

# Starting out again in Gorkha

SHRI BHAKTA KHANAL in CENTRAL NEPAL

> to Myagdi has seen a dramatic decrease in Maoist activities in the past four months, and the Royal Nepal Army says this is a direct result of successful undercover work and its infiltration of Maoist ranks. "They have lost many district-level

leaders, their supply lines have been severed. their weapons caches have been captured and they are running out of food," one military officer told us. On a recent trip through Gorkha, Tanahu, Parbat, Baslung and Myagdi, local villagers confirmed that Maoist activities had gone down in the past few months, but that it was too early to say the rebels have been vanquished. Operations in these districts are under command of Brigadier General Prakash Basnet who heads the army Third Brigade based in Pokhara. A year ago, the sight of armed guerrillas

walking in broad daylight was common sight along the Gorkha-Abukhaireni road, and even in the bazar. The Maoist student front had extorted over Rs 4 million in "donations", and 13 schools had been forced to close. Maoists regularly ambushed security patrols. Eight police posts in the district had been abandoned, and police presence was restricted to the district headquarters. Today, security forces are being deployed

again outside district headquarters, and the army says intelligence breakthroughs have undermined Maoist strength and disrupted supply lines for food and explosives. The security forces have already set up 18 outposts-the largest security presence in any

#### HEMLATA RAI

he number of rhinos killed by poachers in the Royal Chitwan National Park has doubled in the past year. Since November. 38 great one-hom rhinos have been killed. Only the carcases or skeletons were found, with skull bones minus the horn (see picture).

Poachers appear to have taken advantage of the Royal Nepal Army's deployment against the Magists to step up killing things for their valuable horns. Government records show that of the 48 rhinos lost in the past year, only eight died natural deaths.

showed us the way."

have surrendered.

those who don't

and photographs of Maoists that the army has

captured so far have come from these districts. The army has used them for propaganda

"If we don't do something the species could be lost within a decade," warns Ravi Sharma Aryal, a Nepali expert on CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. A 2000 census showed that there were 544

rhinos in Chitwan, one of the two viable populations of Asiatic rhinos in the world. As Chitwan got crowded, the government started translocating rhinos to Bardiya two years ago, and 25 have so far made the move. But poachers are active in Bardiya too-four rhinos have been killed there in the past four months, three by poachers. Nepal's efforts to save the rhino is an internation recognised success story. After being hunted and killed nearly to extinction in Chitwan, the rhino population rebounded in 30 years. Besides Chitwan there are now 88 rhinos in Bardiya and eight in Suklaphanta

#### As the military goes undercover, the Maoists are feeling the heat in central Nepal.

district. Schools have started to reopen. An purposes, broadcasting them over Nepal officer in Gorkha told us: "In the beginning Television and releasing them to the press we knew our goals, but didn't know where Aside from inadequate logistics and

to start ... defecting Maoists themselves equipment, the army's main gripe is that the civilian administration has Gorkha has important symbolic value for not been taking advantage of its both sides. It is the seat of the Shah dynasty as successful pacification campaign well as the home district of Maoist leader to move in with development. Baburam Bhattarai who is the head of the The military is itself now engaged rebels' central command. Army sources say in a "hearts-and-minds" drive the district had 178 hardcore guerrillas, 80 under the command of Colonel people's militia and about 400 active Dipak Prasad Bharati, His Barda supporters. This number has been reduced Bahadur Battalion has already by half, they say-some have been killed in spent Rs 1.3 million rupees to encounters, others captured, and the rest repair about 30 schools, organise health clinics, and Documents captured in raids were shown even air-lift the seriously to us, and seem to indicate a falling out sick locals to hospital in

among the comrades themselves. There appear Kathmandu A 50 m Bailey bridge to have been internal party purges against suspected informants, and disciplinary action has been built under the taken against district leaders accused of using Integrated Security and looted jewellery and cash for personal use. A Development Program letter written by Kaushilya Gurung (Comrade Shilpa) who was recently killed in an encounter (ISDP) to link Tanahu and Gorkha districts, although seems to show a serious split among Maoist this was washed away between those who support Baburam and by floods on the Marsyangdi last week In emailed and faxed statements, Maoist The army is also leaders strongly deny the differences, and say it is "reactionary disinformation". Most videos

building four important feeder oldier sits on a ballot box from th roads near Gorkha. Go to

Khinos on the With the army distracted, poaching in Chitwan has double

vious elections while keeping an ey

he valley below

But after November, soldiers were pulled out of conservation duty. The 39 army posts set up to guard the 32 sg km area in Chitwan were reduced to 10 posts. Patrolling

especially at night, was stopped. "Economically and politically influential people are involved in poaching," states Anil Manandhar, at the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Kathmandu. A rhino horn can sell for up to Rs 800,000 per kilo within the country and for more than Rs 2.4 million in the international market. Besides things, tigers are also being killed by poachers in Chitwan, but there is no way to tell how many. Poachers take away every part of the tiger they kill, whereas they are only interested in a rhino's horn. But there is good news: park management in Chitwan has changed tactics and there hasn't been a single rhino poached in the past month. "Poaching is now under control," Chandi Prasad Shrestha at Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation told us. Officials are secretive, but what did the trick seems to be the deployment of the army in villages outside the sanctuary, and a change in park management. In the last five months 52 suspected poachers have been arrested, and three were killed in an armed confrontation.

The bottomline The news is so bad that the prime minister was perspiring as he read the

budget speech at the NPC on 8 July. Kathmandu has always had a problem spending its development hudget and this has got worse with the insurgency. swathe of central Nepal from Gorkha

Rs 3.66 billion-a nearly 35 percent expenses other than million for helicopters. fixed-wing

aircraft, assault rifles, machine guns and 5,000 new enlistments. The ISDP will get Rs 1.35 billion, more than double last year's allocation. The civilian police gets Rs 817 million over its usual expenses and the paramilitary armed police gets Rs 506 million over its personnel costs The price tag for the elections is Rs 1.5 billion, not including indirect costs such as civil service deputation and extra security. Costs for the royal household and palace will triple to Rs 387 million.

In addition to all this, the army has been asking for Rs 17 billion in upgrades over the next three years. There is the danger of a sharp rise in government spending before polls as it front-loads spending. The government is unlikely to get the budget support it is seeking from donors before the elections-they have their own disbursement cycles, and are also wary of the spending frenzy of a



Gem of an Engine, lewel of a Car CIVIC inited, Dhobighat Ring Road, Lalipur, Tel: 549741 Fax: 549742 Email: syakan



#### Donors are now paying nearly our entire development bill. Revenue collection is so dismal, it is barely enough to pay for recurrent expenditure, which will overshoot regular spending this year. Civil service salaries have hit the ceiling, and defence and security expenses are up by

increase from last year. The army will get Rs 2.34 billion for for personnel, including Rs 255

#### EDITORIAL

## Déià vu

s it just us getting a feeling of déjà vu around here? Or do you also get that whiff of pre-1990 Nepal in the air? After 12 years, sycophants are again lurking in the shadows, the same mantra is chanted on the Radio Nepal morning news (even the national budget is crowded out as other rituals are read), there is the sight or daily television news of a familiar retinue stooping in a familiar routine, and national holidays everytime there is a state visit. It's all form and no content, and it feels like we have come a full circle.

Kathmandu can never do things in half-measure: it either goes for a self-serving, free-for-all politics and ruins the country in the process, or it swings to the other extreme and re-invites the debilitating paralysis of partylessness. It would be unfair to compare this bureaucratic vassalage, this knee-ierk kneeling, and feudalistic servitude just to the Panchavat. In fact, the antecedents of our chakari culture go back to the Rana regime and beyond.

Today's Nepalis deserve better than this. Was our evolution towards rule of law pluralism and democracy so flawed that we have to swing back to a feudal Nepal of Percival Langdon? Is our self-esteem so low that we now wait for a second coming?

Nenal is not unique in this nostalnia for strongman rule. Most of the ex-Soviet bloc saw it in the 1990s when the democratic transition was so messy that, in a supreme irony, Stalinists were elected to power in free elections. Closer home, there are parallels in the untidy freedoms of post-Marcos Philippines and in Zia-less Pakistan

The Nepali people are now sovereign, and yet we hanker for a saviour. It is partly cultural-the helief that divine intervention will set things right-and partly a deep-seated public disillu sionment with what commoner politicians have wrought in the past decade

But post-1990 freedoms have made Nepalis more astute and alert, they know why things are in a shambles and exactly who is responsible They know the Maoists are not the messiahs they claim to be, but the people need a sign that their elected representatives can get their act together. Support for elected political leadership and parliamentary parties has never sunk as low as it has today. Even so, the people are not ready to give up

people power. They don't want to abandon the political mechanism of electing local leaders, a process that had finally begun to show results by delivering basic services at the grassroots. True, at the national level, the stench of

political gangrene was getting unbearable, but this is no reason to go back to 1960. The Maoists have reacted to this political failure with a violent attempt to overthrow the parliamentary multi-party system. If we do the same, then how are we different from them? The alternative to demagogues from the left cannot be demagogues from the right. Reform will not come hanging on the coattails of reactionaries, nor can it last without the people's support for long.

And yet, democracy is not so much in danger from those who are openly anti-democratic as it is from those whose sense of self-worth is so low that they are willing to consider that it is dispensable. The continuity and stature of our constitutional monarchy will be best served by the checks and balances of democratic pluralism. We tried strongman rule, it didn't work. Let us not go back there is only darkness there.

FAST IS RED

I was really touched after hardworking, innocent people reading Mohan Mainali's "Fast is being trapped between the security forces and the Maoists. I red" (#101) on your website. Far away from Nepal. I saw the was a devastating indictment of picture of the Arun river, and what we have done to our thought the article was about the country. The people of the east nic beauty of our homeland. are industrious, hardworking, and

But instead, it was about

GOD

Thank you for Daniel Lak's article

"On a mission from God" (#100) I

am so unsuccessful when I try to

explain my viewpoint to people

about religious intolerance, and

Lak has articulated my feelings

exactly. I am a Hindu, grew up in a

Buddhist place in Kathmandu and

studied in a US Christian school.

so I don't know if you could

understand the complexity o

eligious understanding and

transformation I have gone



ow that Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has finalised the country's budget, he must pay attention to the other conditionalities of bilateral and multilat eral donors and lenders. And on top of that particular agenda is getting rid of the deadwood in his cabinet. The wood there is not just dead,

STATE OF THE STATE

The London meet of donors and loaners gave Deuba an unequivocal message: shape up, or ship out. Some important cabinet nar were specifically dropped. It is not difficult to figure out whose names were openly censured but you can tell because they have gone awfully quiet brely

Here is an opportunity that Deuba must not miss. After the London meet, he has a valid reason to drop some of these hot potatoes. A

There are certain political compulsions too that must make Deuba reconsider the size and the composition of his cabinet. Though his status is still technically partyless, the prime minister's party is not yet a hard reality. If Deuba is to further his aim of undermining the Nepali Congress lead by

cabinet colleagues more at his New Baneswor office than in Singha Darbar. The country

Public Works Ministry so that his vicechairman can fully concentrate on his primary

of facing elections Putting Khum Bahdur Khadka as the cretary general of his new political outfit is another shrewd move. Khadka's practical skills are legendary, and he can put them to better use in a set up where his methods are allowed full play. Devendra Rai Kandel would perhaps be a more appropriate person to keep the morale of the security forces high as the inister of state in-charge of the Home Ministry, Kandel is the person who made the otorious remark: "bring along the severed heads of Maoists and take the reward in the

Bijay Gachhedar is waging a lone battle gainst what he perceives as the "Koirala tyranny" in Sunsari. As the deputy secretary eneral of the Deuba party, he has to keep mself free from the open feuds with the secretary at the Water Resources Ministry. In any case, the government can't take any policy decisions at this moment; and Gachhedar's departure from the ministry will not affect the government in any way. has to do himself

With Panchayat-trained journalists at the helms of government-run media, there is no need for a competent person like Java Prakash Gupta at the Ministry of Information and Communication. His talents can definitely be better utilised in countering the campaign of Koirala-led congress. There is no reason why Gupta shouldn't temporarily leave Singha Darbar and make Raibirai his base to further the political aims of his leader.

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Sharat Singh Bhandari's organisational talents are formidable, and could be put to better use for the election campaign in Sindhuli, Dhanusha and Mahottari than in the Ministry of Hearth

Another thing that Deuba must do to strengthen his party is fire his army of backdoor and front-door advisers. They should be asked to go the grassroots and canvass support for their boss. All the advice that Deuba needs he can have from his wife. Similarly, congenital losers at national elections like Pradeep Giri, Prakash Man Singh, Badri Narayan Basnet and Bimalendra Nidhi need to be given tasks more appropri-

ate to their skills. These die-hard dis are liabilities for any political party, and it would do Deuba a world of good if they joined the Koirala Congress Building a political party from a scratch

is no joke. It is more challenging than being in a government that is barred by the election ussion from taking any major decisions. Deuba's side-kicks would therefore be more useful to him in the districts than in Kathmandu. Being in the districts would also

send a strong message to the security forces that the civil politicians are not chicken, and that this is a party that cares for the welfare of the rest of the country and not just Kathmandu These fellows have staved in Singha Darbar for far too long, they badly need to feel the pulse of the people. Shedding the cabinet flab would also please Nepal's donors and loaners.

as being insecure and afraid of being toppled from within, now it is time to lead the pack. After all, he is now the chairperson of a political party that has to face the impending local elections even if the court reinstates the house. The American Embassy has stopped referring to the Deuba-led party as Nepali Congress and started calling it the "prime minister's party" instead. But hanging on to

For far too long, Deuba has come across the coattails of the international cor can only take him this far. The rest Deuba

# COMMENT Human rights, and wrongs

### "I have never seen human life treated with so little dignity."



The ridge-top army base in Khara where the Maoists suffered hundreds of casualties (left). One officer told visiting human rights activitists that the stench of rotting bodies be couldn't wait for the civilian authorities any longer. A pickup full of corpses after the Satbaria raid (right). me so overpowering that they buried them. The

t is clear that the fight against Maoists as not a choice but a compulsion for he government. It is a struggle between mindless violence and the rule of law. But, what emerges from a recent fact-finding mission by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to the midwest is a picture of human rights violations on an nprecedented scale, and local civilian. authorities unable or unwilling to maintain proper records of the dead, or abiding by e process In Khara we met a young boy who had been forced by attacking Maoists to ferry a

NATION

wounded fighter five hours away in the middle of the night. He was sent back without food or rest, with a warning that he would be killed if he talked. Elsewhere we have heard about families who have lost their dear ones in Maoist attacks, but don't even have a place to lodge complaints. In Rukum ordinary people are afraid to talk. They can be mistaken for Maoists by security forces, or killed by rebels who have ordered all the villagers to stay put. A young man from Sindhuli had given up Maoist politics a long time ago. But, fearing for his life, he came to the NHRC in

Kathmandu asking for protection. He was

arrested less than a month later. No one has

site of the battle even a week after the attack. We asked the police chief at A boy from Lamjung also came to Kathmandu in search of information about Ghorahi if he could provide information; he his father who had been arrested about a said he did not know, because the dead month earlier. It took the NHRC several belonged to the paramilitary. letters to the government to find out what The Police Act says that a postmortem had happened. The boy's father had been of all unidentified dead bodies or those killed in "an encounter" a day after his killed in accidents must be carried out, and documentation maintained. Then there are arrest. The family was never told what happened, and the boy travelled all the way international conventions and treaties to Kathmandu to hear of his father's death. which say that every effort has to be made to hand over the dead bodies to relatives. Then there are stories of Maoist atrocities, abductions, kidnappings of family Nothing of the sort is happening. Those members. Many parents come to the who have been shot or fall in battle are NHRC seeking help in finding their children. Everywhere the commission members went on a recent trip to the west, such neglect of human bodies. we heard stories of threats, intimidation and

The NHRC went to Satbaria in Dang, made inquiries at Nepalganj, the nerve centre of the anti-terrorism operations, and travelled to Khara in Rukum, where soldiers repelled a major Maoist attack in May. The government had said at the time that it had ecovered 92 bodies in Satbaria, but very few were accounted for, many had been defaced, and few were in combat fatigues wrote to the CDO, and the CDO to the More worrving was the fact that the Chief District Officer (CDO) had not visited the local police office. We don't know if the

police now have a positive ID of the bodies. But that is not the point. What if we had not informed the authorities in Kathmandu? Would the bodies just have remained there until nothing was left?

close-range gunshots. Army officers the NHRC interviewed are equally appalled by the lack of initiative of the civil administrators. In Khara, an officer told us that the CDO had not visited the scene of the battle, and, unable to live with the stench of rotting bodies, the army had buried them. We asked the CDO in Rukum if that was true. He replied that there was no way for him to get there, and that leaving the headquarters itself was very risky.

teams of volunteers to monitor the humar Government officials elsewhere lament rights situation in conflict zones. At the ver that the first they hear about the day's least, we hope to keep proper records of the encounters is on the Radio Nepal news implementation of national laws and from Kathmandu. The district level security international humanitarian laws as well as committees are non-functional, and this is the international instruments to which reflected in the shoddy manner in which Nepal has obligations. records and insurgency statistics are kept The government has not yet formed a dirty war comes to an end, the people must onitoring agency as is required by Article get instice. 13 of the Terrorism and Disruptive

Activities (Prevention and Control) Act. (Sushil Pvakurel is a member of the The government has also not formed the

National Human Rights Commission.)

When the emergency is over, and this

confused as anybody else ahour

what exactly he is doing to

present violent insurgency especially the exclusion, discrimination, alienation and poverty otherwise similar crises will occu in future even if we manage to win the war against the Maoists. G Rai, UK NO UMBRELLAS Thanks for Andrew Nash's article on the non-resident Nepali community in the US ("At home abroad", #100). However, there

are a few errors. There is no umbrella organisation for Nepali groups in the US and it is inconceivable that any umbrella organisation will be formed in the future. After years of debate on the pros and cons of an umbrella organisation, a coordinating body called the Nepalese Americas Council (NAC) was founded in 1991. Currently, NAC has 17 coordinating body for all of its Nepalese associations including members founded at a national ANA as its members Prahlad D. Pant. convention for all Nepalese

Cincinnati, Ohio

I am a Nepali who has lived in the US for over 25 years and I find it heartening that we are getting more noticed as a group by the media in Nepal. Even if all the facts are not always presented as we would like it, it's still

and achievements KRISHNA SEN Lessons from another emer gency" (#101) by CK Lal is yet another example of how narrow minded and arrogant he is in his writings. He tries to make the was no journalist in the "usua

readers believe that Krishna Sen sense" because he was the editor of the pro-Manist papers which he terms "propaganda sheets". Mr Lal could you take the trouble of giving us a list of papers published Nepal that are not the propaganda sheets of either the government or political parties? You call Krishna Sen a pamphlet eer. What do you think you are?

subtlety reminiscent of rotting garbage, frequently wash over the unfortunate residents of Balkhu Bridge and the southwest suburbs

professor assigned for general will be deeply inhaled by all and guidance, but not take classes To what extent Deuba made use of the world's largest social science library at the LSE is PM Brandt Kathmandu unknown but he was lucky to have been assigned the occasional guidance of Fred Halliday. an Arab scholar of renown. Deuba

is said to have done some home-("Where are you Tulsi Giri?", #101) work on parliamentary democracontains a factual oversight. cies, but since he published nothing at the LSE, one doesn't Bhusal notes Sher Bahadur Deuba's Western-trained credenknow how "western trained" he tials as one of the reasons to was at the end of his stint at LSE. Under the urging of Krishna explain the prime minister's Prasad Bhattarai, the acting behaviour these days. Let's clear this myth once and for all. Sher president of the then-banned Nepali Congress Party, Socialist Bahadur Deuba was never a research fellow" at the Londor International (once led by Willy School of Economics (LSE), He Brandt, with historically close ties didn't "study" at the LSE, neither as to BP Koirala) and aided by covert processing at the British Council. Deuba is said to have been sent off to London in 1988. Bhattarai is said to have wanted to stave off a ssible defection of Deuba to the Panchayat by sending his protégé into exile. Deuba, for his part, ied he ever wanted to defect When the democracy movement began in Nepal, Deuba was still in London where he is said to have lobbied for the movement. His stipend from the Socialist Internaional had long been discontinued, and he was relving on borrowed money from Nepalis, irregular translation work for the BBC Nenali Service, and subsidised lodging at the Natraj Restaurant, ater home of the actress Karishma

Manandhar. Deuba is a simple, humble man whose 30-year struggle for democracy (10 of which were spent in detention) were genuine His democratic credentials until

recently were pucca. But at a

time when he himself is as

Nepal's young democracy, people like Puskar Bhusal should know that by Nepali standards Deuba may be a fine politician. And, sadly, possibly one of the better ones amongst a lousy lot But it would be to everyone's benefit not to overdo his 'western trained' credentials. Deuba was in London on an under-financed holiday, not for any hard academic training. Name provided, by emai



away their skulls. The bridge was 5 km away from the CDO's office. We asked

In Nepalganj we came across four dead bodies under a small bridge. They had any information on the bodies. We came back and wrote to the Cabinet Secretariat asking the government to be more account

around, but very few civilian authorities had able. We understand the secretariat wrote

to the Home Ministry, which we presume

already rotted and wild animals had gnawed

simply left there. I have never seen human life treated with such a lack of dignity, and

an undergraduate nor a postgradu-

ate. He didn't get a degree there

Deuba seems to have registered

called "research fee", allowing him

as a student under a category

In Dang, we were told that some of the bodies of people killed in encounters had case. Are the special courts not being formed because there is a fear that they might free detainces?

In fact, however, army personnel we met don't want to hold on to prisoners. because it means feeding them with their own rations. The government jails are already full, and because there are no court to hear the charges, the detainees crowd existing jails to bursting point. The NHRC, with the help of the British, Danish and Norwegian governments, is now organising

special courts that the law calls for. A person in a very responsible position in government told us that judges were not willing to take up the job. But many district and regional judges told us that this is not the

by SUSHIL PYAKUREL





Deuba's side-kicks would be more useful to him in the districts than in Kathmandu. 

lame-duck partyless prime minister waiting for the decision of the Supreme Court do need three dozen ministers to run the day-today administration of the country. A caretaker ernment has to be manageable to fully follow the directives of the election commission. The smaller the cabinet, the smaller the chances that election codes will be trans-

gressed. There is no conceivable justification for Deuba to carry the millstone of discredited politicos round his neck.

Girija Prasad Koirala, he must institutionalise his political outfit. He needs his senior

came bag

and the multi-party democracy too would benefit by proper functioning of the prime minister's party. To institutionalise Deuba's new political

set up, an old warhorse like Chiraniibi Wagle is an invaluable asset. The prime minister's decision to keep Wagle as his deputy at his party office is a wise one. But he must release Wagle from the responsibility of running the

task of building a new political party capable

## LETTERS

throughout the time and I strongly committed to developing the VDCs with farming and cash believe that many problems in the world around us would be solved crops. They have no interest in active politics, and they don't care only if people were a little who is in power. Even if it is the respectful and tolerant of each Maoists, because they know they other. Understanding comes along will be no different. We have great somewhere in betwee resources areat nature and a Dikshva Adhikari great civilisation why are we determined to ruin everything Khagendra Timsina,

#### FYCI USION by email

It was heartening to read British Charge d'Affaires Andrew Mitchell (#100) emphasise the root cause of current violent insurgency in Nepal. Clare Short rightly said that corruption. exclusion and discrimination must be addressed and tackled. Mr Mitchell seems to agree with her and others with similar beliefs. Unfortunately, apart from your paper, no other media has bothered to even mention these underlying factors. Nepali leaders must act now to deal with the serious underlying causes of

Indiana, USA

welcome. Unfortunately, there are

two serious errors in Andrew Nash's article. ANA is not, has never been, and probably never will be "an umbrella organisation

for the dozens of NRN groups". There are some 20 plus Nepa groups across the US that will challenge this absurd contention ANA was founded as a regional organisation with a somewhat grandiloquent name but its base has been mainly some portion of the US east coast. Nepali groups in the US all belong to an organisation known as NAC (Nenales) Americas Council) which is a

associations in 1991. Nobody

wanted or wants an umbrella organisation with all its implications and so the NAC. ANA joined this body last year. I do not want to rain on ANA's parade, and I commend them for their initiative Sharda Thapa, USA

efforts to justify (albeit indirectly) the killing of Mr Sen in police custody is utterly abhorrent.

RAISE A STINK Your paper is renowned for its investigative and deeply researched news articles which expose the seamy underside of how and who make the decisions that affect resident's lives in Nepal. Now it is time to reveal the secret(s) behind Kathmandu Nagarpalika's latest contribution to the exotic passion-arousing aromas of Kathmandu, Would you please publish the names, addresses, telephone numbers. emails and other vital statistics of those responsible for the creation of "The Essence of the Bagmati" What do you think of your friends whose redolent scents, ever so

working in Gorkhapatra, Rising Nepal and most of the weeklies Do they ever make honest efforts to "separate news from views"? Aren't vour views biased? Your Kamal Nepal, Kathmandu

heard from him since.

demands from the Maoists.

### of Kathmandu. I am sure a deep and penetrating expose of this fine to use the LSE library, and have a example of "service to the public"

result in a flood of tourist cancellation orders because of this truly unique product. DEUBA AT LSE Puskar Rhusal's eloquent niece in his Somehwere In Nepal column

#### 4 NATION

#### AVIDIT ACHARYA

rsenic often gets ignored, associated with out-of-date murder mysteries involving lace and country houses. But there is arsenic in the water in many parts of South Asia, and it could kill yet. Arsenic is an element found in rocks and sediments, can slowly poison humans when dissolved in drinking water. In the past drinking water in Bangladesh and West Bengal has been found to be contaminated with arsenic, but results from recent studies in Nepal's tarai are cause for concern.

Some 17 000 tube wells have so far been studied, and more than five percent of them have had arsenic concentrations over 50 parts per billion (ppb), the amount Nepal has set as its national guideline. Furthermore more than 25 percent are above 10 ppb, which is the guideline value set by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Kim Rud



HERE AND THERE

If the water you drink comes from a tube well, you might want to have it tested for arsenic. When a we

> Adamsen and Anil Pokhrel. number of deaths are only working at Nepal Water for reduced by 50 percent, if the Health (NEWAH), say that their national guideline value is set to organisation's mathematical 50 ppb. models, with the government's 50 ppb as the maximum acceptable arsenic level, translate to 20, 000-40,000 deaths annually after 10 to 20 years of time. According to the mathematical model the

health problems such as cancer of the kidneys, liver, lungs, stomach The arsenic problem hence becomes comparable to the problem of bacterial infection. It differs in that the bacterial problem is one that affects weaker eople more seriously, while whody could die from arsenic poisoning. Furthermore the problem of arsenic is a long-term effect whereas the bacterial problem is instant. According to the latest statistics 30000 pass away from the bacteriological

problem.

Poisoned wells

There are two kinds of arseni poisoning: acute and chronic. Acute poisoning occurs in industrial locations, mines, and factories. In countries with lower wells. At the current stage it is not possible to adopt a guideline

and other internal organs which may appear only after 10 to 30 years, depending on the general health and diet of a person and the amount of arsenic uptake. The problem, say Adamsen and Pokhrel, is that studying arsenic contamination is very difficult. "We are studying very small amounts-a few parts pe billion—and the equipment necessary for that is expensive. Apart from this we don't have enough financial resources on a national level to mitigate this burning problem which can later explode into serious effects for the tarai population of Nepal. Until now the testing is limited only to agency supported wells and does not account for the innumerable private wells. The mitigation plan for the nation should include these private

arsenic contamination in drinking

water. Chronic poisoning leads to

levels of industrialisation such as Nepal, on the other hand, chronic poisoning is more common. symptoms appear as darkening of skin colour and reddening of the eves and other initial effects These symptoms are visible epending upon the level of value in line to the WHO 12 - 18 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES

NATION

standard. The policy states that forums to interact and identify this guideline value will be solutions around quality water revisited every year. These are supply including the arsenic part of the reasons the governdilemma The tests to detect arsenic

ment set the national guideline value higher than the WHO contamination in ground water standard. What this does, of are carried out either using field course, is ignore the risk bracket test kits or analysed at laboratobetween 10 and 50 ppb. ries in Kathmandu. Most of the Arsenic research in Nepal sector organisations are using began slowly in 1999 when the field test kits as they are cheaper HMG's Department of Water and the results are obtained Supply and Sanitation first began instantly at the site. This also its surveying of tarai districts with improves the necessary communi the support of the WHO. Since cation to the community in order then, the Nepal Red Cross to lower the arsenic uptake by the Society has taken the lead with people in the remote tarai tests of more than ten thousand villages. Initially these kits were water samples. The National imported, but now a Nepali NGO named ENPHO, has also Arsenic Steering Committee. which includes NGOs, internastarted making the kits locally. tional and government organisa-The laboratory tests are relatively expensive and the water samples tions, was formed in 2001 to co have to be sent to Kathmandu ordinate all arsenic research in Nepal, and the NGO Informal There are an unknown Committee also began to support number of tube wells in Nepal-

probably more than 300,000-of the Steering Committee. Pokhrel says that NEWAH is in the which more than 17.000 samples process of building regional have been tested. Approximately



two-thirds of these tests have to the WHO-recommended 10 taken place in labs, so while ppb. " In the longer run we don't statistical information was finally want people consuming arsenic in available, very little was done to the 10 ppb to 50 ppb bracket to inform communities around highbe ignored," say Adamsen and risk wells that their water was Pokhrel. contaminated. Government officials explain Though researchers admit their side of the problem. "We

that field testing is far less precise want to make sure that all the than tests conducted in the lab, highly contaminated wells are they still support it. But researchclosed before we bring the ers might have to rethink their standard down to ten," says testing strategy if the government can be persuaded by the other Nirmal Tandukar of the Department of Water Supply and members of the Steering Commit-Sanitation. His colleague at the tee to change the guideline value DWSS, Amar Neku, adds, "Right

ing with Bullet Lands and a britle of horr # Bi, KH - Yes for adults, ing with Bullet Lands and britle of ush deals # Bi, 200 - Yes for oblighter.

EASY TIMES 5 4 3 3 3 3

resources to bring the standard out which process contributes to down to ten. The private sector arsenic contamination most." might have enough money to That may not be happening fast work with this standard, but we enough. Going by the data from the studies being conducted don't. Our priority is to close all the seriously affected wells before currently, the death toll is we proceed. Of course, we too increasing, and will continue to would like to ultimately bring do so at a much faster rate than down the standard to 10 ppb but the concentration of arsenic. we need to take things slowly. Currently, an estimated 500,000 the problem is to stop using the people consume water with water for drinking and cooking arsenic concentrations of over 50 purposes in any well that is found ppb, and 26 million drink and to be contaminated and for cook with water that has over 10 example start harvesting rainwate ppb of arsenic.

now we don't have enough

for use instead. It is expensive to The roots of the problem go back to the 1980's—the Decade investigate contamination, and the costs to do so will only of International Water Supply increase if the government and Sanitation. As traditionally decides to reduce the guideline used dug-wells were easily value to 10 ppb. An added microbiologically polluted, difficulty is that testing only one UNICEF, WHO and a host of well in a locality is not an other international organisations accurate measure of the arsenic advised that tube wells be drilled contamination or lack thereof in to provide safer drinking water. neighbouring wells. Therefore all Arsenic wasn't on anyone's mind wells must be measured. Despite until large amounts were detected the difficulties, research teams are in drinking water in Bangladesh trying to survey all of Nepal's and West Bengal in 1986, and tube wells. Of the 17 tarai arsenic research began in those districts studied so far. oarts of the region. Over a decade Nawalparasi, Rautahat, Bara, ater, in 1997, when some 90 Kailali and Parsa have the highest ercent of tube wells in Banglaincidence of groundwater desh had been tested and 20 contaminated with arsenic nercent of these closed due to GOLF MEMBERSHIP TRANSFER high levels of arsenic contamination, water experts in Nepal decided it was time to look into Foreign Diplomat the quality of water supply here. returning to home, wishe to transfer Gokarna Golf

It is difficult to explain the whys, wheres and hows of arsenie Club Membership to any contamination in Nepal, and there are plenty of theories to choose from Scientist and water expert Dipak Gyawali thinks delving into the causes can wait. "No one knows which theory is

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#### Novel protest

Residents around the Pashupatinath, one of the seven areas in Kathmandu that make the Valley a World Heritage Site, have reason to protest. Irate locals, including priests, are angry about the decision of the Pashunatinath Area Development Trust (PADT) to demolish the settlements around the temple core on the grounds that they are not built according to construction regulations. An independent authority, the PADT issued a public notice on 29 April detailing its decision to acquire 183 houses and temples in the Pashupati core area. Anory residents said at a recent press conference that 119 of those properties belong to families who have been living there for generations and are actively involved in the traditional rituals and festivals, and the PADT decision would put more that 40 religious festivals and jatras in jeopardy. Locals, including a well-know sadhu, are suing the PADT and asking the government to intervene. Some have even threatened to convert to Christianity

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#### Sen update

There are still conflicting statements on the alleged disappearance and death in police custody of Krishna Sen, the pro-Maoist editor of Janadisha, who was reported to have been arrested on 20 May. The weekly Jana Astha announced that he had died under torture, and this was confirmed by the international organisation Reporters Without Borders (RSF). A Home Ministry statement said that Sen was never arrested by the police and dismissed as "baseless" Sen's reported deat n custody, but acknowledged that he was on its most wanted list. "This latest statement is as revolting as it is ridiculous," maintains Robert Ménard, secretary-general of RSF.

Sen's case has triggered off an outcry among human rights and journalists groups here too. On 4 July the Federation of Nepalese Journalists announced the launch of a two-week long protest campaign demanding an official inquiry into cases of journalists who have been killed or tortured in prison, the release of journalists still in custody and the lifting of all press censorship. A number of vernacular weeklies left their editorials blank on Tuesday as part of the campaign.

### Hot air

Balloon Sunrise Nepal says that it hasn't been ordered to shut down by the palace or anyone else, contrary to a report that appeared in Janastha weekly recently. "April to October is off-season. We only operate flights after October." says Ratan Singh Pal an official with Balloon Sunrise, the only hot air balloon company operational in Nepal. "Early this year, when we flew over the palace area, there was an inquiry. But we were never ordered to shut down." The company recently had to send a clarification to a vernacular paper that published a news item about a balloon landing on a roof. "I don't recall us ever doing that", says a bemused Pal.





Living in the moment

ashington DC - This is truly an imperial city, the capital of the global superpower. Except that most of the architecture the global superpower Except that most of the architecture that seems designed to cow down the visitor and impress with its soaring, imperious lines is from the 19<sup>th</sup> century or the first half of the 20th. Yet Washington hums with power, even in the blazing heat of their first Independence Day since the 11 September, 2001

The Mall, a slash of green running from the Houses of Congress to the Potomac River, is, as ever, the setting for planned displays of patriotic exuberance. From the US Capitol, the lone remaining bit of topography here, a sound stage will boom out the musical backdrop to the fireworks ignited at the feet of Abraham Lincoln, or at least outside his neo-classical and oddly moving memorial at the far end of the Mall. The plan is for Americans and visitors to line the parks and streets between the two extremes, taking in both the sound and vision of the Fourth of July, 2002.

The normally open spaces at the centre of the city are blotched with security checkpoints and thousands of men and women in uniform are funnelling us through gaps in hastily erected fences, searching handbags, rucksacks, coolers full of ice and water, even cigarette packets. "Ya can't be too sure," I heard one Howard County Maryland sheriff's deputy tell a tourist from Mexico, who nods his head in vigorous assent. Even this morning, the newspapers were full of vaguely worded yet dire warnings of more terror attacks, and the need for vigilance on America's national day. The mood is odd, light and celebratory yet somehow watchful. People glance about them and talk in hushed tones in the shade.

No one, I repeat, no one, makes jokes about terrorism, attacks on the US, anything like that. This is definitely something different about comedy-obsessed America. I go to a vendor's stall to buy a hat. some protection for my follicularly challenged scalp that's now

Past wars and national obsessions such as comedy are being sidelined in today's USA.



reddening in the blazing sun. My choices are stark, and all almost militant in their patriotism. There's one saying "US Marines", another vith "FBI", the letter embroidered on a camouflage motif. The New York police and fire departments are honoured as well, still powerfully venerated here for their heroics last September. Various other police forces have their logos on baseball hats, along with myriad US government agencies concerned with security. I choose "CIA" on plain navy blue in hopes that somehow choosing the symbol of the agency that got it most wrong is a fashion statement. Later I realise that I also got it

The most powerful of Washington's memorials and monuments, the

low black wall inscribed with the names of slain veterans of Vietnam, is for once not thronged with emotional families and surviving spouses and children. It's always been the most moving moment, for ne, of a visit here. The sight of a teenager who probably never knew his father or in rare cases, mother, pointing the name out to his friends, finding it among 58,000 victims of what surely still be one of the world's more pointless wars, never fails to make me weepy, confirmed in my opposition to militarism. You often find yourself in conversation with a Vietnam veteran here, and usually he feels much the same. But today-in the unseasonable heat and the security scare-the crowds are sparse. Just a few people run their fingers over the black marble lists of the fallen, just a few tears sizzle on the pavement below. That morning's New York Times brings dire warnings of another war and I can't help but think about the consequences of a military invasion of Iraq. Will that one require another ontroversial monument to its fallen? I hope we never find out. Later, night brings a little relief and the din and delight of the

fireworks display. Nothing too fancy, just fountains of light and colour etched against the eastern sky. A lone gunman-mad, apparently, and able in today's America to purchase weapons easily-has been the only incident of violence. Commentators seem quick-too quick-to tell us that it's not related to al Qaeda or terrorism, despite the fact that the attacker was Egyptian and his victims Jewish Americans standing at the check-in counter for the Israeli airline El Al.

It's been a peculiar day and I wonder what lies in store for America, and for all of us, between now and the next Fourth of



we extend our heartiest

felicitations.

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Addictive disorder e don't know what the e don't know what the chairman of last month's morting in London actual Maybe donors should fund nolitical narties here, and NATO deploy soldiers. meeting in London actually ad in mind while calling for "the flow from a nation's geographical, strongest possible political leadership' physical, historical, and political ent Nepal from becoming a umstances, such as colonial error ailed state ("Nepal must not be allowed and Cold War policy mistakes." o become a failed state", #100). A Rotherg adds. (Back to the Air and democratic version of Jang Bahadur Water Theory of Politics, eh?) Lack of evertheless seems to have become the development could trigger hostility and violence that could spill over to most sought-after politician in the country. This obsession with the other countries, which believe they ymoron obscures Nepal's primary have the right to act in self-defence. ailment: it's addiction to a brand of Call it "nation building", "humanitar ian intervention", "defensive imperialolitics it can't afford. Multiparty elections are hugely ism", the fact remains that national ensive and activists are getting sovereignty is shrinking-and fasterussier. There are too many variable orer countries only wads of money can control. The Nepal must begin the party/faction in power benefits from incumbency. Political envy in rival process of breaking the cycle of poor governance and amps breeds unhealthy comr corruption by overhaul-At the macro-economic level, election ing election-campaign entail quid pro quos. financing. Public Although state failure is not a new awareness against corrupohenomenon, it has become much tion cannot work in a nore relevant to the post-9/11 vocation that puts a nternational discourse. "In less monetary value on interconnected eras [in the past], state weakness could be isolated...," Robert I achievement. Barring corrupt politicians from

SOMEWHERE IN NEPAL

Rotherg, director of the Programme on

Intrastate Conflict at Harvard Universi-ty's John F Kennedy School of

Government, writes in the July/August

themselves and their neighbors but also

to peoples around the globe. Preventing re-election from the

2002 issue of Foreign Affairs. "Now,

these states pose dangers not only to

tates from failing, and resuscitating

noral imperatives." But lack of homogeneity poses a

oroblem. "The nature of state failur

aries from place to place, sometimes

dramatically. Failure and weakness can

those that do fail, are thus strategic and

out of the question in a country with rampant illiteracy. Parties and candidates can't be expected to make a full disclosure of donors and expenditure unless they're reasonably sure everybody else is being honest. We must mobilise external resources. Donor governments should be encouraged to become more generous in the cause of saving democracy. Since they already afluence our politics through the tiniest of micro-credit projects, they might as well come more active in directly funding political parties The Bretton

Woods institutions fund that would support parties by calculating the percentage of popular otes they received in the last election weighted with their voting record on legislation facilitating

contesting elections would raise nasty

questions in a societ

susceptible to political

witchhunts. Requiring

members of the House

Representatives to seek

same constituency

could infring

their freedoms of movement and adjustment programmes. Electoral law choice. Running background checks should be amended to ease the flow of on candidates runs the risk of direct foreign political investment infuriating our increasingly vocal civil This way, donor governments, libertarians. Term limits can't be agencies and consortiums could effective without the cooperation of ovide matching grants to candidates those affected. Setting minimum education qualification for candidates is whose campaign pledges conform to their respective philosophies. The nation's single-minded focu

should be on holding free and fair elections in November. (Even if the eme Court reinstated the Lower House, it would only be postponing our moment of truth by three years at the most ) Election manifestos have always looked alike and we know what the star campaigners are going to say, anyway. It is important to ensure the the people and their leaders feel the results are genuine

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We should consider ways of drawing international assistance for the mechanics and logistics of elections. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisa tion, torn by an identity crisis sino the fall of the Berlin Wall, may find a could design a basket useful role here. After 9/11, NATO headquarters in Brussels invoked for the first time in the organisation's history the mutual self-defence article of its charter, whereby an attack on any member is deemed an attack on all. Once Nepal's political viability is established as an integral part of the global war on terror, our embassy in the Belgian capital can go into the details of deploying NATO soldiers and supplies across the country during each election cycle. Even if we don't ge a modern-day version of the wily 199 century autocrat, we might be able to breathe easier

# "They are terrorists..."

structural

the Pokhara area. the Maoists are still active in Lamjung where they haven't stopped collecting donations from hops around Sundarbazar. In Tanahu, Maoist extortion and threats have diminished after the army moved in which was enough to sap the life of what little of the rebel presence there was. Bandipur's Japanese-built Notre Dame school re-opened this week and is being run by the

"It is now possible to return to villages provided there is a security presence," says DDC member Satish Chandra Neupane, who was himself abducted by Maoists three ears ago. Schools have begun reopening in and around Damauli, and the district administration is distributing voter ID cards for the November elections.

The Chandika Armed Police Force stationed in Parbat district is in charge of security in the Dhaulagiri Zone, although the army has also set up a garrison there after the v Maoists attacked the Modi Khola hydroelectric plant in April, and the rebels are said to be active in one of ts two election constituencies made up of 28 VDCs. "The soldiers use the main roads and the Maoists control the shortcuts," one villager told us.

Other villagers told us the Maoists are losing support, and that one of the reasons is their desecration of temples and forced beef-eating. Last year they killed a bull near the village school in Barjanga in Myagdi, and forced villagers to eat the meat. It is clear from speaking to locals that the support there is for the Maoists is born largely out of fear.

In Baglung, Maoists have destroyed all but one of the 59 VDC's buildings. As in Myagdi, there are no phone connections left anywhere, except in the district headquar ters. Besides telecom towers, Maoists have also destroyed four health posts and a government food godown with 50 quintals of rice. The rebels have not disrupted construction work on the Baglung-Bhurtibang (105km) road but they have burnt down four community buildings built with

ADB support. The security forces have imposed quantitative restrictions on food supplies to 16 VDCs in the district's western regions, where two VDCs are said to be under strong Maoist influence. Each family is allowed to take in only 35kg of rice each week, but there are reports that the Maoists are taking away even that. The western regions of

Baglung are facing a serious food shortage. Local Rastriva Jana Morcha leader Amar Bahadur Thapa says his party has fundamental differences with the sists. "We used to be together, but having seen their destructive activities up close, we have no hesitation in calling them terrorists," he tells us. Local leaders of amentary parties had organised resistance to Maoist in various Baglung villages, but the rebels responded with death threats and forced them all to move to the district headquarters. They've been there since October last year. Raelung CDÓ Prem Naravan Sharma savs he has

proof that the Maoists are forcing members of other parties nto their cause, but adds: "We are in a position to take rapid action in any part of the district the moment we get formation of Maoist activity. In Myagdi, the Maoist hardcore strength is said to be

only about 50. But the rebels use threats, intimidation and arson attacks to spread panic and magnify their presence. They have burnt down all but one of the 39 VDC buildings, Schools have begun reopening, but last month the Maoists attacked a private school and the small hydro plant at Tatopani. All this has affected tourism, eve though the northern districts of Mustang and Manang are free of Maoist activity.

The army's Kali Prasad Battalion (engineering) h begun work on the Galeswor-Mustang-Jomsom and the Maldhunga-Beni-Darbang roads. Says one Nepali Congress worker: "The army's presence has made life easier, but we don't know what will happen during the elections and after that.



#### SPONSORED SECTION

#### BIZ NEW

#### Warning signs

The economy is doing even worse than the annual Economic Survey for 2001/02 suggests. Central bank statistics covering 10-months of the fiscal year (up to mid-May) show that exports have tumbled, government spending has dropped, especially on development, and that service receipts continue to decline compared with the same period a year ago. Domestic credit is slow and the private sector is hardly borrowing. Government spending is slow and very little money going into development activities—regular spending was Rs 36.5 billion in mid-May, while development spending decreased by 17 percent to Rs 13.3 billion. Growth in revenue collection has almost disappeared at about one percent, given that it grew by about 21 percent in the same period last year.

Exports have declined by about 12 percent to Rs 41 billion, reflecting largely the slump in overseas exports Export to third countries dropped by almost 38 percent to Rs 15.67 billion, from about Rs 25 billion in the same period last year. The Balance of Payments statistics based on data until March reported a major decline in receipts from services (including tourism). Even though transfer receipts (remittances) continued to grow and imports remained low, the central bank reported a current account deficit of Rs 10 billion, almost double that in the same period last year. The foreign exchange holdings increased by about 2 percent to Rs 104.5 billion in mid-May, but the share of convertible currencies has continued to erode (from about 78 percent last year to about 73 percent in May 2002).

#### **Real trim**

Dabur. Nepal has launched its entire range of Real natural juices in a new 200 ml Trim & Tall" packs. The Real nectar variants of Dabur juices contain 25-30 percent pulp and the Real juices, up to 50 percent, which the company says is higher than similar products, which have about 10 percent pulp. Dabur's preservative- and artificial flavouring-free juices are mainly exported to India, but the 200 ml packs are aimed at Nepali consumers.

#### More banks in trouble

PriceWaterHouseCooper is to begin a study of the failing financial health of two more public financial institutions starting the new fiscal year, beginning mid-July. The two problem institutions are the Agricultural Develop ment Bank (ADB/N) Nepal and the Nepal Industrial Development Corporation (NIDC). The study is to be supported by an Asian Development Bank grant. The study shall take about 10 months and will formalise what many already know-the poor state of the two banking institutions due to years of meddling by bureaucrats and politicians. Any reforms needed would be supported by the ADB. Meanwhile, Deloitte Touche Tomahatsu, which was to have taken over management of the Rastriya Banijya Bank under the financial reforms project, has indicated that it is backing out. The central bank says that it does not have a formal word yet, but is exploring possible legal action for breach of contract

#### More flights to Doha

Nepal and Qatar have revised their Air Services Agreement to increase the number of Qatar Airlines flights to Nepal from seven to 11 every week. The 8 July agreement also permits up to four cargo flights each week. The additions to the ASA include Fifth Freedom rights for onward connections to Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and Bandrasen Begavan (Brunei), while a third destination is to be decided shortly. It also allows stopovers in Muscat (Ornan), Karachi (Pakistan) and a third stop, which will be announced later.

#### Divestment

The Nepal Rastra Bank has given the Bank of Ceylon the green light to sell its stock in the Nepal Bank of Ceylon (NBC). The Sri Lankan bank has been allowed to sell its 35 percent holding to nine of its promoter partners, who will reportedly buy at Rs 196 per unit. The 10 percent rule, which sets a ceiling on the amount of stock a single oter can own, applies here too. The NBC's paid-up capital was Rs 350 million, and its authorised capital Rs 500 million, A recent Nepal Rastra Bank rule says this figure must be Rs 1 billion in seven years. The bank had planned to raise Rs 150 million from the market but has not yet made a public offer.

INTERVIEW

# "People investing here are loyal to Nepal..." Vepali Times: So, do you miss the "French connection"?

Prithvi Pande: It is too early to tell. We as investors have taken the 50 percent shares belonging to Nepal Indosuez/Credit Agricole, the rest still belongs to Nepalis. Our major clients, international companies, INGOs, embassies, the UN institutions have told me they are very happy that the bank came to the so-called "Pande Group". We've only lost one big account, and even that was a domestic one. We have to leave that behind us. We wanted to come into operation by

about March, but eventually it was delayed by four months. So there's no residual bad blood?

No, there cannot be. We are business people, and everybody is entitled to try and make a bid for anything. But once that is passed, what is the point having bad blood with anyone?

#### You have your own investment bank, now what?

We are hoping that we can get into investment banking activity, and this only happen after capital is increased. We hope to get there in a year or so if the central bank allows us to. We are gearing up for that. We feel that if we can get into investment banking, it would contribute to the profits

#### How will this be different from a commercial bank?

Investment banking will have long-term lending, which normally commer-cial banks are not supposed to do. They are supposed to borrow and lend short. We will be going into medium- and long-term lending. We also hope to underwrite (share) issues, go into acquisitions, mergers, etc and get prokerage. Because the economy is so small we have to do both cor cial and investment banking. We hope also to do equity investments, if here is a big project coming up we can act as promoters

#### The Rastra Bank says it is going to be very strict about regulating commercial banks, how are going to cope with that?

The Rastra Bank is a sleeping giant that has woken up. They have been activated now with a more dynamic governor, and of course the World Bank and IMF are waving the stick. But the central bank sometimes tends to go overboard. If someone has been involved in insider lending, why have they not been punished? The tendency is to punish everybody not just the ones involved in impropriety. Recently they said you cannot borrow if you are promoters with over one percent stock. This is not correct. In a liberalised economy anybody should have the right to borrow anywhere. What they could have said is: if an investor horrows and does not nay then we will take action. I think commercial banks are being over-regulated

controlled. A budget is as useless a inges in the tax structure at any given oint in time, that from the revenue document as an election manifesto if i is not properly monitored and

rspective, the budget is pretty material. And then there is the matter of how the tax collection offices function-the reality there has

little to do with the intents and purposes of the budget. On the expenditure side we have been stepping gingerly into the transition from the Ninth to the Tenth Five Year Plan, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework and the three ear rolling budgetary system. But more important than these are the Country Assistance Strategies and Plans of various multi-lateral and bi-lateral

rcentage changes and the pre-historic

lections on the basis of in-your wildest-dreams wishlists such as election manifestoes, the budget, too as come to resemble one of those which budgets are monitored and

country survives on foreign remit tances, but does not even legitimise them, let alone acknowledge them as: major source of revenue. Until all of these elements are together worth more than the total outlay announced in the budget, what purpose can that ument possibly serve?

controls



and flexibility.

ed to reflect realism, practicalit

In any case, the budget has no

country receives is not factored into the

official accounting systems, and most

businesses have perfected the art of

slipping out of the tax net. This

relation to Nepal's major economi

activities. Most of the aid that this

25

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Another budget, another radical suggestion from the Beed.

hen Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba started reading out the proposed dget in a live broadcast, your Beed asked three questions. First, when Nepal is reeling under a financial crisi and there is no Finance Minister, can the prime minister do justice to this portfolio? Second, what is the legitimacy of a budget presented by a mment whose fate hangs in a court of law? Finally, how do we judge the authenticity of statements made by a person who isn't even sure what, if any, party he legally belongs to?

no mistake, interesting or not, worth

the waste of breath or not, the budge

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1

ECONOMIC SENSE

And yet, we went through the motions, as we always do. There were comments in the media, discussions at the Reporter's Club, reactions from people belonging to the Nepal's self-proclaimed Intellectual Brigade. Make



vtale boons. Successive government and parties in the opposition have not made any effort to ensure the efficacy of the budgets or change the process by

Okay, maybe there is no point blaming the government or the opposition. But what about people like us? Why don't we, the real stakeholders in this country, stand up and ask for credible plans, and realistic policies? Taxpavers keep paving taxe nd donors keep funding Nepa despite all these problems with planning, accountability and respons . Stopping either of these is clearly not a solution. Perhaps the real

basic change that we need is doing away with budgetary systems and

will remain an issue in all the print media this week, this month and, if we are especially unlucky, this quarter before it is foreotten. As this Beed never tires of repeating: the budget is merely another opportunity for fun and games in our already festivityagencies that operate in Nepal. There is filled calendar. o way to ensure that these dovetail Over the years the budget has well with the annual budget of the country and truly lost all importance-it is Our budget philosophy remains simply another drag of a document restricted to pondering the elusive that needs to be ploddingly produced and droningly read out, and disinter-estedly commented upon. This year distinction between regular and development expenditure. In a country where parties fight

the promulgation of the new Income Tax Act on April Fools Day made it amply clear that, if it had its way, the mment would rather deal with fiscal and economic matters in a meal fashion, rather than wait in a disciplined fashion for the Finance Bill Over the years it has become so common for the government to levy surcharges and duties, and make



Isn't the size of the pie shrinking with 16 banks already here.. The pie is definitely shrinking, trade has come down, hotels are being subsidised by the central bank. This bank is small and the capital is high This bank after the rights issue will have capital of Rs 520 million. Despit having a big name, this bank was undemerforming, mainly because of the country risk in Nepal for which they had to have provisioning at head office How can you grow bigger?

Being a Nepali bank we have more access to investment opportunities. We don't want to keep a low profile. But this is clearly not the right time to rush into things. We have to find a balance, we need to increase the size of the bank and hope we can grow in the next two years by at least 40-50 percent.

#### What investment opportunities are there, given that this country is awash in cash but has no investors?

am not looking at it from that perspective. My perspective is that this bank has capital, the rest of the banks are already up to their necks in lending. The new NRB rules and requirements are stringent. Capital adequacy has to be 10 percent this coming year. That is the opportunity for us, our capital adequacy is nearly 14-15 percent. So some of the good clients of other banks have to find new lenders. And that is our opportunity

What needs to change, in the economy and in government policy? We are concerned with the economy, which is clearly related to the political scenario in two ways: one is the behaviour of the politicians themselves and the other is the Maoist insurgency. I'm not in a position to say if the gency will be settled in the three years, I think it may take longer than that. But the political side can be settled very quickly, if there is the will.

#### There is a silver lining?

Let's say the insurgency goes on but is isolated in certain regions, then I think tourism will rebound. I feel that 50 percent of the problems we face are of our own making, the nation needs to progress. But I also feel the business community needs to get over petty interests and see the broade erests of the country. We want all facilities from government, but don't want to pay taxes. We expect other country's taxpayers to take care of us. It's a Catch-22: you need to attract investment, which need tax breaks We need investment to generate employment. The bottom line is to

aunch a massive employment generation campaign. I am investing in Nepal now, because this is my country. It is still a reasonable profession to get into, and you are helping your country out. People who are investing ere believe in Nepal and are loyal to the country



Bank. Nepali Times asked him what

sees the country's economy headed.

his plans are, and which way he

Despite successes in Palpa, Gorkha, Baglung and in

#### 12 - 18 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES



### **TSERING CHODEN**

er since Tibet wa opened to the world, it has never been the same again. Neither has the world. This is the roof of the world, with breathaking scenery that is almost celestial. If there is a part of you that seeks adventure and places so exotic that they need more

than words to be described, then this is the place for you-the landscape, the pilgrims, the magnificent architecture of the monasteries. And above all, the sky. The sky. More than most journeys, this is one that benefits from preparation

Improvising along the way is fine, of course, but in Tibet some prior knowledge makes your travels a lot more fruitful and eniovable. A recent six-month stay in Tibet taught me some things well worth knowing, and you need it. it may save you some time and hassle to know them, too.

Where to begin The Chinese Embassy in Kathmandu is open for visa applications Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 10AM-11.30 AM. The screening process is not too difficult, and you can come back for your visa. If you simply can't wait, the embassy will give you a visa the same day, or three lays later, for express processing. Du to the short timeframe just an hour and a half, getting to the embassy earl nmended, and it is also good to know that groups of four and

come under long, time-wasting scrutiny. So do yourself a favour and get yourself a travel agent. You're

Spécialiste du Tibet

L'agence francophone de Katmandou, dont l'un des

responsables est un tibétologue français. Spécialiste du

Tibet, Mandala Trekking organise de mai à Octobre des

excursions en groupes de 8 à 9 jours avec guide francophone

au Tibet (dates et prix sur demande) et des programmes à la

carte en ieep. Accueil sympa et service efficace.

listed, and everybody's happy. above have a greater chance of getting a visa. The visa can cost anywhere Hit the road from Rs 2,200 to \$56, depending on It's a thrill to cut through vast your nationality, whether you're expanses of the country on wide, oper roads. Sure, there's dust, but hat, applying in a group, and how fast

mask and shades solve that problem. Someone to watch over you The landscape is never static. Moving The idea of travelling independently across this pastoral plateau in their might sound tempting in comparison time-honoured pace are nomads, with the prospect of a travel agency mastiffs, herds of yak and sheep watching your every move. But dotting the hills, horses grazing, birds things work a little differently in the Tibet Autonomous Region, and it is definitely easier to negotiate all those checkposts with an insider, instead of having to answer a million questions and having your discman, books, camcorder, dictaphone, visiting card photographs of family-everything-

flying a feet above the ground, wild antelopes and hares scurrying right past you, rolling hills, and crazy cloud ormations in blue skies. (That's why thangka clouds look like that.) You don't even have to take the same route twice. If it's Zhangmou, Tingri, Lhatse, Shigatse and Tsethang on you way to Lhasa, on your way it could be Tsethang, across Khamba La to Yamdo

Mandala Trekking Katmandou

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Clockwise from left: Yading hangrila of Tibet, Kagun Mona undo Yutso (The Turquoise La v. in Fast Tiber, an Barkhor on Mentsekhang Road, Not There are a few public toilets, but not

Yamdo Yutso (the Turpoise Lake). Gyantse and Shigatse. And if you'n lucky you could just happen upon a breathtaking panoramic view of the Himalaya, including Mt Everest fron the north. Travelling by road also solves the problem of altitude sickness and provides many, many photo-ops.

Traces of Nepal Newari traders from Kathmandu have long left their second home, but you n still see traces of history. The Ramoche temple in Lhasa is probably the oldest reminder of the link between Nepal and Tibet. The idol of the 10-year-old Sakyamuni here was a gift from Bhrikuti, the Newari sitting there incess, to Songsten Gompo. The Thokhang's architecture also has some Nature calls

just daal bhaat, here you'll get aloo nearly enough, and even residences dum, aloo sandeko, kalo daal and especially in the Kiray area of old well, you get the idea. There is even a Lhasa, have significantly poor toilet facilities. And as you move out of Nepali consulate not far from the Lhasa, irrigating the arid plateau is y centre. Lhasa locals also have a taste for about your only option. Nepali chia. Maybe it isn't as strong as Shopping, anyone? we're used to it here but it is wonderfu u will weep when you see the price to be able to drink the familiar sweet, on electronic goods, because you can't

milky tea in dingy restaurants. The tea possibly take back as much as you'd is served in little vellow glasses, so it like. VCDs, DVDs are literally given always needs several cups to really get into it. Waitresses come around, fill up away. And then there's great music to be had for about 10 Yuan (just about an empty glass and collect the money that's already placed on the table. They Rs 100) per CD. From Velvet Underground to the Cranberries to th do this constantly, as long as you're

soundtrack to The Godfather. Just make sure you keep some money for the customs checkpost at Kodari and some energy to argue with the security forces on the Nepali side at numerous



call (01) 543333-7 and just give your phone number and address.

Nepali Times subscribers get a 20 percent discount for their copy

Gateway to Tibet Nepal cashes in as

the entry-point for pilgrims and tourists to Tibet.

route despite the presence of Maoists-for a price. Travellers who recently

made the round-trip journey to Kailash via Simikot told us that the

Maoists have a sliding scale for the "donations" required to pass through the area, ranging from \$100 per head

or foreigners, to Rs 7,000 for

t close to Kailash as quickly as

While Indian pilgrims are keen to

ssible, other tourists, apart from the

assical seven-day Lhasa trip, have cling tours, cultural tours to choos

from. Among the most popular are the 10 day expedition to the north base

camp of Mt Everest, 10 day trans

Tsedang-Sangkagutok-Gyantse Zhangmou. With the area east of Lhasa

Himalava Tibet tour 12 day I basa

opening up, the tours are gaining in

is possible to travel virtually

anywhere in Tibet now.

popularity. Not much is restricted and

Indian

easer foreign visitors entering the once closed region, Kathmandu has been a popul entry point to the plateau. And as tourism to Nepal contin to suffer, it is the Tibet traffic that is keeping many Kathmandu hotels in ness this monsoon season. "Tibet has its own particular

er since Tibet opened up

to tourists in late 1984, resulting in an influx of

charm, and it complements a Nepal holiday very well," says Peter Chu, of Amiko Travel Chu is one of the pioneer operator of tours to Tibet, and began offering overland trips to Tibet nearly 20 years ago. Things have changed in Tibet since that time. Infrastructure has improved, logistics are better managed. But the asphalt road to the border at Khasa was definitely better, then," he says. The Arniko Highway today is blocked in many places by nasty landslides and these days it takes up to five hours to reach Khasa, a journey that used to take three hours Of course, you can bypass the

RAMYATA I IMRU

fees on some peaks and providing nsport for climbers right back till landslides by taking the twice-a-week one-hour flight to Lhasa from Kodari at the Nepal-Tibet border. With tourist arrivals to Nepal Kathmandu. At \$255 one-way flight it down by 40 percent, tourists and is steep, but it saves time. Many people climbers going to Tibet via Nepal have fly one way. Opinion is divided over been helping local tour operators keep afloat. "The numbers may have whether it is better to fly there and drive back, or drive there and fly back. decreased but they are still coming Flying straight into Lhasa at 3,600 m says Chu whose company handled can give people problems with about 500 tourists last year, compared altitude whereas driving first can to the 200 tourists it has handled so create acclimatisation problems far this year. because the highway first crosses the The total number of tourists

ous for people with problems with the

in Nepal for China Tibet Mountain

Association Nepal visited the CTMA

eering Association. In April, repre

sentatives of the Travel Agents

Thingri Pass at 4,300 m and (which includes moutaineers climbing Shigatse at 3,900 before descending Himalayan peaks on the border from to the Tsang Po plain. the Chinese side) going to Tibet from "The high passes make it danger Nepal last year was approximately



15,000, and so far this year 7,000 altitude," says Ang Tshering Sherpa of Asian Trekking, which is also the agent have done so. Tour operators expect a 5 percent drop in Tibet traffic via lepal this year. As a result, China South West, which operates the Lhasa connection has reduced flights from three a week to two this season. to talk about the possibility of reducing However, to offset the drop, there

The flooding of the market with has been a spurt in Indian tourists to Tibet, most of whom are bound for cheap tours has led to cost cutting Mansarovar and Mr. Kailash "That's a phenomenon also seen in Nepal. and has been hurting the travel major emerging market which needs to agencies in Nepal. Despite an increase in volumes, they say the be tapped specially in times when the numbers of third country arrivals are decreasing," says Ang Tshering profit margin is getting less. Sherpa. Truckloads of devout Nepal may be 20 or 30 years ahead of Tibet in terms of tourism Buddhists have also made their way to Kailashfor the Sakhedawa festival development, and many Nepali which is held every 12 years. mpanies still provide the expertise The alternative route is for and logistics required to run tours and

ilgrims to fly to Nepalgunj and suntaineering expeditions in Tibet. ikot, and walk to Hilsa on the But as China builds up it own Neral-Tibet border. From the border tourism notential this could soor it is a four-hour drive to Mansarovar. change. There is talk of Nepali and another four hours to the base of climbing support teams being replaced Mt Kailash People continue to take this



HE KAILASH ESTIVAL

Since early May, there have been crowds of pilgrims around Mt Kailash circumambulating the holy mountai is believed that if you circle the mountain in the year of the Iron Horse, it is equivalent to circling the mountain 13 times so you can do the inner kora," says Manod K Shrestha, who recently returned from the area.

Mt Kailash is considered the supreme pilgrim's destina tion for Tibetan Buddhism, Hindus and Tibetan followers of the Bon-po religion, and this year, there was an unbroken human circle moving around its base. Located in the far west of the Tibetan plateau, 1,600 km from Lhasa and about 1,000 km from Zhangmou, Mt Kailash is believed to be a manifestation of Dachok, a tantric god and Lake Mansorovar is supposed to be the manifestation of the god's consort. Hindus believe it to be the abode of Lord Shiva.

7.2 million people visit nepalnews.com every year.



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#### The good fight

CANBERRA - For the past week, 70-year old Canadian farmer Percy Schmeiser has been warning farmers in Australia's grain growing districts Schneiser has been warmig names in Australia's grain growing distincts about the risks of genetically engineered crops. Schneiser is a reluctant crusader against genetic engineering and the corporate graint, Monsanto. "I got involved with this and I can assure you it is not by choice—it has been hard on my family—mhey are so big and powerful", he said in Adelaide this week. In August 1998, Monsanto sued Schmeiser for growing 1,030 acres of

canola containing genetically modified and patented plants that are resistant to the herbicide Monsanto manufactured, Roundup, without a icence agreement. Schmeiser argued that he had planted his fields with seeds saved from his previous year's crop, which must have been contaminated by pollen or seed from his neighbours who planted genetically modified (GM) crops. He argued also that he did not gain any benefit from the patented gene. (IPS)

#### Food fight

Europe's parliament has passed stringent new rules for genetically modified food (GMO), raising American objections and allegations of protectionism. The current transatlantic dispute is over the "Codex Alimentarius" (global food standards set by the WHO and the UN FAO). the EU regulation on labelling and tracing genetically modified organisms, and the application of WTO rules. In Europe and beyond, GMOs have become emblematic of the powerful economic fears that globalisation inspires. In France, Britain, and Germany, farmers and ecologists jointly oppose, and sometimes sabotage, trials of GM crops, Americans, including farmers, are more accustomed to paving for innovative technologies and products-a disposition reflected in a recent US Supreme Court decision that extended patents to plants. In Europe. agriculture and intellectual property are more often at odds. In contrast to the US, information on GMOs in Europe emphasises

risk rather than benefits (in particular, reduced use of pesticides and insecticides). For example, national advisory hodies in the LIK, the Netherlands, and France recently insisted on additional regulatory measures for GMOs intended to prevent adverse side effects-for example, allergic reactions-on consumers' health. Americans for their part accuse the EU of practicing bio-trade protectionism. (Project Syndicate)

### Live and let live?

Washington – First it was the pledge of allegiance, now it is the turn of the death penalty to b declared unconstitutional in the United States.



otherwise would eventually be able to prove their innocence. It follows that implementation of the Federal Death Penalty Act .... deprives innocent people of a significant opportunity to prove their innocence and thereby violates . . . due process. During his tenure as Governor of Texas, US President George W Bush set a record for the maximum number of execution of prisoners sentenced to the death penalty

#### Radioactive generators go missing

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) investigators failed to locate two highly radioactive thermoelectric generators during an extensive earch in generations during an extensive search in remote areas of western Georgia. The generators, which weigh one ton each, contain a similar amount of the radioactive element strontium-90 that was released during the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. The missing generators underscore the continued vulnerability of 'orphaned' radioactive sources in many parts of the former Soviet Union. Mark Gwozdecky an IAEA spokesman, confirmed that strontium-90 is an element that can be used in a so-called dirty bomb, which could be used by terrorists to contaminate a sizable area

The two-week-long IAEA mission, which concluded 24 June, sought to recover eight reactors. Six were found. However, unofficial information indicates there may be as many as six other such generators unaccounted for, according to Sergei Kakushadze, the head of Georgia's Nuclear and Radiation Safety Service. (Eurasianet.org)



alk is growing of a change i US defence doctrine to allow pre-emptive strikes on states that harbour weapons of mass destruction. Europe doesn't like it, and people connect it with America's oft-stated desire to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. Since the Gulf War. Iraq has been a source of friction among the western permanent members of the UN Security Council By the end of 1999 divergence was complete: the US and Britain were employing their air pow to enforce the no-fly zones while France joined Russia and China in abstaining on resolution 1284. As this UK-sponsored resolution was meant to

bring the Iraq issue back to the rity Council after the withdrawal of the UN weapons inspectors and subsequent American air strikes of December 1998, hope for progress on

OPINION

indication of uncertainty

between the economy's potential and its actual

performance. In these terms, the American economy's

performance is likely to remain dismal. Increases in

potential growth rate is now somewhere between 3.5-4

percent annually. (There have been changes in the way

we correct for price changes, so that what we measure

today as 4 percent actually represents what we used to

3 percent in a \$10 trillion economy means a loss of

definition. The shortfall, in turn, implies rising

output of \$300 billion—an enormous amount by any

unemployment. Given the huge gap, the US will have

to grow in excess of its long run potential in order to

get back to utilising its resources fully. Even with the surprisingly strong growth numbers for the first quarter of the year, most forecasters see growth over

2002 as a whole falling short of its long run potential, and by a significant amount, implying that unemploy-

There is a simple interpretation of what has been

mbined an inventory downturn with an investment

appening to the US economy. The recession of 2001

ment will rise.

Even when America grows at 0.5 percent, a gap of

measure as a substantially smaller number.)

measured productivity mean that the economy's

Slow going

hither the US economy? Every piece of good news suggesting that America's recession is about to end is followed by bad news suggesting

this ambiguity: it is neither lowering nor raising interest rates. Instead, it maintains a "neutral" stance. The meanderings of the stock market are a similar

Much of the discussion of the US economy is of little help, for it is focused

on the wrong question: when did the recession start and end? Recessions typically

are defined by whether GDP has *fallen*. But what is of real concern is the gap

otherwise. The Federal Reserve Board's current monetary policy reflects

The case of Saddam For Europe, it is crucial to come to an

Iraq in the Security Council was scant. This rapidly changed after 11 September On 14 May 2002 the Security Council gave the tottering sanctions regime a new lease on life b unanimously adopting a simplified screening procedure. Even Iraq showed signs of being prepared to consider a possible return of the UN weapons inspectors. But most Europeans take it for granted that the US will attack Iraq, and that this act of unilateralism, in the wake of all the other irritants such as the ABM Treaty, the Kyoto Agreement, the stee tariffs and the International Criminal Court, will have a devastating effect or

transatlantic relations. Now everyone understands that the Iraqi government's improved attitude is caused by the Bush administration's sabre-rattling, but no one can tell whether this is a prelude

Don't bet on a quick recovery of the American economy.

understanding with the US on Iraq. to an inevitable war or a stratagem to with a much stronger Iran, also a make Iraq cooperate with UN weapons member of the axis of evil but with inspectors. The US cannot remove this nuclear ambitions plus fundamentaluncertainty without robbing the sabreism. Saddam may already possess a rattling of its beneficial effect. Given weapon of mass destruction but has this ambiguity, there remains time for been deterred from using it. Once he Europe to engage the US in a serious is attacked by the US, he may use it against Israel, which will retaliate

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Inducing Iraq to readmit the UN

controllable. European governmen

weapons inspectors and make sure they

But the debate could go the other

conclude that it cannot afford that. If

change, Europe should not opt out.

by PETER VAN WALSU

discussion of the options for dealing with Saddam. The common aim should be to remove the threat posed by a dictator with so well-documented can do their job won't entirely remove the Iraqi threat, but it will make it a predilection for weapons of mass destruction. The options vary from resumed inspections to 'regime would then breathe a sigh of relief. change'. There are arguments which nake the choice far less clear-cut than way. Saddam will cooperate with UN it may seem, several being advanced inspectors only as long as the American even within the Bush administration. threat remains, and the US may Europe can constructively participate in such discussion President Bush then opts for regime ovided if it first clears the way by:

 Indignation seems strongest among those who haven't read the Then, many Europeans will argue that they cannot condone military action without a Security Council mandate. American arguments, Europe doesn't increase its influence by berating the But they already did, twice. They condoned or even supported US for acting in its national interest. American air strikes against Baghdad 2 Showing some understanding in December 1998, and supported for the view of some in the Bush administration that the US should not or even participated in NATO's air strikes against the Federal Republic be bogged down by a continent that is of Yugoslavia in March 1999. Some soft, decadent and moralising, Many Americans remember how on two will say that was under the Clinton occasions in the former Yugoslavia administration, but if Europe conveys the impression that its friendship with America depends on Europe was helpless until American warplanes showed up. 3 Making clear that Europe and who the US president is, it is likely the US are on the same side, not only to freeze the transatlantic relationship in the war on terror generally but also for years. Hardly a rational policy in dealing with Saddam. The for a continent in profound transi-

demonstrations that will rock tion. (Project Syndicate) European cities when Iraq is attacked must be counteracted in advance. (Peter van Walsum represented It isn't difficult to overthrow the Netherlands on the UN Saddam, but it is impossible to Security Council in 1999 and predict who or what will take his place. Iraq may even disintegrate, leaving us

considerable capacity overhang—such as fibre optic lines that remain dark, having yet to see any light pass through them. Merely lowering interest rates did not, and

The good news—and the bad—is that the pace of technological change in these sectors is sufficiently fast that much of the equipment may become obsolete

well before it is worn out, or even used, enabling new investment to start faster

tiveness and strength.

olact Sundicate

than it otherwise would. Meanwhile, the US canno

expect much relief from exports, given the global

conomic slowdown, or from consumer spending.

the economy but consumption has almost miracu-

A high level of indebtedness now afflicts US

ouseholds. This sharp deterioration in the US fiscal

position means that long-term interest rates have fallen

conomic insecurity, and may further weaken consumi

tion Record levels of military expenditures are the only

major source of expansion, and while such expenditures

may be necessary and do stimulate the economy in the short run, they do not enhance its long-term competi-

(Joseph E Stiglitz is professor of economics

and finance at Columbia University, winner

of the 2001 Nobel Prize in Economics, and

author of Globalization and its Discontents

little, even as short-term interest rates reached record

lows. Rising unemployment adds to a sense of

and thus there is little scope for a rebound.

Typically, a rebound in consumption helps reinvigorate

lously, sustained the economy as investment has fallen

vill not, lead firms to invest more in these sectors.

2000, and was chairman of the Iraq sanctions committee.) by JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ



ACIA

strongmen who have ruled it for the past 40 years. One radio broadcast last vn the world ove week described the Burmese governas a tolerant nation, draws the ment, which renamed the cou line when barbs are thrown at Myanmar some years ago, as "fickle minded" and "two-faced". An earlier its monarchy, as Burma's government-run press has been doing of late For the last two weeks, the Thai military has been aiming verbal fire at the Burmese for insulting the monarchy, a serious no-no in Thai country's independence in 1948. officialdom. The military used the 220 radio stations and two televisions stations it owns to counter the critical articles in the New Light of Myanmar, a paper published in Burma echoing the views of Rangoon's military rulers

The military programmes talked about the questionable reputation and Poer Saturday character of Burma, particularly the

# Lese majeste

Thailand can put up with a lot from its neighbours, but not jibes at its monarchy. ..... sights on a Burmese woman who has

dominated this tiff. Ma Tin Win. She has written articles on and off since June in the New Light of Myanmar attacking a king Thais respect, King Narensuan the Great, who ruled the country in the late 1500s from the then Thai capital, Ayutthaya. Thai history savs King Narensuan liberated the historic city from Burmese occupation "The Burmese have gone beyond the limit." says Veera Prateenchaikul, editor of the Bangkok Post. "The monarchy is a very sensitive issue. The former kings are revered by the Thais '

Thailand's army chief, General Suravud Chulanont, echoes this view "We must hit back King Narensuan the Great is the centre of our faith and courage," he was quoted as having said. Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Defence Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh have supported the military's verbal counter-attack as a gitimate response to the writings of Ma Tin Win By last weekend, the press was reporting that Ma Tin Win who has a doctorate in historical edagogy from a Russian university. had been "blacklisted as persona non

grata and barred from the country" y Chavalit. Zero tolerance is in keeping with Thai law, which upholds the law of lese majeste to protect the ruling monarch from any critical comments Farly this year two international newsmagazines ran into trouble for publishing accounts interpreted as disrespecting the reigning monarch, King Bhumibol Adulvadei (in picture). The journalists of one magazine tendered a letter of apology saying that they held the monarchy "in the highest esteem". The editions of both publications where the

confidence vote Friday will test calls for the reform of traditional, porkperceived disrespectful articles appeared did not go to the stands or subscribers.

Thailand's current guarrel with Burma evolved out of a dispute in late May, when Burma accused the Thais of firing military rounds into its territory during a military evercise along the border the two countries share. Rangoon ordered local media to remove all references to "Thais" and "Thailand" in stories and replace it with "Yodaya", a term derived from Ayutthaya and one Burmese officials use when makinderogatory references to Thailand. Articles have appeared in the New

Light of Myanmarheadlined Yodaya wants to grab other's territory free" and "In Yodaya sycophants prosper". Burma has been down this road before. "It is a way of diverting attention or instigating anti-Thai

sentiments to serve its own rpose," says Teddy Buri, who heads a group of Burmese parlia mentarians living in exile. "Whatever is written has military sanctio particularly political articles, since there is no press freedom in Burma," he adds. "These sentimer don't reflect the view of Burmese people." The Burmese governmen

has often used history to hector the Thais, given the long wars of distrust, enmity and conflict between the two, explains Matt Copeland, a South-east Asia expert at Mahidol University here. But thi time Burma stepped on a sensitive issue, Copeland says. "The militar had to respond. It sees itself as the defender of the monarchy and the nation " (IPS)

barrel politics in the country. Yasuo Tanaka, governor of Nagano prefecture in northern Japan, faces the ire of the members of its assembly after his controversial decision last week to stop the construct tion of two dams in the area. Local media says the odds are that Tanaka would be ousted by the 60-member assembly, 48 of whose members support the no-confidence motion. A two-thirds vote of the assembly would result in the passage of the motion. At the same time, Tanaka, who has two more years in his term, continues to command 52.5 percent approval ratings in the prefecture. He also has popular appeal across Japan for speaking his mind against economic practices such as rampant construction and funds that aren't ear-marked specifically, that he defines as the root of the country's economic and social breakdown. (IPS)

#### Big business gets big farms

No dams in Japan

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan's already marginalised small farmers will be hurt all the more by the government's latest effort to attract foreign investment into the country, say rights activists here. According to several NGOs. Islamahad's enactment last month of a law that removes the ceiling on land holdings as well as the lifting of import duties on agriculture machin-

TOKYO - The fate of a popular Japanese politician in a crucial no-

erv and equipment practically sounded a death knell for the country's small farmers. Under the old dispensation, at least thousands of landless peasants were able to own land at last while landowners were discouraged from accumulating too much



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because of an imposed ceiling of 40 hectares for irrigated land and 80 hectares for unirrigated land. On 20 June, however, the federal Cabinet lifted that ceiling while approving a Corporate Agriculture Farming (CAF) package that it said was aimed at luring foreign investors (IPS)

#### HIV in India

WASHINGTON - The Indian government's official policies recognise the importance of reaching out to female prostitutes and men who have sex with other men in its battle against HIV/AIDS, but such efforts are undermined by police persecution of fellow-prostitutes and gay men who provide information and condoms to the two high-risk groups, according to a report released Tuesday by Human Rights Watch called Epidemic of Abuse. The document was issued to coincide with this week's XIV International AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain.

"Undermining prevention among high-risk people is a sure way to speed along the spread of AIDS to the general population." said Joanne Csete, director of the HRW's HIV/AIDS programme and the report's author. In Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, and Tamil Nadu the disease has already spread beyond high-risk groups into the general population, according to the report. The report calls for greater government commitment to ensuring that police do not abuse or harass HIV/AIDS workers and delete from its criminal code offences dating from 19th century imperial rule that criminalise sex between men. Officially, India has four million HIV-positive people, the second

highest national total after South Africa, although the official infection rate stands at just below one percent of the adult population But most experts believe that the actual number is significantly higher; some estimate it is more than double the official figure. (IPS)



bountiful, with a pegetarian pariety, The Irlendlies! bar between Tibel and Timbuclee, Live band on Irideval



oung political party with Islamic credentials and many young, welleducated supporters, is being closely watched here. The Justice Party is one of several Islamic groups and parties that support calls to amend the 1945 Constitution to apply Islamic Shariah law in the world's most populous Muslim country, despite opposition from major parties. Such calls are a new phenomenon, not seen during the three decades of Suharto's rule.

"Our main aim based on Islamic teachings is to establish a justice and welfare nation blessed by god," said 42-year-old Hidayat Nur Wahid, second the party's director, an economics graduate from Britain. "You can say we have vertical relations to god and horizontal relations to the people." After entering politics in 1998, the party rose swiftly in the House of Representatives, gaining older, secular parties in the country. It gained seven seats in the House the first time it ran in the election, and soon became party number five in Jakarta.

Leaders of major parties, including the National Awakening Party of former President Abdurrahman Wahid, who counts as his power base the Muslim organisation Nahdatul Ulama and its 35 million members, have frowned on the Justice Party's moves. Wahid has said that Article 29 of the Constitution, which guarantees respect for the supreme being, was a "joint agreement" of Indonesia's founding fathers, who wanted people to be free to pursue different beliefs. Parties like President Megawati Sukarnoputri's Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle,

downturn. The first is now over: the second-the result of over-investment in high technology and telecommunications, the sectors that were so important in the boom of the late 90s-may last considerably longer. There remains a

in BANGKOK

hailand, kno

PRANGTIP DAORUENG in JAKARTA sia sees itself as a politically secular country, but the emergence of a

president of Partai Keadilan or Justice Party. "The intention to serve, which is the main policy of our party, is the worship of god," explained Dr Zulkieflimansvah. seats in a relatively short period of time despite competition from the bigger and

Since its birth in 1945. Indonesia has positioned itself as a secular state with a modern legal system that gave social space for Islam, the religion of the najority of its 220 million people. Nationalism under founding president Sukarno's military regime ignored Islam as a political force, emphasising instead state-controlled national unity, and seeing Islamic groups and their elite as a threat. Islamic groups—even the biggest mass-based ones like Nahdlatul Ulama—have never played a significant role in parliamentary politics, and many Islamic leaders have long advocated a secular state. Even

after Suharto's downfall in May 1988, most Muslim voters still chose secular parties. Indonesia has seen fundamentalist groups such as the Laskar lihad and Laskar Mujahiddin emerge since 1998, but though people viewed them as disturbing signs of extremism, they were considered insignificant in the long-term political picture.

Indonesia's secular politics is being

the former ruling party Golkar, and leading politician Amien Rais' National

Mandate Party, based on the second largest Muslim group Muhammadiyah,

challenged by Islamic groups,

are against amending the charter.

The Justice Party, Muslim factions in the House and other Islamic group want Article 29 of the constitution, which stipulates that "The State is based on one Supreme God principle," to be followed by "It is obliged to perform Islamic Shariah (law)." Says Hidayat, also a theologian: "In our constitution the practice of religion is free. So Islamic law is not against the constitu-tion." He added that Islamic law had been practised before the Dutch colonial period. "Shariah can be applied to Muslims in the country; those of other religions are free to practice their beliefs. Sceptics say that the party may have a moderate face but its real policies on religion remain unclear. Still others say that there is no need for constitutional change "The state cannot regulate how many units a person should perform within a prayer and many other things related to religious service." said Nahdatul Ulama Central Executive Board member Masdar Mas'udi.

There are no surveys to indicate support for the Justice Party, but Hidayat aid it has had a 500 percent increase in party members, which he calls 'cadres", since the last election. Party officials say it has 300,000 core nembers, most from the younger, well-educated middle class. The seeds of the Justice Party lie in Islamic groups active on campuses since before Suharto's fall. Úlil Abshar-Abdalla, an Islamic scholar from the nonovernment Freedom Institute, explains: "During the New Order (Suharto

era), many university students turned to religious activities as an alternative to the ban on political activities," he said.



"If they do not stop or take onsibility the defence ministra will order the army to take offensive measures," Major General Palangkooi Klaharn, deputy defence ministry spokesman, was quoted by the English-language daily Bangkok Thai officials have focused their

# 10 WORLD

#### THIS PAGE CONTAINS MATERIAL SELECTED FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

Too long in prison

Dhankuta resident Padma Maya

Gurung was released from prisor

last week after spending six extra

carelessness of the justice depart

of those years with her in prison

ment. Her daughter also spent thre

In 1990 (2048), Padma Maya

Gurung was raped while on her way

back home after collecting fodder in

the forest. She became pregnant as

result of the rape. A few days after

he baby was born, she killed it by

urying it. The court in Dhankuta

entenced Gurung to life imprison-

nent but the Biratnagar Court of

Appeals overturned the decision and

entenced Gurung to ten years of

Three years later in 1993 the

upreme Court sentenced Gurung

five years of imprisonment

showing the reasons that she was

Gurung should have been free by

papers from the Supreme Court

reaching the Dhankuta and

spent six extra years in prison.

Kathmandu has exposed the

A human rights group in

injustice suffered by Padma Mava

courts and has demanded that she

guilty be punished. Padma Maya.

any sector so far. Sindhunath

Pyakurel, president of the Nepal

Bar Association, says Padma Maya

had to spend six extra years in jail

because of the failure of Supreme

Court judges and the judicial syster

o follow-up on whether judgement

have been implemented. "There has

to be an investigation and the guilts

must be punished," he said. The

joint bench of justices Uday Raj

Neupane decided Padma Mava's

At a recent function organised

by the Manav Adhikar Tatha Shant

Samaj, lawyer Tikaram Bhattarai

Court of Appeals was to be blamed

jails and monitor whether inmate

member Indira Rana says that it i

not unusual for inmates to spend

a few extra months in prison even

after the term of their sentence,

but that six years was an excep-

Secretary of the Judicial Counc

Kashi Raj Dahal has acknowledged

the flaws in this case. He says that

the delay in the judicial system is

due to the traditional processes

followed by the courts. There are

who delay the implementation of

provisions for punishing those

a judgement. Human rights

ensure that Padma Maya is

she endured in prison.

Contradictions

activists have warned that they

will organise demonstrations to

compensated by the state for the

six extra years and mental torture

Harihar Birahi in *Bimarsha*, 2 July

The Nepali Congess statute was not

present party division. There is no

int expressing differences after the

contested by anyone before the

सम्बद्धकविश

tional occurrence.

'It is their duty to inspect the

have served their term and are

entitled to be freed," he said.

Human Rights Commission

said that the chief justice at the

Upadhyaya and Kedar Bahadur

case. Both have since retired.

who is illiterate, has not appealed t

ceive compensation, and that the

owing to the carelessness of the

1995. But there was a delay in the

Biratnagar courts, and Padma Maya

ompelled to kill the baby.

According to the judgement.

prisonment.

years behind bars due to the

යාලිවිශ්

Kantipur, 7 July

with her

# Hold all elections

ew with Krishna Prasad Sankota, president of the Federation of DDCs, in Chalobal June 3

#### The terms of local body officials ends in Asar [the current Nenali month1. The government has also announced dates for general elections. How best do you think the local governments can operate in this scenario?

According to the Local Governance Act, the terms of local bodies can be extended for a year in case of unusual circumstances such as natural disasters or economic indiscipline.... I feel that the term of the local bodies should be extended in keeping with this legal provision. In normal circumstances, local representatives are elected for a term of five years. Although five years have passed, the government is making excuses that it cannot hold local elections. On the other hand, the government has dissolved parliament and has announced the date for general elections. How can it say local elections cannot be held on the grounds of insecurity and unusual circumstances, and then propose that general elections be held? We feel that the dates for local elections should be announced immediately, so both local elections and parliamentary elections can be held

#### On what grounds do you say that both elections should be held on the same day? Is there a precedent for this in other countries?

It happens in many countries around the world. Local and general elections take place on the same day. We could do the same. By holding both elections simultaneously, we'd save on administrative and economic costs, and have a handle on security. Also, this election would enable those people from all parties to go to every ward who believe in this constitution but have been unable to go to the villages. It will facilitate political movement and activity at the local level. It will help make democracy more effective at the local level.

#### Have you presented this alternative before the government?

We have. We have set clearly before the government the thoughts of the Federation of District Development Committees. We have net with Prime Minister Deuba. He said that he would ackend our term in office. But we hard him saying on Negal Television, while attending said program, that he would not extend the local representatives' terms. It doesn't bode well for the country when a person in his respectable position keeps changing his line of thought. It leads to instability and weakens the democratic process. All democratic forces have to challenge such autocratic actions

#### The government says that it won't extend the term of local representatives; you say that it should. Is there an alternative?

I feel that the alternative to democracy is autocracy. For those who believe in democracy, there can be no alternative. A sovereign people exercise their rights through the representatives they elect. There has been an attempt to capture power by nominating individuals, party workers, and enlisting people, and not through associations of people's representatives. This trend will continue despite criticism. There is absolutely no alternative to democracy.

#### Has the government discussed the unusual current circumstances with locally elected representatives and the Federation of DDCs? It has not, yet. The government should take the correct path. In a democracy you solve crises through talks

debate. We're prepared to talk. The local bodies play an important role in institutionalising and strengthening democracy and bringing about social change. In fact, it is the local bodies that have been effectively carrying out work and make the presence of the state felt. If it weren't for the municipalities, the VDCs, and the DDCs, the people wouldn't experience the rule of the state. If at this point the government removes the locally elected representatives, the majority of the people will be alienated

#### Maybe the government decided not to hold local elections because it is unable to ...

If you can't hold one election, you can't hold any election. The same electorate votes at the same polling centres, the process is the same. It's laughable to say that in the case of the local elections they cannot, but for parliamentary elections, they can. If the government can guarantee security during parliamentary elections why can't they guarantee it during local elections? The government's stand is ridiculous, wrong.

#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

None of us Nepali journalists engage solely in journalism. Therefore, it is always controversy how the Nepali press should react if a journalist should carry out an activity in a non-journalistic capacity. For instance, it should be more clear whether an editor is arrested for writing an editorial or for playing another role

-Yubarai Ghimire, Editor of Kantipur and The Kathmandu Post in Iana Aastha on 3 July



"The importance of our office has increased after the Maoists bombed it." Signs - PM's Residence - Deuba Congress Party - Baluwatar

Nepal Samacharpatra, 7 July

#### 12 - 18. II II Y 2002 NEPALI TIMES

party has split. It you look at the

party constitution, you will see that Prime Minister Sher Bahadur

Deuba was not even a member of

held the 'general convention').

expelled by the party, on 26 May

He had not challenged the legality

central committee of the party. In

disciplinary committee by writing to

Girija Prasad Koirala, acknowledging

But even before the time for a

review to begin had elapsed (35

submitted), on 16-17 June, Deuba

called a meeting of party workers

for "party unity", and declared it a

reneral convention also announce

ing his unanimous election as new

president of the party. President of

the party of which he was not even

Election Commission is expected

to accept the meeting as a general

convention and Sher Bahadur

Deuba, and not Girija Prasad

chaos! The sky will fall!

Koirala, as president of the NC!

Otherwise we are told there will b

Now note another date: 22

May. That evening, Prime Minister

Deuba submitted his recommenda-

tion for the dissolution of parlia-

ment, and declared fresh elections

to His Majesty. The king approved

the recommendation the same

evening. Such a decision by the

king becomes effective immedi-

other words the House of Repre-

sentatives ceased to exist and the

status of MPs and parliamentary

parties became invalid. All MPs,

except the Speaker of the House,

became former MPs. By his own

decision, the prime minister also

ended his membership in parlia-

ment. The day he was expelled by

the party, Deuba was also not the

"leader of the parliamentary party"

against a cadre who had vowed to

abide by the party constitution and

processes, not against the leader of

Deuba claims to have convened the

the parliamentary party. Now

meeting by virtue of being the

and that was the basis for the

decisions that followed.

104 districts

Bimarsha, 5 July

leader of the parliamentary party,

How many districts does Nepal

have? This question has become

presidents of the Nepal Students

issued a statement relating to the

split in the Nepali Congress. Nepal

Union (NSU) from 60 districts

nay have 75 districts, but we

104 presidents of the NSU.

Immediately after a statement

presidents issued a statement

Girija Prasad Koirala.

8 July

saying that 44 NSU presidents

supported Deuba, 60 other NSU

saying that they were siding with

For royal attention

. The respected and well-known

singer Narayan Gopal was perhaps

not decorated for being what he is

best known as—an artist. He was

also the general manager of the

कान्तिपर

Yubaraj Ghimire in Kantipur,

already have such statements from

relevant after 4 July, when

सामाहिकासिताः

ately, unless specified otherwise. In

a general member! Now the

fact, on 9 June he had sought a

review of the decision of the

him as president of the party.

days after the application is

because he had already been

of the expulsion or that of the

disciplinary committee or the

the party on 16-19 June (when he



Cultural Corporation, All selfrespecting artists think it disgraceful seek favours of the Home Ministry for being awarded. As long

as the culture of neglect in the distribution of awards remains the nation cannot look up to the recipients with respect. The king has to begin reforming the process because the awards and decorations are awarded on his behalf, and because the queen is the custodian

of all national awards. Another reform that needs to happen is more relevant now, on the eve the king's state visit to China The Panchavati tradition of declaring a holiday on the day the His Majesty begins and ends a state visit abroad is still in vogue. It is time to rethink the rationale and relevance of this tradition. Such a tradition, which directly affects productivity, cannot perhaps be found in any other country of the world. How relevant is it to think that the institution of monarchy can be respected by stopping productive activities, shutting down administrative, educational and other general activities? Is not the continuity of such a tradition equivalent to the waste of "man-daws" or "man hours" during a general strike There may not be a direct relationship between the decora tions and public holidays. But that does not stop anyone from initiating a disciplined, professional and constructive culture. Because these two traditions are associated with the institution of monarchy no other institution but the monarchy can initiate reform

#### Suicide bomber because the party had taken action

Khagendra Sangroula in Himal Khabarpatrika, 16 July

A Salman Rushdie has been born in Nepal too. Her name is Manisha last name, Darji. Someone who is weak in terms of caste, wealth and religion tends to be victimised by ose intoxicated by the strength resulting from [higher] caste. [more] wealth and [dominant] religion. Manisha Darji of Naglibang of Parbat district became

a victim of rape, by a group of four led by Indra KC. What happens when a woman is raped? As far as possible she tries to hide the wound as best as she can, or even commits suicide for fear of being shamed socially. Or she may even resort to the help of a woman trafficker, and egin a (voluntary) journey to the hell that is Mumbai's prostitution dens. But Manisha was different, she did not pick any of these options...

Wailing and screaming, she told the village the story of her rape. She named the perpetrators and filed a lawsuit against them. Then she came to Kathmandu and faced the people's court (sic) at the auditorium of the Nepal Bar Association

where she lamented her plight and stretched her hands out seeking support in her fight... All this prompts a question: what was the

motivation of the organisers of the meeting in getting Manisha to eak out? Who will take responsi bility for her security now? In a sense, Manisha Darji has become some sort of a suicide bomb

#### HISTORY

## Back at Sundarijal >14 "I have no time for depression"



Sundarijal: It looks like winter rigour will not let up. The night was extremely cold and in the early morning the whole landscape was

bright white from heavy frost. The water in the earthen pit, that GM

think this morning was the coldest period of the winter. On account

of this severity of the winter my body hasn't felt relaxed ever since

I arrived here. Two days ago there was hint of the spring in the

winter would be over. But it was a false hope. I didn't feel like taking bath. I sometimes feel that excess cold affects our psychol-

pessimism-it is not really pessimism as it is deepest state of uncertainty-may have been induced by this long spell of severe

winter. At my age man feels the severity of cold excessively-If I

greatly helped in mitigating the severity of the winter. As it is I am

cooped up in a small area, with the company of one person, no

work except reading some book which had been brought inside

just by chance, far away from dear ones who can't visit me-all

this makes for a mental state in which the vigour of the winter is

were free, perhaps the normal daily round of work would have

comfortableness and ease that my body would feel when the

ogy through diminishing cerebral activity. My present state of

atmosphere, and I had felt happy contemplating the

keeps in the open for birds, was frozen into a thick lump of ice. I

29<sup>th</sup> January 1977

felt abnormally

# is trying to keep his spirits up through the worst of the winter. He tells himself that there is no time for gloominess, as he has only seven more years to make the best of before he hits 70, and his mental and physical faculties start to decline. Every week Nepali Times brings you entries from BP's 1977 prison diaries, handwritten in English.

At the end of his first month in Sundarijal, BP

bewildered and a little lost too. A month which is like an infinity separates me from that time and place and dear ones. Today too it was extremely cold. In the morning frost was heaviest and the water froze in the open. I shivered the whole

morning. Didn't read. Didn't get relief even under the pale sun. When back to my bed and tried to get warm under the quilt. I have wasted the past one month that I have lived in prisonwasted being psychologically weak, being homesick, being exclusively concerned about how my family members would fare

in my absence-wasted being moody, sad, depressed listless or nervous, disturbed, impatient, restless. I must pull myself up. Enough is enough. I have not many years to live-I am already past 62. By September I will have completed 63 years. Another seven years are left in which I can be actively engaged in the pursuit of my calling with full physical and mental vigour. I may live beyond 70 years but I can't expect to be in full possession of my mental and physical faculties. Hence I have to be extremely careful, methodical and organised so that every minute of my life is accounted for. And usefully utilised towards the end of my life Enough is enough. I know nothing is lost by my imprisonment. If anything this has improved our political position. I have to look forward to a time when after my release I will be called upon to shoulder responsibilities of political nature. There will be our party to organise on a new basis-which will entail a lot of work. Then a lot of writing has to be done to educate the people and our rank and file. I have my ideas on various subjects to put into writing. When is the time for all this? I have to hurry up. Time is short, I have no time, absolutely none, for depression and black moods

#### 31<sup>st</sup> January

The day continued to be cold-the morning was as cold, if not colder, as yesterday, but during the day time the wind was not strong, hence the atmosphere was tolerably cold. I bathed today after a lapse of four days.

I finished Basham's book. It is a biggish book, but he has made his subject very interesting. For the beginner this book on current and medieval history of India can be easily recommended. I read the book with a half mind, and was not keen on going on but this morning I found to my satisfaction and surprise that I have finished the book. I will again read it with attention. I had already covered the ground during my study of Indian history with school. I had read Smith's history for my matric exam in 1930. Perhaps Smith's is more academic and detached. Basham's appears to be a love's labour since Rasham is an admirer of India's heritane This subjected attitude of the author makes the book readable. His dealing of the arts and literature of ancient India is very satisfactory and some of his own translations of Sanskrit poems are reflective of the originals' moods and nuances of feeling and felicity of expression.

I was under the impression that I haven't done any reading during the 30 days I am here. It is not so. All told I have read 600 pages. Not a remarkable achievement. But considering my present state of mind and disturbed psychology I haven't expected that I would be able to do even this much of reading. Since yesterday my mood is all right. From tomorrow I am going to organise my daily routine with reading which will occupy the primary place. But where are the books? I will be really unimagi nably hard if we are not supplied with reading materials. As it is we have books, not a very high quality, but books all the same, to last us till the end of February. After that if the isolation is not lifted and contacts with people at home are not allowed then I don't know how we will spend the time in jail

Today we were informed that our clothes would be washed by navvies attached to the platoon doing guard duty here. We said that we will wash our clothes ourselves



### VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

#### Helvetas is looking for a Programme Officer to join the small central country programme office team (PO) in Kathmandu

The PO is responsible for providing support and guidance to all Helvetas projects in Nepal, including may civil society partners. A team of three professional staff design and monitor programmes and various organizational policies across the country. We are looking for a fourth team member with rich proven hands-on experience and clearly demonstrated leadership qualities. Maior responsibilities:

Provide a proactive backstopping role for social, economic and technical activities in the sectors of Rural Infrastructure Green Sector; Skill's Training and Business Promotion. Facilitate practical learning/complementary linkages within and between own programmes, and with other actors. Take responsibility to the continuing development and management of a Learning Through Monitoring System (LTM)

Act as watchdog and support person for qualitative vectors across all programmes. Continue to improve and manage support modalities for

Continue to improve and manage support modalities for civil society, private sector and government partners. Work with the programme team in developing new con-cepts and programmes for the organization. Provide other forms of conceptual and managerial support,

as required.

#### Qualification and Experience:

Good common sense, good judgement and an ability to think logically.

Willing and able to work long hours, independently and

productively. Flexibility to take on new responsibilities when required, and openness to help other colleagues at all times. Ability to liaise, and support partners and Helvetas projects

in a mature and highly professional manner. At least 5 years experience in a similar position, and at

least 3 years full time work directly in the village. Good negotiating skills and smart strategic thinking.

A Master's degree would be an appropriate qualification for the nost

Excellent knowledge of English and Nepali, both written an spoken. Excellent knowledge of computer application, or willingness

Candidate Profile:

In order to balance the current team, we will be giving preference to women (especially) and men from less represented ethnic groups.

terested candidates should send their C.V. two reference an a passport size photograph to Helvetas. Only short listed candidates will be called for interview. Telephone enquiries wi not be entertained

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ISSUE

far have I travelled from that day? An age has passed, and an infinity seems to separate me from them GM says that we are not going to rot in prison, although there is no indication that the King is in a hurry to do business with us. **30<sup>th</sup> January** It was on this day-a month ano-that we arrived at Kathmandu to

be promptly taken into custody by the Nepal military. In the morning in Patna as I was preparing for departure and arranging things, DP's house was full of friends and well-wishers came to goodbye to me. Sushila was lost in thoughts-and others in the family were



Baan Thai Restaurant & Bar Durbar Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal For Reservation: 24327



gave a party for some of my friends at R Block. Jitanda gave us a

with nervousness at the prospect of my return to Nepal and to jail

individual faces and different scenes. How long ago was it? How

lunch at his house at Pataliputra. Sushila was all the time tense

Shailaja behaved in a peculiar fashion. She too was internally

nervous and excited. I remember everything vividly-remember

FILM. Simple mortel French, 1991, starring Christophe Bourseiller, directed by Pierre Jolivet. 21 July, 2PM, Alliance Française.

#### EVENTS

Facilitation skills and group dynamics workshop organised by UK charity ELD from 15 July. www.eld.org.uk, 524202. Alumni meeting Loreto Girls, St Teresa's, 13 july, 3.30 PM, Stri Shakti, Kamaladi.

247073 Friends of the Bagmati Membership open to all Email

friendsofthebagmatinepal@yahoo.com for details.

#### MUSIC

Dinesh & Pemba Live every Friday 7PM-9PM, Himalatte Cafe, Thamel. 262526 Teesta Rox the house Friday and Saturday nights, music from the 1950s-1990s. Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234 Live music by Catch 22, Friday nights at the 40,000 1/2 ft Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant,

Thamel, 414336

#### DRINK

Bottomless Draught Unlimited draught beer between 5-10 PM everyday, Rs 400, at the Splash Bar & Grill, Radisson Hotel. 111818

Metre of Malts Single malt exhibition and tasting. Twelve single malts for Rs 999. Evenings, Piano Lounge, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 248999

#### FOOD

Weekday buffet lunch Rs 350 plus tax, 50 percent discount for children under 4 ft. 12.30 PM - 2.30 PM at the Sumeru Coffee Shop, Godavari Village Resort, 560675

Plat du jour with a glass of wine and dip in Sundhara pool, Rs 700, Shangri-La Hotel. 412999 Pasta Mania Choose from a variety of pastas for Rs 111 plus tax at lunch and dinner,

and 20 percent off bottled wines. La Dolce Vita, Thamel. Wines from around the world Pair wines from Chile, Argentina and Australia with

Italian specialties at the Olive Garden Radisson Hotel 411818 Sandwiches of any kind Steak, pesto chicken, lamb and more on olive foccacia.

croissant, pita, baquette and other home-baked breads. 12-27 July, The Café, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234 Weekend lunches at Dwarika's Hotel. Rs 700 per head with a bottle of beer and

swimming 479488 Thai Food Festival 1-8 July at the Clubhouse Restaurant, Le Meridien Kathmandu,

Gokarna Golf Resort. 451212, 224399 Fine dining and table top cooking Dinner at The Chimney, Hotel Yak & Yeti, starting

6.30 PM everyday 248999 Wood fired pizzas at the new Roadhouse Café. Completely redesigned with separate bar seating and coffee bar. The Roadhouse Café, Thamel. BBQ and momo evenings 5PM onwards at Nanglo Café and Pub, Darbar Marg.

22263 Special Thai cuisine at Ban Thai Restaurant, Darbar Marg. 243271

#### GETAWAYS

For pilgrims and holidaymakers Dakchhinkali Village Inn overlooking Dakchhinkali Temple and Pharping's Buddhist monasteries. Weekend package Rs 1,300 per person on twin-sharing basis with half board. Children from 6-15. Rs 800. dak\_vinn@hotmail.com . 710587

Monsoon at its best Walk in the rain through the pristine countryside. \$35 per person per night on full board basis at the Horse Shoe Mountain Resort, Mude. resort@horshoe wlink com nn

Monsoon in Shivapuri for birdwatching, short hikes, writing. 20 minute drive and 10 minute walk from Kathmandu, two acres 6,000 feet on the edge of the Shivapuri National Park. Rs 1,850 per person with dinner and breakfast, Rs 925 per child 5-14 years, Shivapuri Heights Cottage. info@escape2nepal.com

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#### 12 - 18 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES



Adroit Publishers, Delhi Rs 512 Kunwar analyses the ways in which tourism which tourism contributes to changes in value systems, individual behaviour, family relationships, ethics and moral conduct, creative expressions, traditions and ceremonies and community organisations. The author focuses on the processes of trivialisation, revitalisa-1 tion, trinketisation and cocacolaisation.

Nepalese Climbers on Mount Everest Ang Phurba Sherpa and Ramesh Raj Kunwar Pemba Chhamji Sherpa, Kathmandu, 2002

Rs 1,100 (hardback), Rs 700 (paperback) A former mountaineer and anthropologist explore the long list of Nepalis who have summitted Everest from both the North (Tibet) side and the South side (Nepal). The authors provide extensive information on and photographs of Khumbu, as well as biographies and photographs of numerous Nepalis to have climbed Everest, as well as descriptions of climbing rituals and first person accounts by Sherpa and foreign climbers.

> Frank Kingdon Ward's Riddle of the Tsangpo Gorges Kenneth Cox, ed Antique Collectors' Club, Suffolk, UK, 2001 Re4 180

Tsangpo Gorge, the world's deepest gorge, twists through Tibet's great river Yarlong Tsangpo and emerges far below in India's Plains. In 1926 Ward published an account of his travels and planthunting through the gorge. Kenneth Cox, Kenneth Storm and Ian Baker spent ten years retracing the route and managed to reach only part of this area. This volume includes Ward's text, updates, as 2 well as information on the history of exploration in the area.

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

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Daily	2245-2300	BBC नेपाली सेवा

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JANAKI GURUNG

Some would say that the entertain efore Jai Nepal Chitraghar ment starvation in the valley, even ecame Nepal's first cinema 52 today, hasn't eased despite the fact that years ago, it was a crocodile there are now 35 cinemas here. Most hatchery. Yup, it was the residence for show Bollywood potboilers and their the pet crocs of the Rana prime Nepali imitations in steamy interiors where the audience is wont to whistle But the reptiles were relocated in each time the heroine makes her appearance, or slap wildly when the time for the cinema's formal opening in 1945 with the screening of the o throws the villain off the edge of religious Bollywood epic, Ganesh the cliff. Mahima Movies used to be such a That is why the arrival in novelty in those days that Kathmandu Kathmandu of its brandest new luxury udiences used to stand in the cinema is to its entertainment aisles in the packed hall for three THE R. O. W. starved denizens what the hours watching black-and-**美国英国** 





Kathmandu-based diplomatic corps before embarking on the royal visit to the Peoples' Republic of China on 9 July.



BUDGET SPEECH: Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba delivers a oneand-half hour speech at the National Planning Commission on 8 July.



Owners threatened to convert to Christianity if it continued.

DEMOLITION MEN: The Pashupati Area Development Trust

ompletely re-equipped and realised that Kathmandu was ready for refurbished Jai Nepal has opened its a modern cinema. He told us: "The ox office to customers this week with time had come for Kathmandu to have the Hollywood nothoiler. Spiderman its own world-class cinema, and we Not that Jai Nepal has not been have brought it." Dhungana is partner n innovator. Owners took a risk by in a consortium called Vision Quest showing the Oscar-nominated France (with Raiesh Siddhi, Nirmal Pradhan Nepal production Caravan two years and Nimak Uddin) which leased the ago, and the film ran for an cinema and invested in the revamp.

Dhungana remembers going to see Caravan, and says he couldn't stand the stuffy interiors with its broken

benches and dirty floor for more than verhans to civil aviation. After a six nonth Rs 20 million revamp, a 15 minutes. That is when Dhungana precedented four months. Bhaskar At a invitations-only screening of Spiderman this week, the audience marvelled at the reclining velvet covered seats with neat cup-holders,

carneted floors, and a modern interior. here is no garish and gaudy chandeliers and drapes, the interior is elegant and functional.

175, aren't the tickets too steep for ordinary Nepalis? "I don't think it is The cinema's 500 seats are cleverly inclined for unobstructed screen views. too expensive, film buffs in Kathmandu pay as much when they The projection and sound equipment is state-of-the-art with Dolby Digital buy black tickets from scalpers for and the latest THX-approved threefamous Hindi movies elsewhere." he way sound system which is so effective says. It is possible to make phone and that when Spiderman and his nemesis online bookings for Jai Nepal, and it is have their duel-to-death sequence, the a good place for a family outing in the reverberations feel like they are heart of the city. In a while, crocodile! ging it out right in the cinema

Dhungana is not hung up on just www.jainepal.com



12-18 JULY 2002 NEPALI TIMES English movies, as long as the sound

quality matches the equipment he wil

also show Hindi films. But at Rs 125

his job more and more, "mainly because digital cameras are

getting lighter," he jokes. But there

have been moments when Dhurba

has wondered why he ever became a filmmaker. In 1995, while lugging

between the Buri Gandaki and

### Under My Hat Dhurba, the peacemaker by Kunda Dixit

# **Spiderman to the rescue**

ith great power comes great responsibil-ity. We must bear this in mind as Nepali researchers take rapid strides in the field of science, technology and reflexology. After all, we are now a nation capable of

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producing test-tube babies at labs on Putali Sadak, so we have to ask ourselves: do we have adequate security safeguards to prevent miscreants from nabbing our scientists in broad daylight as they stop for a snack at the sekuwa shop at the Dilli Bazar intersection?

What is to prevent international terrorists from selling them (the scientists, not the sekuwas) to rogue states? And are we prepared for the nightmare scenario of our labs running out of test tubes? The short answer to all these questions is: How should we know? Even so, we must use the current global war on

terror to reassess other domestic lacunae in our security situation. For instance, there are serious questions about the vulnerability of our biogas reactors nationwide. We have not done enough to stop the proliferation of fissile materials in our strategic stockpiles of cowdung. And we therefore can't be sure that

our weapons-grade bull manure will not fall into the hands of Saddam Hussain. These are issues that every

technologically-advanced nation like ours must ask as we learn to get out of the clutches of the axis of evil. But help is at hand, and we can now rest easy. Lower alert level to Amber Two. There are reliable reports in today's edition of

the Daily Bugle that Spiderman has finally arrived in Kathmandu to take care of our law and order situation. We can't trust humans with crime control in this city anymore, that is why we have subcontracted the job to a private sector mutant arachnid which doesn't need the stairs to walk up buildings, and can shoot a chewing gum-like substance from his wrists to incapacitate crooks. Spidev has his work cut out for him in Kathmandu, and he can start with:

Cleaning the city of crime first means cleaning it of garbage. And it is in this direction that Spiderman's attention will be initially focussed. Before you throw the laundry out with the laundromat on the heads of unsuspecting passersby on the street below from your balcony in Asan, glance around to make sure Spidey is not looking.

Next, our friendly neighbourhood Spiderman will turn his attention to the power-hungry, putrescent, anarcho-syndicalist Green Goblins in Singha Darbar, entangle them in his worldwide web, and restore

of walking on walls.

the nation to its past glory. Then he will give special essons in upward mobility at the Nepal Mountaineering Association's climbing school in Manang on the art

But before he does any of that, Spiderman must first untangle the traffic snarl near the Nepal Bar Association so that an urgent consignment of test tubes can be rushed to Putali Sadak.

> OPENING TODAY

hen filmmaker Dhurba Basnet decided to join a group of journalists on a trip to Rukum, Rolpa and Jajarkot last year, the 37-year-old didn't imagine that his work in the centre of the Maoist insurgency, would result in a powerful, ovocative film. Dhurba's The Killing Terraces,

a 26-minute documentary, was recently screened at Mountain Film Telluride in Colorado, and travels on to the Banff Mountain Film Festival in Canada this autumn. Australian SBS TV recently bought the rights to the film, which has won critical acclaim and been described as a

powerful anti-war film depicting the futility of violence and the human suffering it unleashes. Terraces was the opening

film at Film South Asia 2001 in Kathmandu, and exposes the roots of the Maoist crisis. Although it was shot two years add, before the insurgency moved into fastforward, it delves deeply into the neglect, disinterest and disillusionment that fed the frustrations that contributed to the rise of Maoism. Now what worries many viewers is that things are actually much worse in the midwest, and that many Mapist prisoners. villagers, and security personnel

in the film have since been killed. "The response has been overwhelming. I'm just glad that the film has been able to provide viewers in Nepal and abroad an insight into the roots of the Maoist problem," says the soft-spoken Dhurha modestly, "It is a film about war, but the underlying

message is of the need for peace." Dhurba is not just sitting back and basking in his success. He has just finished another documentary on people living with HIV for the UK-based Television Trust for the Environment (TVE), which was shown his heavy camera equipment up over the 5,300 m Larkya Pass at a global AIDS conference in celona this week.

A graduate in sociology, Dhurba was born in Chitwan, and started out as a trainee cameraman at Nepal levision. In 1994, he helped set up Ankhijhyal, a popular fortnightly tive reports and documentaries on development and social issues produced by the Nepal Forum of

Environmental Journalists. of Nepal's 75 districts, and he likes

Manang valleys, he was struck with acute mountain sickness. And while fighting off the effects of altitude. he was hit by typhoid. He was sure his time had come. Fortunately for

elevision magazine with investigaus, just as they were running low on food. Dhurba and his crew were rescued by helicopter. Dhurba has travelled through 70

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