A little maize and potatoes is all their food. Now it is under fire from both sides in the name of revolution.

The western hills, the main control area of the Maoists, are going through a sad and difficult chapter. The sounds of gun fire and the killings of humans are not The security forces are increasing their control, and the

empty and falling apart, the grass in school yards is growing taller. The villages have no local representatives, district headquar ters are filled with refugees. ... In Rolna, such excesses have led to rallies and public meetings being called, but that has not been enough to put an end to the uinous behaviour of either the Maoists or the corrupt governmen



Thawang and Thawangis were brought to the point of revolt and terrorism due to the wrong policies and behaviour of the state. The army's divisional heads say "empty stomachs and naked bodies anywhere are fertile grounds for revolt." Hard to disagree with that. If we cannot find out why Rolpa's Thawang and Gaam, Rukum's Mahat and Taksera are Maoist bases, or why the vast Khamspeaking lands support the Manists, then even if our military actions douse these fires for the moment, there will soon be other

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Urmila, the little big one

"Marriage is just replacing looking after one's cows and fields for someone else's cows and fields."



counters, will appear every night in this space

it by the Kosi at Sitale. It is éjà vu. Depressive thoughts nd negative thinking, but I sit by as the rushing waters, watching the cranes fly by, the massive Gauri Shankar, hidden from view, but like a best-remembered treasure available behind the next bend.

Urmila, that pixyish 13-yearold (or so she says), wise beyond her years, young lady of the village, that gossipmonger, tells me tales of larger than life fish, that she and her hunchbacked grandmother caught at this very same place

Is it fantasy, exaggeration or reality? Did she really catch that fish and cook it in the servant's kirchen or was it an imagined taste and a smell of memory? Delights that she had seen and

by 19th May, 2002.

hoped for, but never really tasted, and maybe never would? It has been a culture shock, a

play unfolding itself before my eyes. That gamine, Urmila, born in my friends' family, child of a retainer, and the "bhuri" whom everyone calls for-right from the haiurama to the kanchi mummy Springing up on spindly legs

below an oversized maxi. Fulfilling everything from bringing hor embers for the grand old lady's hookah, sistering the youngest pampered child that bites and kicks her. Is this life? What does she aspire for? To become a "Miss". The village school teacher who wears a neat sari, tucked and tied with a colourful pin. Chinese sandals and red linstick

Oh yes she has aspirations. "If they want they will make me study, but if they do not wish. what can I say?" The only sympathy that she gets is from the

University of Cambridge, UK

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Entrance examinations: 20th May, 2002

Students are requested to submit their application forms

eets, but she is too much in awe of him to go closer. She dare not tell him: "I want to study" But she day dreams about going to school, fanstasises about being in Grade I. Urmila, with her intelligent

gives her a rupee to buy some

eves, observant and alert, the silent witness. The invisible character, a part of the wall, a part of the floor, and just beyond reach. No one believes she has a voice, a person with feelings, as one who can see and watch the myriad webs that are woven on the family loom. She is the historian and

rumour-monger-knows all the skeletons in the family cupboard. She talks of the black sheep of the family, now in jail, having killed his father-in -law in a frenzy, who howls like the wolf on moonlit nights. She talks of

(2 years course)

 $\overline{\mathbf{LIC}}$

(C

r Behind '

Hotel

maisahebs, who preen themselve perming and coloring their graying tresses with henna, too stingy to give her a decent dress.

hv MEGH RANJANI RAI

The other daughter-in-law, who praises her if she washes her clothes, but will not spare the rod, the children spoilt and foul mouthed brats. She walks the forests alone, collecting firewood and grazing the goats, Fearless, indomitable bundle of energy, no afraid of the ghosts, but only of the dark hag who lives by the water, who she gleefully reminds me comes out occasionally to sun itself on the very rock that I am

sitting on. Oh, she has tall tales of meanfaced monkeys that try to bite her and the tiger cub that she found and left for others to pick up. She says, "If you can raise a tiger cub, you can get lots of money." But with a sashay and a flick of her hand, she says if she finds another one, she'll drown it. "If the mau follows the cub, then it will eat up all the goats and chicken." A non-stop talker, she look

at me with her head cocked to one side, like a mischievous magpie, and likens me to the mad 'chunni", who used to sit by the river until finally one day she drowned herself. She cannot imagine what is it that I find in this village of hers, that should bring me from that magical Kathmandu.

She loves the drunken revelre at the marriages, but as for the institution of marriage, she has her own views. "It's just exchan ing looking after one's cows and fields for someone else's cows and fields, today it is haiurama tomorrow it will be some other man's. What is the difference?'

Here I am, a 45-year-old city slicker getting a lesson in life or the banks of the Kosi. Here I am, supposedly an emancipated, ogressive woman, learning from 13-year-old about gender roles, learning the shocking truth about my own inadequacy. There goes my bubble of bliss. ♦

the deaths and the births, the

visual artists at the behest of the Janakapur Municipality is a more recent trip of self-exploration. The Yatra has produced a few fine canvases of contemporary art under the blandly-named rubric "Made in Janakapur". Along with select pieces of traditional Mithila arts and crafts, these paintings are being exhibited at the Siddhartha Art Gallery. The Gallery plans to take the exhibition to New Delhi as well. The renewal of interest in Maithili culture is not a day too

soon, Ignored by the courts of both Nepal and India for about three centuries, Maithili art, literature and culture is stagnant. It lacks the dynamism and inventiveness needed to survive in a competitive world enamoured by the constancy of change. Novelty may not be culture, but a society that doesn't constantly inspire innovation decays and dies



The works of art on display at the "Made in Janakanur-A Mithila Yatra" show are representative of the journey of sensitive artists to their inner selves. Paintings such as Aditya Basak's illusionary Maarich or Ragini Upadhyaya-Grela's deeply moving Marani Devi ko Betha can only be "made" when refined senses confront the soul. Such encounters are often independent of time and space. Despite that, the expressions that have come out of Mithila Yatra carry the resonance of their context, and convey the specificity of Janakapur. The "Made in Janakapur" tag may not be as hackneved as it sounds in the first instance.

In these trying times, solace can be found in works of art that represent the real essence of Mithila—the ultimate triumph of truth at the end of every trial and tribulation in any society. Janaki wasn't born; she was the manifestation of mother earth, and her beloved maiti is not a destination. A Mithila Yatra is always a beginning, a spirit that Batsa Gopal Vaidya seems to have caught in his eponymous work

(The exhibition is on until 23 May at the Siddharth Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, from 11AM-6PM daily, except Saturdays. For more details ring 411122.)





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CULTURE

Sikkim-haser

character

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

values in a family with three

magine a regular Kollywood film

like a generation gap, or changing

generations. What do you see? A

dotty grandmother, deeply con-

servative and slightly ridiculous

parents, and children who simply

the dance floor and wear short.

shiny clothes

want to drink, smoke, burn down

Now imagine a Nepali film that

eschews all of that and meditates on

change through something more

Numafung, the oldest family

members speak only Limbu, the

second speak Limbu and Nepali,

It's a sign that Nepali film

mature senarating themselves from

violence and slapstick, producing

truly original works that depict the

real Nepal. After the 2000 success

Mukundo, Numafung is another

and rub your eyes in disbelief.

film that makes you want to sit up

Limbu girl finally decides to take

the suffering and pain that her

earlier misdirection gave rise to.

Numafung, which in Limbu means

'beautiful flower', is based on the

First-timer Anupama Subba

essays with style, passion and just

story Kaarbar ki Gharbar by

Kaziman Kandanowa

charge of her life after learning from

Numafung is the story of how a

of Tsering Rhitar Sherna's

Bollywood's trend of gratuitous sex.

directors are finally starting to

and the youngest speak only Nepali.

basic—language. In Nabin Subba's

attempting to portray something

Numafung.

Anupama Subba.

who plays the title

· Football on show Posters, national team jerseys, equipment, football newspapers and magazines, stamps, memorabilia, photographs and lots more.

Also surf websites of the Nepal Football Fan Club, the British Council, and Wor Cup sites. From 26 May, British Council, Lainchaur.

Second National Drama Festival organised by Bal Chetana Samuha (with Save the Children-UK). 10 May, 2PM, Rastriya Sabha Griha. . Phillips Saturday Bowling Tournament Each bowler rolls three games, the

bowler with the highest average score wins Phillips CD players. 18 May, 12PM onwards. Rs 500, or ten percent less for entries before 13 May. Bowling Boul-

evard, Kantipath, Register at mg@mail.com.np

• Friends of the Bagmati A group of concerned activists with the aim of cleaning up the Bagmati River

Membership open to all. friendsofthebagmatinepal@yahoo.com.

Extended- Festival of War based on episodes of the Mahabharata. Annual drama production of Studio

7. 10/11/12 May at the Naga Theatre, Hotel Vajra, duration 1hr 15 min. tea and show Rs 700, reduced student tickets available, vaira@mos.com.np. 271545

Club Rumba Latin band, salsa food until midnight on Thursdays. Early bird discounts between

*9-30PM, buy one, get one free. Hotel Shangri-La. 412999
 * Dinesh & Pemba Live every Friday 7PM-9PM, Himalatte Cafe, Thamel. 262526

Beatle Nite Tribute to the late George Harrison. 12 May, 6.30PM, New Orleans Cafe, Thamel. 425736

Himalayan Feelings live every week at Dwarika's Hotel's famous Friday night sekuwa. 479488
 Down Memory Lane Wednesday nights with Teesta. The Rox Bar at the Hyatt regency Kathmandu.

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

 Metre of Malt Single malt Scotch exhibition. Shot on the rocks, or 12 single malts economically packaged for Rs 999. Piano Bar, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999

Beer Mug Club Talk beer, drink beer. Monday nights, Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234

 Coke week Coke-infused sweet and savoury culinary delights for lunch and dinner. Until 17 May, The Fun Café, Radisson Hotel, 411818

 The Tharu Kitchen Dikhri (steamed rice dumplings) with a variety of jungle sauces and hot coriander chutney. Jungle Base Camp, Bardiya.

Ice creams & Sorbets Single, double or triple scoops of ice creams and sorbets, some with alcohol. The Café, Hyatt Regency

* The San Miguel Brunch Brunch, live music and unlimited draft beer. Rs 600 plus tax, Saturdays, The Fun Café, Radisson Hotel, 411818

 Wood fired pizzas at the new Roadhouse Café. Completely redesigned with separate bar seating and coffee bar. The Roadhouse

Cakes, Bakes & Baguettes Pastries, puddings, oven-fresh breads, Shangri La Bakery. Home delivery

 Krishnarpan Restaurant Six-16 courses of ceremonial Nepali cuisine in authentic setting, Dwarika's Hotel 479488

 Weekend Brunch Rs 350 per head, special package available with bowling. Oriental and continental lunch or dinner by the pond. 1905 Boardwalk, Kantipath. 225272

 Vegetarian Specialties and clav-oven pizzas at Stupa View Restaurant & Terrace. Boudha. 480262 Saturday Live Buffet with unlimited draft beer and live music by the Rusty Nails. The Fun Café,

Radisson Hotel 11 30AM-2 30PM Saturdays 411818 Authentic Thai food Everyday at Yin Yang Restaurant. 425510

Paddy Foley's Irish Pub A wide range of drinks and food. Live music on Wednesday, Thursday and

 White rhododendron getaway at the Horseshoe Resort in Mude, three hours from Kathmandu. Two days of rhododendron walks in forests, package tours at \$30 per day, all meals and sauna included. Email

The Great Godavari Getaway Special weekend packages including room with breakfast and dinner, 25 percent discount on health club facilities. Godavari Village Resort. 560675

 Chiso Chiso Hawama Summer package with two days, one night with breakfast, dinner, transportation and activities. Rs 1,500 per person with twin-sharing. For Nepalis and expats only. Club Himalaya Nagarkot.

Secret Garden Lise of new pool, overnight accommodation plus breakfast for two for \$99. Dwarika's Hotel

 Bardiva's Best Four days, three nights, jungle activities, transfers and food from the menu at Royal Bardia National Park. \$120, all-inclusive. junglebasecamp@yahoo.com. 061-23402

 Summer Splash Use of pool 15 May - 15 July, 10AM-6PM Over 18 Rs 4,000 plus tax, schoolchildren under 18. Rs 2.000 plus tax. Hotel de l'Annapurna. 221711

Taste the difference Cosy Nepali-style house on an organic farm in Gamcha, south of Thimi. Up to Rs 1 200 per person per night including meals, aga@wlink.com.nn

 Shivapuri Heights Cottage 30 minutes from Kathmandu, staff guides to monastery, peak and reserve. Rs 1850 per person with dinner and breakfast. Rs 925 per child 5-14 years, children under five free. info@escapetonepal.com

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

NEPALI WEATHER



A major cyclone in the Arabian Sea, which has now moved off the coast of Oman signals the first stirrings of the monsoon. The plains of north India are baking, with temperatures now nearly reaching 50 celsius. But respite is still a month away. For Kathmandu look for localised thunderstorms, and the duration of these will depend on the moisture content of the westerlies. These will slowly give way to pre-monsoon showers, mostly in

the afternoons. The maximum and minimum tempera-

tures for Kathmandu will now rise to more normal levels

KATHMANDIIVAIIFY

















The Chronicler's Daughter Kishore Thukral Ravi Daval publisher, New Delhi, 2002

Rs 480

The megalopolis of U Belly, bounded by the mighty Scalps and the daunting forest of No-Know, is the setting for this satirical chronicle of events, intrigue and upheaval. U Bellians believe they have nothing to complain about, until the Chronicler's Daughter questions received wisdom, leading to one Revolu-tion, then another. The times are contemporary, the political philosophies and systems recognisable,

> Truth, Love and a Little Malice: An Autobiography Khushwant Singh Viking and Ravi Dayal Publisher, New Delhi, 2002

Rs 720 In a career spanning five decades as writer, journalist and editor, Singh's views have always been provocative and controversial, but also deeply perceptive. Singh has been witness to most of the major vents in Indian history—from Independence to Partition to the Emergency and Operation Blue Star. He chronicles these and his professional and personal triumphs and failures in law, writing, politics and marriage.





Plain Tales from the Rai Charles Allen

Charles Allen's classic oral history of the Raj puts together the reminiscences of all kinds of British and Anglo-Indian actors to illustrate the unique experience of British India., both in its Edwardian ammer, as seen by the privileged chota sahibs and missy babas doted on by innumerable servants and the sometimes painful years of its decline and eventual capitulation.

On Secrest Service East of Constantinople: The Plot to Bring Down the

British Empire Peter Hopkirk Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994/2001

Under the banner of a Holy War, masterminded in Berlin and unleashed from Constantinople, the Germans and the Turks set out in 1914 to forment violent revolutionary uprisings against the British in India and the Russians in Central Asia. This more sinister version of the Great Game is set out in epic detail here for the first time, recounted through the adventures of secret agents and other who took



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A beautiful Nepali cinema is growing up, and what better way to do it than through

Rammaya Tumrock, do more than passively bear witness to Numa's life slowh going out of her hands. They show, by standing up for her, that they don't buy the argument that such rows ween husband and wife are "trifling", as Girihang tries to convince her they are. And so Numa, realising that someone at least is on her side, eventually musters up the courage to take

the character of Numafung.

control of her life All of this comes to the viewer through the eyes of Numa's younger ister, Lojina, whose attachment and lovalty to her sister are apparent right from the first frame of the film, where she is picking a white chrysanthemum to put in Numa's hair. Young Niwahangma Limboo, in reality a pigtailed Gangtok schoolgirl, slips easily into the role of a young village girl whose prophetic nightmares offer an insight into the innocent mind. As the story progresses from one chapter to another, the titles that appear on the screen are those from Lojina's point of view, as is obvious

Girihang, played by veteran stage Girihang as Mote Bhena—fat and screen actor Prem Subba, is a classic—the spoilt son of a wealthy family, an alcoholic who has no brother-in-law. qualms about domestic violence. The many scenes in which Girihang publicly humiliates Numa are all the more chilling for the fact that they fall neatly within the realm of real possibility. Girihang's alcoholism and the physical violence drive Numa back to her parents house. It's a scenario common in the everyday life of communities, where alcohol has traditionally been a part—the old ways of brewing, drinking and regulating consump-

tion have fallen apart in the face of modernity and its new occupations, focus on cash, and divisions of time. The united, empathetic relationships between the female characters in the film provide a nice counterpoint to the conflict between tradition and change plays out in the world of men. Both her isn't just another commercial film

mother-in-law and her grandmother

Fungloti, played by 82-year-old

the right amount of restraint the

east Nepal. Through a series of

marriage, widowhood, miscarriage

and then forced remarriage—the

first to be disempowered when

conflicted about the future

caught in the tyranny of a society

Numa's second husband

events in which Numa has a

role of Numafung, a young Limbu

woman in a village in contemporary gradually diminishing say-arranged film's tacit message fills out. It is so easy for women like Numa to be the when a title comes on describing

> The story is compelling, as is the manner in which the characters are developed, and the backdrop of Nagi village in Panchthar district is spectacular, with magnificent views of the Kumbakarna or Mt Jannu All of this more than makes up for the choppy editing. Director Subba agrees and says, "Technically, we naven't been able to achieve good quality, but I believe in learning by doing. I'm sure in due course we will be able to produce films of excellent quality." Subba already has three feature

> films to his credit. His first. Tarewa, was a telefilm in Limbu language, and his second, Khangri, which was about a Sherpa community, did the international circuit, even winning the Jury Award at the 1997 Graz Film Festival Numafuna

> > being arty, it is as much a well-

researched ethnographic document

of the changing ways and lives of rural Limbu people. It's obvious in the way each member of the family sits in their precise. designated spot during meals, in the scenes of grandmothers weaving on traditional handlooms in the easy, unfettered interaction of young men and women in village markets But Subba is careful not to be prescriptive, or pretend to be

authoritative "My job as a director is not to distinguish between culture and religion, right and wrong. We have done much research for the film and I was only showing what is prevalent in the community at the moment." And so, though some viewers say Subba's characters should have been more "authentic", he insists that central to the change he is concerned with in Numafung is the notion that cultures cannot but mix, and that it is up to individuals to decide how they want to deal with it. The problem savs Subba with a smile, will be clear when this film goes to the masses. "How do we manipulate society's psychology into accepting Numafung? That's a similar challenge." ♦

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filan Fair, Italy (Halls 9/11,10,11,12, 13, 13/11,18,19, 20/1,22,23 ember 30-December 8.2002

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10 - 16 MAY 2002 NEPALI TIMES



Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

Pleasure centres



t this precise moment, you wouldn't want to be in the shoes of this robotic rat with electrodes sticking out of its brain which went through field trials recently to successfully negotiate a maze while being steered by a remote control joystick. As far as we know this is the first time in rodern history that a sentient being has been emploved as an all-terrain weblick.

Scientists at New York's Downstate Medical Centre in Brooklyn, according to an article in this week's issue of the journal Nature, have trained lab rats to make port or starboard turns by tickling their port or starboard whiskers respectively, and then rewarding them if they obey (and I quote) "with a pulse of euphoria in their pleasure centre."

Nature magazine does not divulge which body part of the said mice these pleasure centres are located in, or whether the scientists monitoring the volunteer roborats also treated themselves to pulses of euphoria in their pleasure centres. But this is how it works: strapped on the rat is a tiny knapsack with an antenna for receiving radio signals in the very high frequency range and a small microprocessor that sends

electrical pulses to its brain that gives the rat the illusion that it is having a good time when in actual fact it is getting an acupuncture of

Its cereocuum.

Asked about the ethics of all this poking around, the Brooklyn scientists denied that it was an infringement on the basic rights of rats, and maintained that during the experiments the rats got written guarantees to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Here in Negal, our main goal should be to find the appropriate applications for these rapid strikes in science and technology. By this, I mean we should see if we can't install some of these sophisticated pieces of equipment on our street dops and turn them into traffic cops. Of course, the Hounds of Handigaon will need some training, and we will need to do something about crains Robo Cops being temporarily distracted by the passage through the Singha Durbar intersection of the Municipality's gathage truck.

However, with practice, we are confident that our robotic mongrels will be alter enough to know when southbound traffic is backed up from the statue of King Frithin Narayan Shah the Great all the way across town to the statue of Voice Emperor Narayan Gopal. Then, all it will lake is a short electromagnetic signal on the dog's right whiskers to trigger his motor receptors to lift his right hind leg. Oop, sorry. Worse, electrode. Lef's trivia blue wise here on his left

whisker. Dat, why is be sitting on his but and offering me his left paw? All right, there are still some techniq problems with turning our street dogs into Robo Cops, but as science advances we will lick this problem and can move no to the move ungent task of installing these devices on to the skulls of humans who hold high office. Politicians equipped with electrodes artached to the greed centres of their brains have, in recent field trials, successfully rebuffed offers for "breakfast monor" from two-start.

When the brike offer is made, scientists manning a joystick from a relatively safe distance of 100 yards, send a signal by remote country to the public servant s pleasure centra and transmit him a quick multiple orgasm. Nine out of ten times that this experiment has been ried out in the lab, the official has turned down a hefty bribe. So there we have it, the answer to the problem of graft: replace greed with last. *P







In lot of people thought I was must, 'laugh's Sungested with Thap, remembering the call to
seventeen years ago, when sangeets as we he work of artist Shashikala Tiwari at the Sitabhawan Gallery in Naxal and the October Art Gallery of the Vajra Hotel, she fell in love with it immediately. The two met and talked, and a couple of years later, in 1986, the firendship turned into a partnership when they opened the Siddhartha Art Gallery or Kanticash.

"My father is my inspiration. Wherever he went, he always bought art. He always took me to exhibitions, cultural events, the theatre," explains Sangeeta speaking of daddy, the banker Himalaya Sumshere Rana Since the age of five, she knew she was born into art. At eight, she had already sold her first painting, and at nineteen, she produced her first major work. But then in art school, Sangeeta says she realised that she didn't want to paint all her life. "There was so much going on in the world, outside, and I didn't want to be

And so Sangeeta decided that there had to be a way to combine her passion for the

that Sangeeta is a partner in. She has used her networks in both spheres to help raise funds for earthquake relief and the maternity hospital, bring the Pakistani band Junoon to the capital in March 2001, and organise "protest" shows like the one on the Bamiyan Buddha last year. "Artists can catalyse social change," she says with conviction. The Gallery moved to Baber Mahal Revisited, and has hosted over 150 shows. Exhibitions there are a are a regular fixture on the arts calendar of a town that doesn't have too many cultural outlets. Sangeeta strives to bring more and better shows from all around the world to

Kathmandu, and sometimes even

ventures out like she did last

Janakour aimed at encouraging

month with an exhibition in

local artists. The current

exhibition, entitled, Made in

Janakpur: A Mithila Yatra is a

and the Janakpur Municipality,

collaboration between the gallery

and is a benefit exhibition for the Janakpur Women's Development Centre. Her next project is called Art for Peace, and she says: "Even if you can't change politics, you can contribute as a citizen, always remembering that you are Nepali, first: " \$

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