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Disastrous monsoon

A day after 41 villagers were buried in a landslide in northern Ramechan, a Twin Otter on a flight from Jomsom crashed near Pokhara, killing 15 tourists and three Nepali crew. Four hours later, 45 people were feared dead when a bus from Kathmandu to Baglung fell into the Trisuli River near Mugling. It has been a season of disasters, as the country lurches from one accident to the next. Landslides and floods have ravaged central and eastern Nepal, killing at least 500 and affecting more than 300,000 people in the past month.



Thursday's Shangri-la accident (file photo above) was the fourth air crash in three months. A helicopter carrying 10 trekking guides from Makalu Base Camp to Lukla that disappeared on 29 May has still not been located. Meanwhile, the insurgency rages on, and aside from the daily toll, 30 Maoists were killed in a fierce firefight in Rolpa Tuesday.



Neekly Internet Poll # 48. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com O.Is it now time for the government to agree to the Maniste' offer of talke?

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BINOD BHATTARAI

he cities of north India are now a their summer peak demand for power. Nepal's monsoon-gorged rivers are at peak supply. Common sense would see a possibility of trade there. Yet, Nepal-India power exchange agreements remain mired in mis-management, bureauc-

racy, and geo-politics.
When all three turbines of Nepal's largest and newest hydropower plan at Kali Gandaki-A (see picture) went on stream last week, they added 144 megawatts, taking Nepal's total installed capacity to 585 megawatts. This gave the national grid an unprecedented summer surplus of 140 megawatts.

But here is the paradox: although the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) has surplus wer some of this has to be bought at such a high tariff that one third of its revenue is used up paying just two private power producers for lood energy: Bhote Kosi and Khimti.

Some of this loss could be recouped by expanding the domestic market and exporting to India. But there are many hurdles like transmission bottlenecks, the lack of an agreement with India's inefficient and cash-starved state electricity boards, and New Delhi's unspoken desire to use hydropower as part of wider bilateral bargaining with Kathmandu

We have to trade the surplus that has started to accrue in the system, admits NEA chief, Janak Lal Karmacharya. That would be mutually beneficial to India and Nepal, and even at seven cents per unit, buying Nepal's surplus flood energy would be cheaper for India than the long-term cost of thermal generation. Selling power to India is Nepal's best chance of reducing its whopping Rs 19 billion trade deficit with India

If there is political will, there would be a

Trading power



way. We don't have to wait for compatible grids, but sell to contiguous tarai towns across the border where some power-exchange is already taking place.

Clues about why Nepal and India are stuck lie in Nepal's only project designed specifically for export to India—the 750MW West Seti dam, a Nepali joint venture with Australia's Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation (SMEC). The \$1 billion project has been stuck since 1997 because a power purchase agreement with India ont caught up in domestic Nepali politics, and has been stalled in India's Ministry of External Affairs.

Analysts told us New Delhi seems to want hydropower to be part of wider bilateral giveand-take with Nepal that would include border and trade disputes, and security issues. Meanwhile, Nepal loses potential export revenue and royalties, Indian consumers suffer power outs, and the villagers of Uttar Pradesh do not benefit from West Seti's irrigation and flood mitigation effect on the Karnali River.

It is clear where the main obstacle to Indo-Nepal hydro trade lies: in the lack of political trust. Says hydropower expert Ratna Sansar Shrestha: "India's security concerns seem to override all economic annuments. How can you talk business without that changing?"

The Australians are not waiting for the India-Nepal power trade agreement to go into force, and appear to be giving th project one last chance. SMEC and India's PTC have even discussed tariff and are happling in the 5 cents per unit range. But both know that in the end it will depend on a nod from South Block.

Nepali experts see an anomaly if West Seti sells cheaper power to India than the price at which NEA has to buy it from private enerators here. "Why should we even think of selling cheap when Nepalis are paying one of the highest electricity tariffs in the world?" asks Dipak Gyawali of the Nepal Water Conservation Foundation "It is chemerfor

NEA to buy west Seti Power which is high quality peaking energy when it is already paying six cents for low quality flood energy. But officialdom has not lost hope. At the National Planning Commission Minendra Rijal says it is an issue of demand and supply and could be easily resolved. "Logically they

stand to win by buying from us." But what if economic logic is not the only factor at work here? Much of that hope hinges on recent private sector initiatives which may help overcome political and bureaucratic hurdles.

During King Gyanendra's India visit in June, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) agreed with its Indian counterpart, FICCI, to explore joint hydro-ventures in Nepal.

"We're trying to see if the Indian private sector can help untangle the knots," says FNCCI's Rajendra Khetan. And a large Indian business house is said to be shopping for a project in west Nepal.

In Vienna museum, Nepalis worship stolen Buddha

When will Nepal officially request the Austrian government to return a stolen Buddha?

ERWIN MELCHART in VIENNA Nepali and Tibetan Buddhists in Austria are carrying out regular puja at the Ethnographic Museum in Vienna in front of a 17th century Dipankar stolen from

Patan in January.

The Buddha was confiscated in April the museum. The gilded copper mask is being displayed at the entrance hall of the museum while the Austrian authorities wait for the Nepal government to

make an official request for the return of the image

Among the devotees worshipping the Buddha recently was Nono Bista, the niece of the Raja of Mustang seen here laying a khata at the altar. "It is sad. This Buddha is of such great religious significance to us," she said. "I after a German art dealer tried to sell it to am grateful for the museum's intervention, and pray that the image can be returned to Nepal soon." Butter lamps and offerings adorn the base of the stand on which the Buddha is kept in the museum's foyer.. see ⊏>p16



EXTREMELY AFFORDABLE TO MAINTAIN

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NONE OF THE ABOVE

drift into a constitutional crisis, so that a knight in shining armour can

rescue us from the brink. There is a nostalgia for strongman rule to end

this messing around by neo-oligarchs who used democracy to percetuate

Just a word of caution here. We tried it hefore, and it didn't work.

remember? What to do when neither democracy nor autocracy seems to

guarantee accountability? Only representative governments, periodically

endless infinition, and you come to the hare hones of what this is all about. It is about where sovereignty should lie. Should it be with the people, or with the powers-that-be? Or rather with the powers-

The Deuba-Koirala confrontation looks like a cock-fight. But don't get distracted by the roosters; find out who is betting on them, look at who is cheering for whom in the stands, waving fistfuls of money, and why Perhans Girlia Prasad Knirala is right that Prime Minister Sher Rahadur Deuba is taking the country back to pre-1990. Perhaps Deuba's mentors are really pulling the strings.

Even so, we may have taken Koirala's insinuation more seriously if it was any one else making it. Coming from a person who during two tenures as prime minister couldn't show the ability to rise above the selfish concerns of his cronies and relatives, it rings quite hollow. And it sounds even more hollow when the kangresis argue that they are the defenders of democracy, when all they have done is misuse our mandate and run the system to the ground.

The November elections, as we argued here last week, were not called by Prime Minister Deuba because he was keen to give sovereign

Nepalis a say in getting the country out of the rut. No, he called elections out of desperation to save his own political skin. And now with less than three months to go for elections, no one really believes it can be a representative exercise in free choice.

What kind of moral mandate will a party that gets 20 percent of the votes have when the turnout is less than 40 percent? Isn't no election at all better than a flawed election? Or are we having an election just for the sake of elections: to have a fig-leaf democracy that is not really repre-

sentative or accountable? If we do have elections, let there be a new category in the list of

candidates and parties on the ballots: "None of the above". This will encourage Nepalis to say: "I vote because I believe in democracy, but I don't like any of these blokes." And we must bring in a new style of campaigning. Candidates will no longer get up on a podium to give engaches: they will take nort in public hearings to answer questions from voters.





SADAU.THAILAND-MALAYSIABORDER

Given the fact that what is left of Nepal's

Disadvantaged abroad

The outside world judges us by the economic state of our country.

economy is being propped up by our migra Usually, the family of the worker has to sell workers, you would expect them to be treated better. Remittances from Nepali workers in land or take on a huge loan to be able to send India, the Gulf, Malaysia and east Asia have abroad the son, brother or cousin or, now overtaken the country's foreign currency increasingly in some parts of the country, the young woman of the family. earnings from exports and tourism combined.

Despite the humiliation involved in And yet, look at the way we treat Nepalis going or returning from abroad. The ordeal getting out of the country, thousands of pins right here in the process for acquiring : erate Nepalis do so every year, and the Nepali passport. They begin by filling up numbers are growing. For the poor who have ineligible forms in quadruplicate, and then ru no way of getting a passport—let alone a visa, around government offices to get some gazetted all roads lead down south, to the bustling officer's to endorse that he knows you personcities of India. ally. Since HANSAs (Hindu, Aryan, Nepali Speaking Administrators) dominate Nepal's bureaucracy almost totally, this step in itself

Middle-class Nepalis travelling to India on pilgrimage tend to look down upon these economic migrants from back home who do the dishes at road-side eateries, without deters all other ethnicities. Those who end up with the little green book in their hands after realising that it's the remittances from andless munds at the district administration kanchbas like these that have prevented the office consider themselves lucky to have been collapse of the Nepali economy.

thus blessed by the state The irony is that the ones who are most For a Nepali Muslim from Mahorrari ir's proud of their Nepali identity are also the easier perhaps to reach the minister from his ones most willing to give it up. Perhans they district, Sharat Singh Bhandari, than to find a section officer in Jaleswor to sign his applicawhenever they need it, in the name of "nonresident" facilities. But that's a different. tion form. Since there are no local government units these days, middlemen have a field day. story. Doctor and engineers migrating to Fouts will make things a little simpler for those Australia or America do little for our who can afford their fees remittance economy. Our true heroes are If you can get over that first hurdle, you the villagers from Myagdi toiling in the then meet the sharks at manpower agencies that ysian palm plantations, or the farmer prey on the vulnerable and the desperate from Kavre working on Kuwaiti construcrion sites in 50 degree heat.

But while non-residents get to meet e prime minister when they return to Nepal on summer vacation, migrant Nepali workers returning with their meagre savings are harassed, ill-treated and often extorted the moment they set foot on Nepali soil at the airport

In Qatar, Thailand or Saudi Arabia, the Royal Nepal Embassies consider it beneath their dignity to help fellow-Nepali workers The welfare of migrant workers doesn't figure



Prem and Lard Yao prisons? Nearly all of them are janajatis. The interest of diplomatic missions alone uldn't be enough to reduce the sufferings of our brothers (there are still very few sisters) ahmad. A diaspora commands respect only when the home country is prosperous and strong. We need to better train our workers who go overseas in search of job opportunities. And as the experiences of other Philippines and Sri Lanka show, host countries treat guest workers differently when

The reason for such gross negligence is

largely cultural: the diplomatic service tends to

he HANSA-dominated while a sizeable section

of Nepali migrant workers come from humble

minority backgrounds. Denied just opportuni

ties back home, they are again deprived of

attention when they are exploited or have

problems in a foreign land. Could this be the reason that the Nepali Embassy in

Bangkok continues to ignore the nearly thre

dozen Nepali inmates of Bangkwang, Klong

on their to-do list

hey realise that their unfair actions can have ndesirable diplomatic repercussions. The diaspora of Nepali professionals can also be effective in lessening the sufferings of their disadvantaged brethren. The Nepali ommunity at the Asian Institute of Technol

ogy (AIT) already visits Klong Prem once in a while, but if they were to increase th uency, Mangal Bahadur Gurung would definitely feel less miserable about his time there. If privileged Nepalis were to framed for crimes, perhaps the authorities of the host country will become more

The Nepali elite need not be apologetic about the first-time fliers at the back of the plane on the flight to Bangkok, International migration, caused by the push factor of misery at home and the null factor of better osnects overseas. has a long history in lepal and in other parts of the world. Migrants through the ages have shared a similar motivation—the determination of taking a risk in the belief that they can build their future by relocating.

At the Sadau border post on the southern tip of Thailand, immigration officers are instructed to look carefully a the passports of all Nepalis. The Malaysian authorities often dump illegal Nepali immigrants here. Even better-placed Nepalis aren't exempt from the torturou procedure of careful scrutiny.

You may be an elite back home, but the outside world judges you by the economic state of your country.

Rs 700 for Bhaktapur is a little

steep)-if not, then maybe that

category of tourist brings little to

Give and take We face the dilemma of high expectations and low, almost non-existent, delivery.

n Friday night, the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) took in about two dozen officials from the revenue administration. While we all wait to see how the commission follows through on this campaign, it is clear that the crackdown finally addresses the rot within.

It is a jungle out there, and only the strongest survive. But civilised societies are governed by values and morality that are presumed to be rational Every society also has the types that don't bother about the law, and even less about its implementation

We in Nepal are now at a stage where we all want to set up to a system of governance that promotes sustainable human develonment through a rule of law. Sound economic policies presume that decisions directly or indirectly facilitating the creation of wealth and its equitable distribution will be fostered Good administrative governance is a system of policy implementation carried out through efficient, independent, accountable and transparent public

institutions. It is often said that Nepal is at the crossroads. It is at the junction of a paternalistic and isolated past where tradition took precedence, and a modern globalised world of the rule of law. We used to be almost immune to external influences. We are now headed full-throttle into a wider donor-driven world. Across society. we have begun growing past the notions of "we" and "our" which used to be inherent to our traditional family structures and have graduated into the "me" and "my compartmentalisation typical to western societies.

The dilemma today is high expectations and low, almost nonexistent, delivery. Our leadership has no agenda for providing us an eco-

pronounced your verdict that we

What makes you think that elections

Election Commission to stop flash

cannot be held? Nobody is asking the

floods or these recurrent landslides. In

the prime minister should restore the life

the same vein, nobody is saving that

of all 5,000 Nepalis who were killed

during the last six years, or eradicate

poverty by a single stroke of his spade

It is just elections in the normal course

of our democratic development. We are

Additionally, the Maoists never said that

Even if there are challenges, we have

not doing elections for the first time

they are going to disrupt elections.

enough power and patience to go

ahead. Why are you overreacting?

Your comment on Article 127 is really

minister should advise the king to take

any move under Article 127 in the name

of removing obstructions. That will just

controversy. Let us not push the nation

bring the constitutional monarch into

precedence in the Supreme Court's

to another catastrophe. There is

cannot have elections. Avoid doing that

nomic leadership suited to changing patterns of socialisation, and we cannot afford to keep anchoring ourselves to our social background. To get a sense of just how directionless we are, ask the following questions of those that lead us today, their answers will tell us all we need to know:

 How well versed are you about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats? · Have we set our goals and object

 Are we involving real stakeholders in planning and execution of decisions. or are we merely using them as uninunland witnesses?

GIVERS AND TAKERS

In 1990, when we started rebuilding democracy, we put rules into place to elect governments in the manner most democracies do. But democratic governance-a fully transparent and accountable system—proved elusive. The system has provided more space for external players to influence decisions and decision-making. There has also been a realisation of rights. "our" rights but not that of others.

When we are efficient only if there is personal gain, then there are only akers and givers" but no give and take. We have begun to develop specialisation for last-minute crisis management and damage control. We know there are mismatches between demand and supply, but do not pay attention to aligning the two or reducing wastage. We rely on conventional management practices.

Decisions are made at the top and passed down to those down the ladder who are expected to obey orders, even if they are not what the rules say. Even where the rules say something there is much left to the discretion of the official. And officials have excelled at using discretion, where there are personal benefits. Because everybody is made responsible for a particular job, a decision could begin with a section officer and end up with the minister's approval. This way, no one is accountable. Job responsibilities don't exist and where they do they are not defined or are just too vague.

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by RAJENDRA Κ ΚΗΕΤΔ

In such a situation, hiding and cheating becomes the norm. Businesses and individuals that try to stick to the rules end up being victimised by officials with discretionary authority. Most businessmen (even ordinary law abiding citizens such as those going to the tax office to clear their motorbike and vehicle taxes) are compelled to bribe officials just to let them pay theirtay

In business, bribes have become the preferred method of lubricating the machinery of the bureaucracy. Ironically, it is the under-the-table exchanges that make public employment attractive. And in the absence of clear laws and prompt implementation, graft has allowed many businesses to lower the high cost of doing business in Nepal. The bribery network stretches right up to politicians, who also need extra cash to bribe fellow politicians in the race to remain at the top of the bribery chain.

Bribery contributes to the increase in the costs that society has to pay. because it is eventually their money that is being used to grease palms. The situation begins to get out of hand where a culture of impunity prevails and there is little fear of wrongdoers getting

Controlling corruption and improing governance in the public sphere ould entail ending discretionary authority of officials, simplifying rules and implementing them. Businesses can help in the process by being open and transparent, professional and by insisting on upholding rules despite short-term losses.

(Rajendra Khetan is President of Nepal Britain Chamber of

Commerce and Industry

credibility and moral superiority. And

LETTERS

UNFRIENDLY FIRE The powerful article by Mohan moved many of us. Whoever the army attack, or the army for not making an effort to

Mainali ("Unfriendly fire" #106) original massacre-whether it was the Maoists for provoking distinguish guerrillas from civilians-it is clear that even six months later, there has

been no effort by the state to



redress the misery and loss of the families of the dead. When will those in power in Kathmandu ever understand that it is exactly this heartlessness and indifference to the suffering of citizens that gave birth to the Maoist insurgency in the first place?

G Lamsal, Kathmandu Thank you, Mohan Mainali. for doing what few Nepali

iournalists have done to investi-

 A few days ago the body of ung man was brought in to the Teaching Hospital. He had been beaten to death. History was he was arrested and ther umped or fell from a vehicle Sorry, he did not get those injuries that way. The security proes requested that we not write about the injuries". You can imagine how far that went. They would also not provide information about identificationapparently wanting to dispose of

being aware of what had

gate the tragedy of the villagers

from Dhading in Kalikot Reing

of the bereaved villagers

far away from Nepal, the story

brought tears to my eyes. The

icrocosm—the violence and

Bhim B Thapa, Hong Kong

brutality, the anathy, revolution-

aries gone berserk, and an

story is today's Nepal in a

rule of law is restored to some degree at least in this country there is little hone for anythin As your story "Unfriendly fire" shows, poor people in the villages are caught squarely between the Manists and the security forceseach one as bad and ruthless as and atrocities. Several victims have been brought into the Emergency Room at the hospital with legs crushed by heavy rocks

as punishment for whatever

happened to the man. Until the

perceived infractions. Name withheld, Teaching Hospital

. The open letter to Nepali and British Prime Ministers by the group, Nepal Unity (#106) was pertinent. But I don't see any eople around who would think in this way If they ston selling and buving weapons and start promoting human rights instead, how can they get commissions

and personal benefit? I don't know a single Nepali leader who has no nersonal interest

FEE OF COST

to holiday there. Since Nepal is

among the poorest 10 percent of

countries, I think the vast majority

of tourists accept paying a token

reasonable (though perhaps the

I was especially amused to find a Swiss tourist lodging such a I take issue with yet a reader's complaint. My organisation is a letter ("Remove fees", #106) from Swiss-based NGO. Four years a western tourist suggesting again ago, the Swiss national and local that visa fees, tourism/heritage government arbitrarily levied a fees and similar are "too high" and that to reduce or abolish them sions of all our 100 interna would somehow "promote tourism tional staff worldwide (who do in Nepal". Basically, Nepal remains not live or work in Switzerland, but the fund is held there). If one one of the lowest-cost tourist destinations in the world and most of the richest countries in the world engages in official illegiti western visitors benefit from the low prices and cost of living. The mate "looting by tax". I hardly think fact that access to historic its citizens can complain when modest, legitimate official fees for arters in Europe may be free of charge disguises the heavy visas, heritage sites are collected ernment subsidies and the from wealthy tourists in Nepal.

John Maxwell, Kathmandu incredibly high cost for any tourist

the country.

FLY EAST

The proposed flights between Kathmandu and Bagdogra will benefit thousands of tourists, students and pilgrims from India and Nepal. A short drive from Bandogra into Nepal is the small airfield at Bhadrapur. The link would destroy the potential of Bhadrapur airport and affect thousands of Nepalis who depend on it for their livelihood in Jhapa and Ilan Negali tour operators should start thinking

Pravesh Saria, Chicago USA

TUNDIKHFI

I wonder if any of your other readers felt, like I did, that Hemlata Rai shied away from calling a spade a spade in "Shrinking Tundikhel" (#108). Yes, as she points out and the map amply demonstrates, the Tundikhel is a shadow of its former self. It is like Kathmandu has had one of its lungs amputated. But please don't blame the



the past three decades: just look at who took the whole southern half.

sure hope this is a beginning of things to come and not the end. I hope the CIAA now goes on further to nab those, who have plundered, looted and amassed insane amounts of wealth at the expense of the people and left the country to the dogs. Give us more reason to cheer about and to restore some semblance of hone for a better future in our minds. The civil ciety in Nepal has been lying dormant and apathetic for too long-resurrect it in disheartening. I don't think that the prime all its vibrancy, so we can have a better

citizens of Kathmandu for encroachment. We know very well who has been encroaching into this public space over HL Amatva, Tripureswo

The CIAA deserves our gratitude for taking an unprecedented and bold step. I Nepal to leave behind for our children.

really regret to read your editorial "Article 127" (#107). Rather than giving an opinion, you seem to have already

Manish Pandey, Kathmandu

monarch cannot spell out rules and conditions by exercising his powers under Article 127 on the advice of the prime minister. There is no "dilemma" here at all.

Bipin Adhikari, Bangkok I do agree with the sentiments expressed in your editorial "Article 127 that chances of any improvement in the current situation remain dim should the same politicians be elected back in. But frankly, do people have other options? Where is the new generation of politicians that our people can choose from instead? Where are the alternative parties that show notential to be different? If there are none, why aren't we creating them? I understand that the last twelve years of status quo and the prototype of politicians that we have seen so far (including the Panchayati era for that matter) have been instrumental in putting the entire elite of Nepal are striving towards total detachment from the mainstream politics, perhaps to prove their

this "disgust" with politics seems to extend even further among our vounger generation. So, who will we give the reins to? We face a huge challenge to rid our country of the deen-rooted corruntion and inentness to govern, and I have no doubt this But perhaps it is time for us, the new generation, who might be more capable of politicking differently, to ask ourselves some serious questions. Questions such as why aren't we there creating these alternatives for our people? Why aren't we giving them the power to make a difference? Where are our new leaders? Will they only be born once the present political dinosaurs become extinct? Will they only start to write the future of Nepal once the slate is clean? Alas, that might be just a bit too late for us.

In "Catmando" (#106), the artistic director of the photonovellas is Kirti Keshar Joshi

Neeta Pokhrel, Australia

HEMLATA RAI

problem" if one-fifth of the

times higher than that.

population suffers from it. The rate

of iron deficiency in blood among

Nenali women and children is four

Two out of three Nepali women

are anaemic. This number goes up

among pregnant women to three in four. And anaemia in Nepal is no

under the age of one are anaemic,

according to the Nepal Micronu-

trient Status Survey 1998. Kyoko

Kathmandu's Nutrition Section is

longer only about women An

alarming 90 percent of infants

Okamura of UNICEE

emphatic about the conse-

quences: "We are producing a

are less competent mentally "

adverse health consequences

slowed learning and cognitive

development, and decreased

12 months of age.

including impaired growth,

whole generation of Nepalis who

Iron deficiency anaemia can cause

physical activity in children below

Simply put, most anaemia

results from an iron deficiency.

Iron, a micronutrient required in

small, but critical, quantities, is

haemoglobin, which form the all-

important red blood cells. Since

haemoglobin is essential for the

hady tissues and the synthesis of

iron enzymes that are required for

delivery of oxygen from the lungs to

essential for the production of

World Health

Organisation,

anaemia chould be

considered a "signif

cant public health



lowest level health care institutions that are allowed to distrib-8,000 tablets at any given tin But most of the time sub-health posts are out of reach of the people who need supplementary of two to three hours for most women to reach the sub-health post nearest to their homes the power to make decisions or let alone the family income, taking time out from an already

is a tough proposition. Women who manage to receive antenatal care are five times more likely to take supple Nepali women ever receive antenatal care from a medical professional in the first place. Complicating this, two-thirds of health posts say they are simply

prenatal care, let alone iron tablets,

tablets with the accompanying talk on the benefits and side effects of supplementary iron. It shouldn't have taken so

long to realise it, but at last the Health Ministry decided that the only way to improve women's access to iron tablets was by making them available to commu nity health workers. A pilot phase of what is called the "iron intensification programme", which allows women community health volunteers to distribute iron tablets, was launched last year with very encouraging results. In wards of Bhaktanur Banke, Sunsari and Santari when the program was implemented, the use of iron tablets went up to 80 percent of pregnant women. Since one female volunteer only looks at five to 10 pregnant women at any given time, distributing iron tablets isn't a huge burden. The Micronutrient Initiative, which works with the

overnment, hopes to launch a

and Mahottari districts by the end of this year But distribution of iron

tablets, while it has uses, is hardly a foolproof way of tackling anaemia For one, community health workers are uncertain about when they should give out the tablets, because anaemia rarely has stark symptoms. Ever trained health workers sometime mistakenly believe that as long as women eat fruits and vegetables regularly, they don't need supplementary iron, even if they are pregnant. Women with severe anaemia account for 2.2 percent of the female population of Nepal, but among pregnant women as many as 5.7 percent of women are severely anaemic

Pregnant women need two to three times as much iron as normal as the body's requirement increases with the increase in blood volume and the growth of foetal and placental tissue. In Nepal, the policy is that all pregnant women should get 60 mg iron per day from the start of the fourth month of pregnancy and continue through 45 days after birth. But coverage is very low and adherence to the full supplementation protocol is extremely poor

The Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2001 shows that 77 percent of women did not take iron tablets in their last presnancy because they just didn't know about them, or thought that their regular diet was nutritious enough. Still others who do take the tablets often discontinue them too early because they feel like they have regained their strength or because the side-effects—stomach cramps and dark stools-worry them. Iron deficiency in mothers means severe anaemia among

children. WHO reports say that one in seven Nepali women is considered to be at nutritional risk, which means a direct impact on the nutrition levels of her child, and there is a stark lack of programmes that target at correcting anaemia among the adolescent girls of childbearing . Studies show that two-thirds of all non-pregnant women are

anaemic which means that the enter a pregnancy with alreadydepleted stores of iron. The Nepal Micronutrient Status Survey 1998 shows that 90 percent of Nepali babies between six and 11 months old are anaemic, about three percent of them severely so. This age group is particularly vulnerable is breastmilk does not fulfil an infant's iron needs after six months, and the iron stores that the infant is born with start to get depleted. After that age, the complementary diet is often too low in bioavailable

iron to fuel the rapid tissue growth

that takes place.

Despite the shortcomings of the supplementary iron regimen, food based intervention against iron deficiency is difficult in Nepal because most families are too poor to diversify their diet, and even those that have a varied diet don't use the best cooling methods, with less water and a shorter cooking time. It is possible to fortify some food items, and the MI hopes to begin fortification of wheat with five mincronutrients, including iron as soon as the Finance Ministry agrees to it. The cost of fortification will be passed on to consumers, but the MI's Maharian says that it is almost unnoticeably lowaround 10 paisa per kg, even lower than the cost of iodising

MI studies show that 30 percent of Nepali household consume flour-based food everyday, and that the figure goes up to 50 percent in urban areas. Monitoring the 20 large-scale flourmills that produce more than 40 metric tonnes per day would be relatively easy, but addressing the small-scale, locally-operated flourmills will be a challenge that the MI says it will be ready to take up by the end of 2002.

Mandala House Lucury Apartments of Comfortable Rates

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DOMESTIC BRIEFS

Editor killed by Maoists

Navarai Sharma, the editor of Karnali Sandesh, the first weekly newspa ner to be published from Nepal's far west Karnali Zone, has been killed by suspected Maoist rebels. Sharma was abducted two months ago and his mutilated body was found by the banks of a river near Kalikot this week. Reports said he had been tortured, mutilated, and his eyes

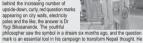
Disabled Nepalis

In developed countries, the number of people with disabilities is 5 percent of the population or higher. In Nepal, it is 1.63. Good news? Not really. The reason the figure is so low is because in Nepal, disabled people tend to just die. This tragic bit of data is just one revealing piece of information contained in A Situation Analysis of Disability in Negal. prepared by the New Era research group and brought out jointly by UNICEF and the National Planning Commission Tuesday. The report timates that nearly 400,000 people are living with disability in Nepal, with the prevalence highest in the west and in the mountains. Nearly one-third of these people live with multiple disabilities.

Fourteen percent of Nepal's disabled are evesight handicapped, two percent are hard of hearing, 0.6 percent cannot speak, 32 percent are not mobile (due to spinal injury, etc), 20 percent have problems with 'manipulation', and 19 percent suffer from epilepsy. The survey also shows how far the country lags behind in providing basic support to those who are handicapped, either since birth, or through disease and injury.

Don't worry 3

For those wondering whose hand is behind the increasing number of



mark is an essential tool in his campaign to transform Nepali thought. He says visualising the symbol as a third eye every morning and evening while meditating creates in a person a powerful kind of energy. He tells us that classical (Hindu) knowledge says that the symbol means "There's no need for questions, accept life as it is." Residents of the capital will certainly sleep better at night for knowing what that twirly red thing is

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ute iron tablets, had an average of iron the most. It takes an average When so many women don't have control even their own earnings, packed day to even get adequate

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Fatland

orth America is the land of large, the land of largest, in fact, Every thing here is huge-especially the people and their appetites for rything that is bad for them. The physical evidence is overwhelming. A friend from New Zealand, flying from home to Europe via the Pacific Ocean and Canada, got off the plane to stretch his legs in the wealthy oil city of Caleany near the Rocky Mountains Lacked him for his impressions

hoping to hear comparisons between the Rockies and the Alps of his native land, perhaps a comment or two on the friendliness of local folk, or their penchant for cowboy culture. "Everyone's fat," he said. My Kiwi friend is right. There is countless evidence for his observation

beyond the visual. A story in this week's Toronto newspapers says doctors are alarmed at the growing incidence of Alzheimer's disease—a grim condition that robs people of their memory and ability to think. It used to be something that hit in the twilight of life, a sad but almost accepted decline of the mental facilities to match the physical aging of the body. Now, according to the newspapers, Alzheimer's is appearing in younger and younger people across Canada and the United States. And the reason is obesity. That causes diabetes, which in turn—apparently—damages brain tissue and mental decline sets in. I urge my North American friends to

reflect on that next time they stuff a hamburger or a donut in their mouths. Hey, I'm not making any claims to be svelte here. I carry a few extra kilos around my middle-aged middle, so I too am on the risk list for various fat-related diseases. But there's no escaping the conclusions that North Americans—the most prosperous people in the long history of mankind are digging their way into early graves with their jaws. The other sad fact is that fat is a class issue here. People from lower economic strata don't go to fitness centres or take up mountain-biking. They eat junk food, not health food.

But the culture of consumption that stuff mouths and bellies with

Notes from North America, the land of excess.

empty carbohydrates, fats and vast quantities if sugar knows no boundaries. The well-off have their own form of obesity—a mindless, status-driven spending habit that keeps them busy, stressed, tired and disengaged while further laying waste to the planet's natural resources. Sound a little extreme? Perhaps, but I don't think so. The United Nations has just released a dire report warning that 30



consumer spending habits of the continent's people. In short, we are driving our cars more often, burning far more petrol, living in sprawling, energyinefficient houses, and taking long-holidays on passenger jets that spread air pollutants more effectively than any of Saddam Hussein's putative weapons of mass destruction.

Two in three Nepali women are anaemic. That

means very unhealthy children, and lower GDP.

oxygen utilisation and energy

metabolism, if you don't have

they should be.

enough red blood cells, you breathe

less efficiently, which means you're

constantly short of breath and your

energy levels are nowhere near what

"This is a serious public health

crisis," says MR Maharian of The

More than most other illnesses, the

economic impact Iron Deficiency

Anaemia is significant, as it causes a

sharp reduction in physical activity

and work output in adults-

of their GDP respectively to

been any studies in Nepal, but

nublic health experts and

between 20 and 40 percent. An

MI study claims that Bangladesh

and India lose 1.9 and 1.3 percent

anaemia every year. There haven't

enidemiologists estimate that the

figures would be just as dramatic

here. As importantly, anaemia

increases the risk of maternal.

prenatal and perinatal mortality

Nepal has the fourth highest

maternal mortality rate in the

world-539 in each 100,000

pregnant women-and UNICEF

cantly, 20 percent of these deaths

says if it can be reduced signifi-

"Our food habits are

problematic—anaemia is more

who eat ritually prescribed

visible among high-caste Hindus

vegetarian food and less among

meat-eating janajati communities

like Gurungs and Newars," said

Sharada Pandey, chief of Nutri-

Ministry's Child Health Division

Only 15 percent of the Nepali

tion Section at the Health

could be prevented.

Micronutrient Initiative (MI).

population eats enough meat-

available iron. The remaining 85

percent depend on vegetarian diet

for cultural and religious reasons

afford meat. Women, whose iron

needs are more significant anyway,

or because they simply can't

suffer doubly because of their

status. Not getting enough food

energy deficiency in one in four

women in Nepal. According to

WHO standards more than 20

percent of women with chronic

energy deficiency indicates a

serious public health problem.

Eating right is only one part

of the story. The scale of anaemia

in this country is an indicator of

many more problems than just

food habits: it points to the low

socio-economic status of women,

poor, sometimes non-existent

anitation that spreads and

exacerbates the prevalence of

inadequate decentralisation of

In 1999/2001, some 45

million iron tablets were procured

for free distribution for across the

country. Less than half, about 20

tablet supplies are more than

distribute them doesn't work.

savs Okamura of UNICEE"s

commodity support to the

egnant women

sufficient, but the system to

million, were given out. "The iron

Nutrition Section, which provides

ernment for its universal iron

tablet distribution programme for

The sub-health posts are the

parasitic diseases, and the

health services.

lower social and nutritional

already accounts for chronic

based food rich in naturally

North America, with less than five percent of the world's population, consumes 25 per cent of its energy-most of that generated from nonrenewable sources. Family size here has fallen—the best natural form of birth control being affluence—by 18 per cent in the past three decades. The size of our homes has grown by nearly fifty per cent. The notion of the New Left parties, such as Tony Blair's Labour and Bill Clinton's Democrats, that we can have it all—social justice and prosperity, redistibutive policies and wealth-is being sorely challenged. That's one reason I welcome a right-

winger in the White House. George W Bush and Co are nakedly probusiness, anti-labour, pro-consumption, anti-environment, and they make no secret of that. It restores political goalposts that get lost in the muddle of the middle of the road.

But even our politics seem an irrelevance in the face of mounting evidence that our consumption habits are killing us. More criminally, they are damaging everyone else's chances at development. We dig our graves with our appetites, and drag you into them. We have it. We spend it. We onsume it. You sniff our exhaust as we speed on by. Oh yes, we may throw a few pennies out of the window. Use them wisely. Don't be corrupt or greedy now. Do as we say. Not as we do. ♦

SOMEWHERE IN NEPAL

and Algeria would defy the imagina

FCONOMY

snonsors of the eyno

A feather for Fulbari

The Fulbari Resort & Spa has been nominated to

an exclusive club of the world's great hotels

and the Banyan Tree and The Royal Meridian

release says that selection was based on a

natural setting, interiors, ambience and quest

satisfaction. The exclusive collection of the

number of criteria including architectural design.

world's select hotel properties is operated by the

Great Hotels of the World organisation, which is based in London.

the tune of Rs 675 million and investments totalling to 546 million.

placing it alongside international names such as

The Ritz Carlton, The Grand Hyatt, The Oberoi Bali

Yacht Club in Phuket, Thailand. A company press

Contrary to expectations, when the Nepali and Indian secretaries of commerce met over the weekend in New Delhi, they could not reach an agreement on one of the most pressing problems addressed during the renewal of the trade treaty. The Inland Container Depot at Birganj will continue to remain unused, as

it has for the past year, until the rail link can be made operational. There was some movement on other Nepali concerns. Finally a deadline was agreed on to set up quarantine posts at Sunauli, Jogbani and Banbasa by 1 November, and the Indians have also agreed to lower the quarantine fees. India also

agreed to raise the guotas for copper exports from the 7.500 MT agreed on in March to 10.000 MT. Nepali

officials at the meeting said that the Indians agreed to waive the Special Additional Duty (SAD) an-nounced in its budget early this year and also remove the luxury tax West Bengal state had slapped on

Nepali ghiu and tea. There were also assurances that anti-dumping duties on acrylic yarn and zinc oxide

But it will take time before India actually stops levving the duties, given the complex procedures

in more detail two matters: the modalities for trans-border movement of motor vehicles, and the rail

agreement. Rail transport to the ICD is expected to lower transport cost of goods to and from the Calcutta port by as much as 40 percent.

involved. The Inter-Governmental Committee has agreed, however, to meet again next month to discuss

The 12th Himalayan Expo which opened Wednesday showcases products and services offered by 125-150 companies from Nepal, the USA, the UK, Germany, France, China, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia,

Japan and Singapore. The Shree Distillery, Radisson Hotel, Mount Everest Brewery, Kwality Ice-creams,

About the same time next month—18-22 September there will be another exposition, the Agro-Expo

Ace Finance Company Limited says it had an operating profit of Rs 20 million last year, a continuation of the trend a year before. The company with an authorised capital of Rs 90 million says it has deposits in

Qatar Airways, Bitarak.com, Transavia Airlines, Indian Airlines and the Standard Nursery are major

2002 (September 18-22), organised by the Agriculture Enterprise Centre, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Floricultural Association of Nepal

That was no small risk, considering

the prevailing perception that the

mainstream press had become the

Self-censorship became a prized

agent of government and elite

editorial skill in deference to the

suspension of the people's fundamen

high, questions of immorality were

largely ignored. The first stirrings of

tal rights. To keep the national morale

Prime Minister Deuba may be discontent emerged as private-sector called a "press predator", but he isn't in completely bad company.

turned out to grant their counterparts in the official media the freest moments of their professional lives. From the official smugness to all those blank editorial columns in the tabloids, carried in protest against state-imposed restrictions, you're forced to wonderwhether the prime minister and his men consider the media Public Enemy No. 2 in the anti-Maoist campaign. (Although, it's probably safe to assume that most of our ministers wouldn't have read anything in that space anyway.)

Nepal's struggle to preserve press domain of news analysts. In two cogent sentences, the RSE has traced Deuba's transformation over the last 12 years. "An unrelenting opponent of the absolute monarchy prior to the start of the 1990s, Deuba has thrown in his lot with those who have opted for all-out war against the Maoists." the RSF says. "To this end, he has decided to renounce all his democratic convictions and has turned Nenal into the world's biggest prisor for journalists." The watchdog could have been howling about most of the

people in power today We can't quibble with the RSF's assertion that press predators come in all shapes and that we must recognise their faces to better denounce them. But two of the other three new carnivores hardly have countenances that can be identified. The Islamic

scribes discovered how the emergency tion of the most creative police artist The security forces in the southern Philippines become more amorphou if you take away their camouflage and iackboots. Then there's the thing that should miff Deubathe most. More than 150 journalists have been attacked or threatened in Bangladesh since October 2001. But the country gets away with Home Minister Altaf sain Chowdhury on the list And there's no state of emergency in force there The RSF doesn't mention this but the Magists' most conspicuous transgression was the three-day abduction of a few journalists for trespass in their western Nepal

nghold last September. When Deuba complains that the people don't appreciate how he's the only person who has tried both peace and war with the Maoists, he has a point. But the people who are supposed to explain that to the rest of the country are angry with him. And he's not doing anything about that It's not too late to befriend the press. Here's a tip: We deal with etractions all the time but rarely are the recipients

While we're still in a conciliatory mood, let's face it. The RSF list is not as repulsive as it looks. Consider some of the other people on it: Fidel Castro, Ariel Sharon, Mahathir Mohammad and Vladimir Putin. Have these iron-fisted leaders been that corrosive for their countries? It depends on how, as we like to say,

ime Minister Sher Bahadur Prachanda and his seven Deuba entered the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) hall of press predators the day after we found out Internol had issued red-comer notices against eight senior Maoist leaders. Our prime minister and premier rebels have become

international baddies duly certified

by organisations headquartered in

comrades face arrest, at least theoretically, in the 179 member states of the mational criminal police organisation. Deuba is in deeper trouble. The undated RSF roster comes at a time when he's facing the intensifying fury of Nepal's fourth estate. Reporters and editors are outraged not just because a colleague happened to vanish from state custody. Or because

A fun time modify you this currence of Godavan Resout, Beat the heat and splish into the cool blue pool. Ther, only the fascinating natural setting of the Resort white survouring a sumptious Buffer Lunch. Good clean fun for the entire family - countersy the Godavant Village Resort.

Swimming with Buffet Lunch and a bottle of beer 68 Rs. 600 + Tax for adul-

Swimming with Buffet Lunch and bottle of soft drink @ Rs. 350 + Tax for children

from our pool-side. So watch out, you just might be on aid

many of the more than 100 journalists arrested since the emergency was mposed last November are still behind bars. Their wrath has more to do with what amounts to breach of contract. When the government imposed the emergency, insisting that the restrictions were aimed only at those who encourage and support the rebels, the press believed it and stood squarely behind the prime minister.

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Wet & Wild Summer

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militants on the rampage in Pakistan you put together your story. ♦

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In praise of watchdogs 🧢

Sometimes it is better not to give.

sabbatical—from one's day job not this space—the Beed on Sunday only had time to hurriedly skim the headlines. And they were good. The boundaries of one of the many unattainables in this country seem to have been breached—the Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority has belled the cat. Sure, the exact size of the cat may not yet be known, but good lord, at least something is happening, and for that hats off and thank you.

This is just one sign of just how much the government is scrambling to regain some of its credibility. Their extensive press campaigns asking the people to declare their income or face consequences were fruitless. The deadlines passed, no one noticed, the headlines faded away, and no action was taken. Honest taxpayers as well as the not-so-honest ones who actually declared their wealth, later regretted having given up their cash to pay for Paieros, the adulterated fuel they run on, and completely pointless junkets.

White-collar crime and graft are under close scrutiny world over. And what is gaining increasing emphasis is giver is as guilty as the taker. In the days to come it will be interesting to see, from the standpoint of a Nepali how events unfold in the US corporate—and political—world. The thing about graft is, that it remains in all nodes of economy—capitalist, socialist, and all those in-between What matters is how far it spreads, and whether there are constant—and admittedly somewhat Sisyphian-



In Nepal, unfortunately the

entrantian of damacency has made graft rampant, it is more and more blatant, and cuts across all segments of wemment, politics and even business. The democratisation of the process has meant that more people id for coveted posts in the revenu denartment and other denartments that have the potential to earn revenue. The price of the positions went up, and the politicians were happy to keep the market expanding, eventually resulting in little ceremonies that bore an uncanny resemblance to auctions. Of course, none of our watchdog agencies—and they are amusingly numerous given the ever-expanding nature of our graft-could take all of this on, as it would mean that the people on the agencies would have to fight their own political masters. The CIAA and its current boss have been

courageous. Maybe this will be a esson to other well-intentioned but lily-livered oversight appointees to get out and do something. The business community should

not be spared in this discussion of corruption. After delicensing and pseudo reforms, many businesspeople found it easier to do business b corrupting officials and politicians. If members of the business communit did not encourage this kind of giving. and compete with each other to give more, things would have been significantly different. That said, when the government itself cannot ensur proper statutory compliances like audits and taxes in enterprises that it owns, how can it hope to have any control over the actions of private companies? Simply put, the govern ficoal and other controls in State Owned Enterprises gave private businesses plenty of latitude to first complain, and then outdo the SOEs in

malfeasance. Your columnist promises to keep: keen, beady eye on the CIAA's efforts and the reaction of the business community, and report back to you. And just think: if the names of taken are out in the press, maybe the names of all those givers of not just cash, but computers, furniture and appliances are not so deeply buried either.

The only worry that one has is that this might well be a one-off exercise, bringing about a pleasant sense of euphoria in the public-right before those worrisome elections. The regulators need to put the fear of the people in themselves, and governme and politicians, and business.

"Very few people understand the value of brand building."

Nepali Times: How has Nepali advertising changed in

Joydeb Chakravarty: Things have changed drastically.
Obviously, the change has not kept pace with other countries in the region, and the economic and business situation isn't what it is in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan or Sri Lanka. But communications and media have changed. Education has changed: now we have a crosssection of Nepalis out of school and college aware of what is going on outside.

What is the role of advertising given this growing, aware educated class?

I won't say the educated look at advertising to get information. Advertising is just one, guite different, communication vehicle. Advertising is more about brand building. To that extent, even local companies have changed the way they look at their brands.

How fast has Nepalis advertising pie grown? It didn't grow very fast until about 1996/97. After 1997/ 98 to about 2000 it grew at about 20-25 percent. It has slackened of late owing to local and global factors. When your GDP growth plummets to less than one percent, you can imagine what happens to advertising. hich is related to the business and economic situation The overall situation today is not very good.

How is it doing business in Nepal? When Thompson was set up in 1998, advertising was not listed as an industry where you needed a licence to invest. We made a presentation at the Ministry of Industry saying foreign investors will be looking at the infrastructure-insurance solicitors auditors and advertising companies of international quality. They took the point, and we became the first advertising joint venture. As far as dealing with the government is concerned, it is one of our largest clients.

You say advertising has flattened, but at least three new TV companies plan to begin broadcasting in the next six months. How will that change the market? It would sort of increase. If you look at the spread of the market. Kathmandu contributes 60-70 percent of the

state of the industry in Nepal. business. Look at what FM did to Kathmandu. After the FMs came, you had a host of new advertisers and that was when retail advertising came in. That may be the same for metro TV stations. As far as national TV is concerned, they would have to compete with Negal TV

and they can be in business with better programming. To a certain extent TV would expand the pie, but not as much as some say, and not overnight. It will be tough for the new channels, radios, newspapers and magazines unless the market expands, and with that the purchasing capacity. Unless people can buy, there is a limit about how much advertising can do.

How has the arrival of other multinationals been? The Advertising Agencies Association of Negal has been saying that we have a huge market. Obviously many multinational companies see this as a country where you can set up a presence and take a chunk of that business. But this is a very difficult place to survive. Advertising is not seen as an investment, but as a cost. Very few people understand the value of brand building. We've been very lucky and had clients who know what marketing is all about. We've helped companies with small budgets build their brands. Manpower is a very, very serious issue. You don't get art directors, visualisers and writers. People who go out to study and come back like to set up their own little shops. They are happy doing letterheads, visiting cards brochures a few ads sometimes.

How have multinationals helped build Nepal.

canacity? I can speak for Thompson. We have regular training programmes and have sent many people for training seminars and advertising award functions in India as well as South Fast Asia. We also have regular in-house training. J Walter Thomson has always been called the university of advertising. Working here is a very big learning experience for people. When they leave, they take that knowledge and experience and spread it. We help local colleges and universities for conducting communication programmes, and I have been associ ated with Kathmandu University for three years now.

You handle some of the largest commercial ac counts, and say that the government is one of your largest clients. Are you number one?

There are no official listings here as no one wants to disclose the size of their operations. We know that, as far as the advertising industry is concerned, we are the largest taxpayer in this country. The amount of tax we pay is more than the revenues of most agencies in Nepal. Another basis would be the annual billings of organised media, which agencies disclose. If you add them up, Thompson is number one. There are other fees and incomes that agencies can earn through as events, promotions, etc, but in terms of, say billings or taxes, we are the largest.

How would you say firms can have the maximum reach to enable them to do serious brand building? Radio. It has the widest reach, followed by TV and print. Radio is the most cost-effective medium. We have data that indicates that it has been growing, especially after FM. Television will hopefully grow with the new stations that are coming, NTV will grow with its satellite. especially if it expands its low power transmitters. This

must go together with electrification. Today newspapers offer colour, which wasn't there 10 years ago. The newspapers and magazines survive, which means people read them. Kathmandu has the highest reach across media, so this is the only place people are consolidating. If the media were to consoli date in the 15 other urban areas, the advertising situation would change. We've advised media houses to increase distribution. The moment they do that, their readership will increase. There's a limit on how much Kathmandu can absorb, media has to go out.





A The chore the

he monsoon-heavy nourish its culture and religion brown waters of the And it is the main element of Bagmati will Friday Kathmandu's environmental host a unique flotilla of regeneration. But it is now kayaks and rafts. The choking with waste, and has Second Bagmati River Festival become a symbol of our negliwill bring together environmengence of the environment. The Bagmati River Festival is jointly organised by the Nepal talists, school children, the tourism industry, and concerned

ters in Sundarijal to Sankhamul. The Bagmati River is the source of the Kathmandu Valley civilisation, the waters that

River Conservation Trust (NRCT) and the Friends of the Bagmati. Says veteran river guide and NRCT founder, Megh Ale: "We can clean this river, but to do that we have to look at the And, since Friday is also Gai





onth's flood (left); the Bagn ridge built by Chandra jumshere in 1903 and a Ran: elephant procession crossing ove to Patan (above); the Bagmati a ashupati is now much cleaner

problems from the Bagmati's perspective. That is why we want to raft down the river." Twenty professional river

guides will kick off the festival at 8AM on Friday, 23 August, with a kayak race from Sundarijal to Tilganaga. Next, ten rafts holding VIPs, school children and representatives of local communities will leave Tilganga for Sankhamul. There, starting noon will be music and an exhibition with the Bagmati as backdrop. Popular actors Niruta Singh and Dilip Rayamaihi will be guest stars, and Himalayan Feelings will be belting out music. Also atending will be Om Bikram Bista, Yogeshwor Amatya, Nalina Chitrakar, Tantric and others

It's not too 1 late to . Save the river.



culturally. It is the responsibility of

restore the river to its original

Jatra, present will be famous Nepali comedian duo Madan Krishna and Haribansa, and infamous Nepali satire poet, Chatyang Master.

Several Kathmandu Valley schools will put on an exhibition of photographs, Bagmati debris and water sample analyses. Also on display will be a container showing the residue from a distillation of Bagmati water. Other shools will each and every one of us to help have poster exhibitions and clay models of Kathmandu Valley, and will stage plays and skits. pristine state, and conserve the cultural, religious and architectural

a pressure group that aims to The Bagmati is presently gorged restore the Bagmati to its tradiwith monsoon water, the annual tional glory, says that the river festival is a unique partnership natural cleansing of the river. This year, the river also burst its banks: between like-minded conservation could it be a divine warning to treat groups. Dr Suresh Raj Sharma, the river with more respect? chairman of Friends of the Bagmati says: "The Bagmati River is in a terrible state, ecologically and For further information:

Friends of the Bagmati friendsofthebagmatinepal@yahoo.com Nepal River Conservation Trust nrct@wlink.com.np





10 WORLD 23-29 AUGUST 2002 NEPALI TIMES 11 23 - 29 AUGUST 2002 NEPALI TIMES



eling sympathy for Norwav is hard. Thanks to its its North Sea oil reserves, the hard Thanks to its massive country has achieved a level of wealth unimaginable only a generation ago. which has allowed it to cold-shoulder the EU since 1994. But Norway's problems, while hardly on a par with Sub-Saharan Africa or Afghanistan, are serious enough to elicit concern.

When a country's newlydiscovered natural resource abundance leads to windfall wealth, investment in the rest of its economy shifts away from tradeables (mainly manufactured exports) and into nontradeables mainly consumer goods and services). The diagnosis is a familia one called "Dutch disease." If and when the natural resource generating the windfall wealth (in this case, oil and eas) disannears, the economy is left with too few competitive industries and too many empty bookstore-cafes.

ANALYSIS

Painful restructuring is sure to follow. So for Norway has avoided the worst pitfalls of Dutch disease by using its massive oil revenues to establish a national savings scheme. the Petroleum Fund, which is rted to invest only in foreign assets. This curbs inflationary demand pressure while preventing elected officials from squandering the country's riches on politically rewarding but economically wasteful projects. But Norway has recently

ered its guard on both count Wages have soared, with the average increase likely to hit a whopping 6 percent this year. To ssate, firms have raised prices. fueling inflation. But with the central bank committed to holding annual inflation at 2.5 percent, Norway's interest rates are currently among the highest in Europe. This has helped cause the

exchange rate to strengthen by nearly 10 percent over the last year against the currencies of Norway's main trading partners, making tradeables even less competitive. Domestic industries that face foreign competirelocate abroad. Thus, in one of the world's richest countries, unemployment is rising. But the real problem is the public

sector. Government spending is increasing by 4 percent annually because of a new "action rule" that allows revenue from the Petroleum Fund to be phased into the domestic economy. But the additional budget revenue has merely offset lower taxes while high wages and interest rates are jacking up public expenses. So government must spend more to maintain public services and keep unemployment down. The cycle t takes another vicious turn: higher

rich after the payments stop. (Gunnar Bärdsen is associate professor of economics at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology.)

appreciation, further decimation of

the importance of tradeables

unemployment

the tradeables sector, the risk of more

twindling, the nontradeables sector

output Excess demand in the public

must increase its productivity and

sector must be shifted elsewhere—it

won't just disappear Waiting list

for medical and nursing services in

Norway already seem endless, and

school buildings are deteriorating-

have to be privatised. This will be

politically contentious, but also

provide a chance to realise the

country's potential through a strates

of sensible investment_the origins

numose of the Petroleum Fund

significant investments in human

scientific research, rather than

"innovative" projects. With just 10-15 years of

the UAE last year dropped visa

in an effort to accelerate the

its huge Caspian Sea reserves.

Norway, were winners in the

Kazakhstan stands at the start of

this process. These countries, like

natural resource lottery. But that is

no guarantee that they will remain

stimated oil reserves remaining

equirements for most westerners

velopment of a viable tourist

rende With the recent discovery of

capital: education, training, and basis

his strategy should include

the public health authorities

some have even been closed down by

A range of public services will

There is only one solution, With

Make markets, not war DEPTH - The Aueralian government has toned down its rhetoric on

the possibility of a US-led war with Iraq, pledging a full parliamentary debate about any planned action with the United States as domestic pressures from wheat farmers and former prime ministers rose about its position. Grain farmers are threatening to push for compen sation if Australia's \$449 million wheat sales to Iraq were jeopardised by Canberra's joining-or threatening to join the war on Iraq. Australian Graine Council President Keith Perrett told reporters he had issued the ultimatum to Prime Minister John Howard, over the wheat sales, in a face-to-face meeting Tuesday. Iraq, Australia's largest market for wheat through a UN food-for-oil programme, has said it will stop all Australian wheat imports if Canberra does not tone down its "hostile rhetoric". In a marked change from his previous statements, Prime Minister Howard said the government would commit troops to an American-led first strike on Iraq only if it was "completely satisfied that it was in the national interest to do so". The prime minister told the House of Representatives, "I would want as far as humanly possible to achieve hinartisanship (with the Labor opposition) in relation to any decision to commit military

Compensation for unfair trade

BUENOS AIRES - The Latin American delegations to the upcoming
World Summit on Sustainable Development, which opens this month in South Africa, will insist that the industrialised North eliminate barriers to exports from the developing South, or compensate for those obstacles with development aid

Raúl Estrada Ovuela, director of environmental affairs at Argentina's Foreign Ministry, told IPS: "We need financial support for sustainable development, because the distortions in trade deprive us of the resources that we should be assigning to that purpose," said the official. According to statistics of the Argentine Foreign Ministry, the funds that the EU assigns to official development aid are equivalent to one-fifth of what that bloc, the US and Japan spend annually on farm subsidies. (IPS)

Green power in Johannesburg

HANNESBURG - In keeping with the theme, some of the main venues hosting the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) will use environment-friendly "green" electricity during the summit. Green electricity is produced in an environment-friendly way from renewable energy sources like the sun, the wind and waves. Electricity generated conventionally-in coal or nuclear power stations—either releases large amounts of carbon into the atmosphere or produces pollutants, like radioactive waste. While South African produces some of the cheapest electricity in the world, its nower stations are fired by "dirty" coal, which emits large amounts of carbon. South Africa produces 42 percent of Africa's carbon emissions. Yet, the emissions for all of Africa are still substantially less than that of a single developed country (IPS)

Fighting an unjust fight

NATIONS - A US proposal to cut off military aid to countries refusing to shield its peacekeepers from war crimes prosecutions is under fire from human rights groups and legal scholars. "It is blackmail-pure and simple." Brigitte Suhr of the New York-hased Human Rights Watch, told IPS. She said the threat comes from a new US law, the American Servicemembers Protection Act (ASPA), which prohibits military assistance to countries that have ratified the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, which came into force 1 July. The law, also called the Hague Invasion Act, authorise the use of military force to free US and allied suspects from detention by the ICC. Last month, the LIN Security Council agreed to give US peacekeepers a year's exemption from ICC prosecution but rejected a proposal for an automatic renewal of that exemption

In its continuing pursuit of immunity from the ICC, the US has signed bilateral agreements with Israel and Romania, barring the extradition of Americans for trial on future war crime charges if US troops serve as peacekeepers in those two nations. A state that has ratified the ICC would be violating its statutes if it signed a bilateral agreement with the US, said Marjorie Cohn, associate professor at the Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego. Suhr said the threat to cut off aid is selective. US allies such as the EU. Japan. Israel and Egypt are excluded, while "struggling democracies like Colombia, Bolivia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo-all of which have ratified the ICC—are now under threat." she said. (IPS)

Not paying for excesses

TIONS - A new UN study urges the United States and Canada to take more responsibility for the damage they have done to the world's natural resources and climate in the past 30 years. Their success in improving local environments—where their people live with clean water and air and enjoy green spaces-has come at the expense of global resources and climate, says North America's Environment: A 30-Year State of the Environment and Policy Retrospective, released last week. The report says that one Canadian or American consumes nine times more gasoline than any other person in the world. With 5 percent of the world's population the countries generate over 25 per cent of global emissions of heatcausing CO2. The study, carried out by the UNEP in collaboration with environmental think-tanks, says that both countries must make "substantial and concrete changes" in the way they use automobiles. relying on more fuel-efficient technologies. Urban development ies need to be revamped to stem the overgrowth of cities, they add. UNEP researchers estimate the US transportation sector accounts for over a third of the energy consumed by the world. (IPS)

Like father, unlike son

WASHINGTON - The second-most frustrated man in Washing policy establishment these days, next to Secretary of State Colin Powell, must be Brent Scowcroft, the courtly and self-effacing retired army general who served as George Bush Sr's national security adviser. Like Powell, Scowcroft has consistently and sometimes publicly—counselled George W to pursue a cautious, multilateral approach in his "war on terrorism", especially with regard to Iraq and But his advice has been almost entirely ignored as the unilateralist, pro-

Likud hawks in the Pentagon's civilian leadership and Vice President Dick Cheney's office have consolidated their control of policy since last December's military success against the Taleban in Afghanistan. Scowcroft serves as chairman of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory

Board (PFIAB), a post that guarantees him access to top-secret intelligence and to Bush Jr's top foreign-policy advisers. Normally, PFIAB chairmen are discreet and hesitant to weigh in on policy issues publicly. He has mentored two of the administration's top foreign-policy officials: Powell, with whom he served in the Nixon White House 30 years ago, and Bush Jr's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice. Scowcroft remains very close and very, very loyal to Bush Sr with whom he co-authored A World Transformed, a 1998 book about their foreign policy from 1989 to 1993. One of the book's main themes is the ertance of broad coalitions, both domestically and overseas, for difficult policy initiatives such as the Gulf War.

Scowcroft's loyalty to Bush Sr—and the fact that he is widely seen as the former president's alter ego-makes his speaking out publicly about these issues remarkable. "For Scowcroft to say anything critical amazing," said a former senior official who worked with Scowcroft in the Bush administration. "I can't imagine him doing so without talking with Bush's dad."

Apart from some offhand comments early in the Afghan campaign, when he said he hoped Washington would intensify consultations with US allies. Bush Sr wed substantive public comment about the war on terrorism, bolstering speculation that he shares Scowcroft's concerns. Scowcroft has expressed himself publicly on three issues since 9/11: coalitions, Israel-Palestine, and the administration's obsession with ousting Saddam Hussein.

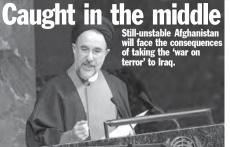
Early in the war, when Rumsfeld and neo-conservatives were arguing that a multilateral coalition could hamper a successful campaign, Scowcroft wrote in the Washington Post: "Success means a coalition. The liberation of Kuwait would n impossible without a strong coalition of countries that provided military bases, staging areas, intelligence, isolation of Iraq and strong moral and



In May, as violence between Israel and Palestine intensified. Scowcroft wrot in the Post's on-ed page again to holster Powell's frustrated efforts to persuade Bush to rein in Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and launch a new, multila eral peace process based on Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's peace offer and culminating in a viable and independent Palestinian state.

Recently, Scowcroft spoke out on national TV urging restraint in Iraq. Echoing the views of State Department and the CIA and drawing on his experience under Bush Sr, he warned that an invasion of Iraq "could turn the whole region into a cauldron, and destroy the war on terrorism". Echoing European and Arab allies, Scowcroft said Washington should work with the UN to get arms inspectors into Iraq, because Saddam's refusal to comply would give the US a "casus belli that we don't really have right now". And, in what amounts to heresy to the neo-cons dominating US policy, Scowcroft says the success of efforts against Saddam depends on progress in Israel.

Scowcroft's advice has not been taken, and he has been attacked, sometimes by senior administration officials, including Cheney and Rumsfeld, and more often neo-conservative columnists and media, such as the Wall Street Journal and the Weekly Standard Many of these actors were among Bush Sr's most violent critics 10 years ago when he halted the Gulf War at the Kuwaiti border and refused to carry it on to Baghdad. They were even more scathing when he withheld aid to Israel until it co-operated in the search for an international solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. • (IPS)



ISLAMABAD - AUSattackon Iraq would have an impact on Iran—high on US President Bush's 'axis of evil list-and Afghanistan. And Afghanistan, where this campaign began,

remains unstable In early August, US troops came under sniper attacks and were engaged in firefights by Taleban and al Oaeda remnants. There have been accidents and explosions resulting in the deaths of American soldiers and Afghan civilians. On 7 August, in the deadliest clash since the Taleban's ouster in November, al Qaeda fighters arracked an Afehan army outpost near Kabul, resulting in 15 casualties, A day earlier, an American soldier was killed in an incident involving US troops and Afobans close to the Pakistan border.

The expectations of a new order of stability emerging in the post-Taleban phase, particularly after the June Loya Jirga, have not been met. The Loya Jirga was caught between the conflict-ing demands of the warlords who assert their own suzerainty in their respective domains versus an

administration in Kabul, which wants to exercise centralised authority and control. And the American-led 'war on terror' has failed to stamp out al Qaeda and Taleban remnants, or Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar Three kinds of conflicts can be

isaged in Afghanistan. First, the lurking conflict between the so-called Taiik troika and President Karzai This troika, representing the ethnic Persian speaking Tajiks, manages to control the foreign and security policies since General Oasim Fahim is defence minister while Dr Abdullah Abdullah is foreign minister. The third member of the troika, Younis Oanooni, has been relegated from his previously powerful slot as interior minister to the politically less influential education minister's post. The majority of Afghanistan's population is Pashto-speaking Pashtun. Tajiks make up 25 percent of the population, with an ethnic affinity with ajikistan and a linguistic linkage with

Reports of tensions between Karzai and Fahim have surfaced, and last month's assessination of Vice President

Kabul His assassins have not been found and remain unidentified. Karzai has replaced his security detail provided by General Fahim's defence ministry with the US Special Forces, a move that shows concerns over his own personal cocurity I set wook's domonetrations in Kabul extolling Ahmad Shah Masood, the Tajik commander called the Lion of Panjsher', who was assassinated on 9 Sentember, 2001, have been viewed as an attempt by the Taiik Troika to assert control by building a personality cult around their slain leader.

Haji Qadeer, a Pashtun like Karzai, has

pset the delicate balance of power in

Second, until an Afghan National Army is constituted, warlordism will remain a key factor in Afghan politics. Afehanistan sometimes manifests itself as a multi-ethnic, de facto confederation of tribes and linguistic groups led by wardords who often have camaraderie and rapport with neighbours who share an ethnic linguistic or ethnic affinity with them. For instance, there is Pakistan with the Pashtuns, Iran with the Shi'ite Hazara and Farsi-speaking Taiiks and Uzbekistan with the Uzbeks

No iustice in Indonesia

Aggravating the problem is American reliance on the warlords

Oaeda and Taleban in particular

role was underlined during the

recent visit of Iranian President

Mohammad Khatami to Kabul.

when Karzai ensured that the pro-

Iranian warlord who controls

Herat, the main city of western

Afghanistan close to the Iranian

warlord and deputy Defence

who is Uzbek and Turkish-

vell as Turkey. The third conflict could

emanate from the Iran factor

the oppressor regime', making

regime change" in Tehran as

in Baghdad, American media

reports quoted US government

officials as saving that they have

ented as next in line for

of Iranian capacity to influence

warlord Ismail Khan, although

during his 13 August visit to

million in humanitarian and

economic aid to Afghanistan

day before Kharami's visit the

Iranian Foreign Ministry con-

firmed that 16 al Oaeda fivoirive

from Afghanistan, who managed to cross into Iran, had been handed

over to Saudi Arabia, their country

of origin. ♦ (IPS)

Kabul, Khatami did pledge \$560

through Karzai's government and a

austern Afebanistan through

given up on Khatami. Iran is

egime change", although

Minister Consed Packid Doctus

border, Ismail Khan, was present

in the parleys held between the two

ONS - Human rights activists and senior UN officials say that an Indonesian court has imposed a lenient sentence on a former East Timor governor charged with war crimes. "The accused (Governor Abilio Soares) was found guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced to three years' imprisonment which is below the statutory minimum of 10 years," UN High and their forces to track down the a Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, said last week parts of Afghanistan. The warlords The sentence was imposed by a Jakarta war crimes court called the Ad Hoc Human Rights Tribunal, whose creation last year was endorsed by the UN Security Council. Soares faced the death penalty for failing to halt the "large-scale, organised and coordinated violence" after the Indonesian-held territory voted for independence in late 1999. Reports say that over 1,000 civilians died in the rioting. The Tribunal also found the former regional police commander and five other military, police and government officials not quilty. John Miller of the New York-based Fast Timor. Action Network said the verdict shows that the UN should have set un an international war crimes tribunal for Fast Timor similar to presidents. In Mazar-e-Sharif, chiel those created for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. (IPS)

Al Jazeera in trouble

speaking, is close to Uzbekistan as ... It is the "CNN of the Arab world" for many people in the Middle East, but governments in the region are beginning to feel that the Oatar-based Al Jazeera television channel is a chronic especially after the 12 July remarks headache. With at least 35 million viewers in the Arab world and of Bush, when he virtually incited elsewhere, Jazeera has gained prominence for its exclusives or the Iranian people to 'rise against Ocama hin I adan as wall as onen dehates on tahon subjects in contrast to the region's mostly consored media. However, it has also contributed to tension between countries by airing liberal and critical programmes on Arab politics and its regimes. The latest row much of a goal as is regime change involves Jordan Oatar and Saudi Arabia. The government of Jordan closed the Qatar-based satellite news channel's office there last Thursday and recalled its ambassador, saying Jazeera was provoking "sedition" through a broadcast that portraved the kingdom's rulers as "puppets of the United States and Israel". (IPS) Washington is probably oblivious

Shorter, better TB cure

rava come un with a chort rani against tuberculosis that halves the six months needed under the directly observed treatment short course or DOTS, approved by the WHO. Because it is shorter, the new regimen developed at the Tuberculosis Research Centre (TRC) in Chennai city reduces the morbidity and poor compliance associated with DOTS, which relies on the closely supervised administration of a cocktail of four cheap but powerful drugs. "Shorter TB treatment regimens would ease drug administration for both patients and providers," said Shaheed Jawahar, a member of the team that developed the new regimen. To shorten the treatment regimen, the TRC team replaced one of the four drugs in the cocktail, ethambutol, with a more powerful drug oflaxacin, which kills, rather than just weakens. TB bacteria ultra-short regimen cured 99 percent patients in a test run with an 8 percent relapse rate. "This is highly acceptable as the usual rate is 20 percent," said TRC scientist M Shaheed Jawahar. (IPS)

Recycled refugees

WAR - An Afghan refugee tried to set himself ablaze at a refugee repatriation centre in Islamabad earlier this month, supposedly after his anneal for assistance to return home was rejected as fraudulent since he had already been given aid. The success of the UNHCR voluntary repatriation process has only complicated it. Repatriation peaked April - June in what officials say was the fastest voluntary refugee influx in history. By August, over a million refugees had returned from neighbouring countries, mostly Pakistan. But this exodus brought other problems as well. As of 25 July renatriation staff had rejected 53 592 families they suspected of making bogus claims. Official sources estimate that some 230,000 'recycled refugees'—who benefited from UN repatriation packages and went to Afghanistan—have returned to Pakistan llegally, to disappear in rural and urban areas of the country. But beyond just a bureaucratic problem, this trend highlights the difficulty of life in Afghanistan, which prompts returnees to head back again to neighbouring Pakistan, (IPS)

Neither a lender nor a borrower be

- Thai environmentalists are deeply suspicious of a

World Bank offer to give \$8 million to a private company planning a biomass project, calling it a way for developed countries to dodge binding commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The activists were reacting to revelations Sunday of the offer from a special World Bank fund, backed by money from six developed nations, to a Thai company planning a biomass project to generate renewable energy. Through the World Bank Prototype Fund's financial support of this biomass project, the developed nations behind the fund would earn carbon credits allowing them to show good performance in meeting their targets in addressing climate change. Thai activists say it would be risky to enter into this carbon credit offer-the first that the country has received so far They say that by using the Kyoto Protocol's carbon credit scheme to fund environment-friendly technology-transfer projects in the developing world, industrialised countries are taking short cuts to reducing greenhouse gas emissions back home. Thailand has yet to ratify the 1997 Kyoto Protocol that sets targets for cutting greenhouse gases, and to create a mechanism for dealing with such offers. (IPS)

Power games in the Philippines Big projects are irresistible

dollars in dispute over the bankrupt US company's Dabhol Power Co project south of Mumbai, there's no one to negotiate with—and no one in India

India may enjoy a lengthy respite from the messy, long-running wars fought over the \$3 billion Dahbol plant, but the rest of the developing world can't count on such escape hatches. In Southeast Asia alone, Indonesia has similar problems, and now we have the details of just how deep in the Philippines is.

The Philippines power sector was haphazardly liberalised in 1987, and by the early 1990s the country was faced with an acute shortage of electricity. Then president Fidel Ramos got emergency powers to negotiate "fast track" contracts with independent power producers. There are now 48 such contracts, and they are something to behold.

Tax holidays, duty exemptions, "take-or-pay" provisions covering generated power, freely repatriated profits for foreign investors, government loan guarantees, exchange-rate protection—it's all there. By the mid-1990s, the power shortage was a surplus and the Ramos government was signing contracts for projects on which it hadn't even solicited bids. Fixed fuel costs and guaranteed purchases turned the law of supply and demand on its head: The more power produced, the more expensive it got. So far, Manila deals with independent power producers have cost the government roughly \$14 billion—not including the \$0.7 billion the National Power Corp. or Napocor, the former monopoly, pays annually for fuel to run the

Napocor now pays independent power producers about \$75 million a month in fixed energy charges, whether power is generated and consumed or not. That is tacked onto the ordinary Filipino's electricity bill as a "purchased power adjustment". This usually adds 30 percent to 50 percent to the monthly charge. Terrific isn't it? Another monument to the senselessness of the 1990s, when Third World countries such as India and the Philippines were sold not merely lousy power deals, but also the ideology of privatisation.

The mess in the Philippines comes to us via the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, an enterprising outfit of dogged determination. Luz Rimban and Sheila Samonte-Pesavco, two journalists, spent three months investi gating the power sector, interviewing everyone from former president Ramos down. They have published a four-part report; read it at http://www.pcij.org.

Among their coups was obtaining a copy of a report submitted to President Gloria Arroyo last month by a committee of officials from the justice and finance ministries and members of the National Economic and Development Authority. magnets for corrupt officials.



The committee reviewed 35 independent power contracts, PCIJ tells us, and found six to be free of legal or financial defects. Plenty of famous names from the Filipino oligarchy turn up in the PCIJ report, and plenty of foreign investors, too, though none of these companies is specifically implicated in any wrong doing The deal that takes the cake, in PCIJ's estimation, is one struck by Argenti-

na's Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona SA. IMPSA contracted a few years ago to rehabilitate and run something called the Kalayaan Pumped Storage Plant. Napocor has so far paid IMPSA \$50 million for 18 months of operation, though ompany has invested only \$9 million. Independent auditors concluded last week that the plant was not in urgent need of repair in the first place, as Napocor officials had argued from the beginning.

The PCIJ report is more than an indictment of privatisation as applied in

wholly inappropriate circumstances. The issue is how effectively foreign companies can invest in infrastructure projects in regions they don't sufficiently understand. For one thing, big projects are powerful, usually irresistible magnets for corrupt officials. For another, unfamiliarity produces an investment model that fails. The Philippines, Dabhol, an Edison International project called PT Paiton Energy in Indonesia, all are cases in point. "Western investors hedge too much up front as they find the projects risky," a southeast Asian executive power game told me. "That's what produces the imbalances. You can't load un your cost recovery at the beginning. These investors are selling a format that

12 FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

23 - 29 AUGUST 2002 NEPALI TIMES

Two years after I was made responsible for

inceremoniously kicked out, instead of being

rewarded for my work, herause I did not

carry out the orders of Minister fof Informa-

to all 75 districts before being transmitted in

I was called to the ministry Thursday.

knew there was going to be a scene and

that they were trying to remove me. They

progress report of NTV, and said my policy

was impractical, and asked why I hadn't

research by experts, said that Rs 40-50

station. [Tapanath] Shukla said that he could

get one for Rs 15 million. I said, go ahead. It

million was required to set up an earth

sought any loans. My report, based on

sked me about the future plans and

the west loverseas! Minister Gunta was

pressuring me to take a loan of Rs 100

nillion to transmit Nepal TV abroad.

I tried to ensure that NTV was broadcast

tion and Communication Java Prakash

running Nepal Television, I have been

23-29 AUGUST 2002 NEPALITIMES 13

Which top politician has been killed?

Excernts of an interview with General (Rtd) Bharat Keshar Simha

THIS PAGE CONTAINS MATERIAL SELECTED FROM THE NEPALL PRESS



It was fine to think about elections, with Maoists participating, as long as the government had not declared them "terrorists" and sent the army after them. Now the situation is different. They have to either surrender or surrender their weapons and ask for the people's pardon. That would make legal sense and, if they come to elections. terrorist activities, kill security personnel and ordinary people and destroy public infrastructure, and still be brought to join the mainstream during elections? I would not agree to that if I were in the army. Which top politician has been killed? What, does this country only belong to the politicians and not to the people also? The people are dying to save this political system, security forces are being killed, but our society does not seem to recognise that, and wants to bring those who want to destroy this political system into electoral politics. You're worried more about those who want to destroy the system, rather than about those who are fighting to save it? The day we

agree to bring them into the election process, we have to free all the murderers and dacoits from the prisons. How can the state function when all criminals are freed? At one time they [the Manists] were So you don't see a peaceful resolution of the Maoist problem? They need to be crushed? Absolutely. I think justice needs to be done. There must be rule of law in the country. Today if you give them a little space and pardon them, then tomorrow new Maoists will be born. If the government keeps

yielding to a force that continues to murder and spread violence, the present problem may be resolved, but what stops another group from doing the same thing tomorrow? They will again force the government to vield. For the sake of stability, we must not create a situation where the government would be forced to yield Ito such tactics1 repeatedly...

One way to neutralise the Maoists is by assimilating them into the political mainstream, yet you are talking about eliminationÖ

You don't eliminate them or make them ineffective through the use of weapons only. Once you remove its teeth and claws, a tiger becomes harmless, as do snakes whose venom is extracted. [How can] you talk about bringing into the political mainstream those that want to change what has been said to be unchangeable in the constitution, those who want a secular state, those who want an end to the monarchy those who want a constituent assembly, those who do not want multiparty democracy? Let them fightforever-that is what happens in wars. Otherwise we would not have world wars; this is a small conflict. The army has not used half of its arsenal. In all those world wars, peace agreements were signed only after defeat or victory. What is the need to give up the rule of law and bring them into the mainstream? That cannot be. No government must do that. Why should we allow in a snake that could eat

So the state of emergency and military operations must continue. For how long? We cannot say how long it will take. An internal rebellion is one of the most difficult operations for an army, because the enemy cannot be identified. External enemies can be identified easily. Much has been brought under control after the Royal Nepal Army went out onto the field. Now we don't have to hear of attacks like those in Dang and Mangalsen. The army has spoken about being in control and having broken into the intelligence networks of the Maoists. At this rate, if the Maoists don't get the support of foreign

Have we reached a situation that demands direct rule of the king for a certain period? Yes, we need direct rule now. Not only me, even people living in the US say that the constitution should be handed over to the king—let him rule. The constitution provides that space, only it has to be ratified by parliament within six months. If parliament adds that timeframe, it could continue for as long as five years. If that is done and the right things happen, it is impossible that the king's rule will not be ratified. Many intellectuals have also been thinking along these lines...

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

countries, the problem will be resolved soon.

"If they do so (disrupt elections as threatened) they will not disrupt the elections, but destroy

-KP Oli, UML standing committee member in Dristi on 20 August.



Newspaper Headline: 22 Bureaucrats Arrested for Corruption

"Oh hello... Mr Dhungana, Mr Thapa, Mr Regmi, Mr Pant, Mr Tiwari... But how come Mr Nepal, Mr Pokharel, Mr Koirala, Mr Khadka, Mr Wagle, Mr Anand and Mr Gachhedar are missing.....

Iana Aastha, 21 August

Television drama

Durga Nath Sharma in Raidhani, 18 August It is commonly accepted that once the election

Durga Nath Sharma, former general manager, Nepar Iole 17 August

Gunta

date is announced, it is illegal to appoint, retire. nromote or transfer people. I was aware

that the Election Commission had made an inquiry, but whether permitted the act [Sharma's dismissal from NTVI, only the ninister knows. Until today, I have done nothing illegal At this point in my life. I don't want to do anything illegal. I didn't feel it was ethical to play with NTV's future by employing incapable people because they

had connections. I

refuse to kowtow to

was all a drama to try to remove me. A while ago, Minister Gupta pressured me to

those who feel that the Communications Ministry belongs to them. Today, it important to make corporations independent. No one trusts the government media. What little trust is there will be lost if we start employing people on the basis of connections they have. No one

should fall prey to government pressure flashing arminging all (

points to ensure that incapable people got jobs, and Duma Nath Sharma: "But Mr Minster, the code of

get people he was backing into NTV. They'd done

hadly even in the written test. I didn't want to add

Minister for Information and Communication Jaya Prakash Gupta: "Shut up! That should concern only the Election Commission, not the government, got it: Or shall I take you to court?

Deshanter, 18 August

Nepalis in India

dros súmeros s ver since the state of emergency was declared in Nepal, the number of Maoists in India has increased rapidly, especially in the bordering states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal. According to Nepalis resident in India, the Nepal Ekata Samai nanned by the Indian government continues to function. Residents complain that they are harassed by both Maoist activists and Indian ecurity forces. More prone to harassment are Nepali migrant workers. Bhakta Lal Hirachan who runs a lodge in Gorakhpur district India, says, "Previously, thousands of Nepali mierant workers would come seeking jobs. Today, the numbers have

Immediately after the visit to India of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, Hirachan's lodge, patronised by a large number of people from Nepal, was raided twice in the middle of the night. Many Nepali residents like Hirachan told Samacharpatra that the Maoists had created an environment in which normal people trying to make a living were constantly under the suspicion of Indian security forces. While Nepalis living in India for a long period have experienced relativel fewer problems, Nepalis entering India recently in order to escape the murder and violence in Nepal, are getting aught between the security forces and the Maoists. Many have been leaving the bordering Indian states and going inland. As the Maoists wreak havoc in Nepal and then seek refuge in India, the Indian public is beginning to uspect any Nepali of being a Maoist. Children of resident Nepalis being enrolled in schools in India are often

looked on with suspicion by the school administration According to resident Nepali

earlier, members of the Nepali Ekata Samai, an organisation closely affiliated with the Maoists and currently banned, would trouble people for donations Recently their activities have decreased. Tilak Kaku, a high-ranking Indian security official om Uttar Pradesh, told Samachamatra that Indian securit officials were prepared to help Nepali residents who suffered any injustice But like other Indian security officials. he said, "Where are the Maoists in India? The Maoists are in Nepal. If they come here, we can only send them back." Despite this assurance, Maoists, including leaders and cadres, are seeking refuge in bordering Indian

Troubled Maoists Ghatna Ra Bichar, 21 August

Maoists in hideouts in India are having a tough time after lo incom thema security was beefed up in New Delhi. Uttaranchal, Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim, And they have been alienated

from their supporters in India. Among the high Maoist mands Rit Bahadur Khadka, Ajab Lal Yaday, Yan Prasad Gautam and Krishna Sen Ichhuk have been killed, while Krishna Dhoj Khadka, woman leader Rekha Sharma, and youth leaders Shiva Dangi, Tara Bhandari and Shashi Shrestha, etc have been arrested. The Maoist information network has also been assaulted

On the other hand, the Maoist entral command is vertically split. Our sources cay that powerful central committee and politburo members

Mohan Baidhva (Kiran) Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar, Nanda Pun, Poshta Bahadur Bogati, Top Bahadur Rayamajhi, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Dev Gurung, Matrika Yadav, Santosh Buda (Rolm) Ram Dev Chhetri and Buddhi Yonian are firmly agains any talks with the government. A vertical split between those for and against talks with the government is visible within the party.

Prachanda supporters like CP Gaiurel, Haribol Gaiurel, Pampha Bhushal, Hisila Yami, Prakash Dahal, Agni Sapkota, Dr Baburan Bhattarai, Suresh Ale Magar, Shakti Lamsal want to use peace talks as a tool to distract the government from its operation against the Maoists. A third fraction, led by Goral

Khambu and other leaders Jhakku Prasad Subedi, Dipak Dahal, Chatur Man Rajbanshi, is trying to distance itself from both the Prachanda Path and the Badal Path. There are still other Magist leaders who want to use the upcoming elections, Jana Morcha-style: Dinesh Sharma Dina Nath Gauram Basanta Shrestha, Bimala Subedi Devendra Paudel, Dev Nath Yadav Ishwor Chandra Gyawaqli, Jai Krishan Goir, Kumar Dhakal, Kumar Shah, Ramesh Chaulagai Surya Yadav, Surya Thapa, Thamas Pariyar and Hemanta Prakash Oli. We have not been able to learn

the names of seven other leaders who support talks with the government, but our sources tell us that Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Tilak Pariya, Uma Kanta Khanal and Jaya Puri Gharti could be among their

Back at Sundarijal >17

HISTORY

"We are totally cut off from the outside world."



BP's mind is on his trial and he, with Ganesh Man Singh, plan their defence. BP says that regardless of the outcome of the trial, he wants the document to be a testament for wants the document to be a testament for posterity of what he and his colleagues have been fighting for. But this energetic frame of mind soon disappears when BP acknowledges that he isn't doing too well physically, and that the prison authorities are doing their best to keep them totally cut off from the world even a request for writing paper must go to the headquarters.

6th February

Sundarijal: I discussed with GM the line of defence in our case. I read out a portion of the defence arguments that I have prepared—it is not a defence of our case against the specific charges brought by the government against us—it is a formal statement of our line of action in pursuance of our political ideology and conviction. I am not satisfied with what I've already written, because I am not yet clear what line we have to adopt—whether it should be such a one which shouldn't totally kill the chances of possible dialogue with the King or we should go in for a categorical statement of our policy, line, and proposals regardless of the consequence of such a stand. GM doesn't seem to see the difference. He thinks that if the King is himself in need of a dialogue he will open it whatever we may say in the court, and if he is not interested then any opening that we may leave in our statement for negotiation wouldn't be taken advantage of by him. I am not so convinced of his argument. After all a statement purporting to expres an attitude of reconciliation or compromise or even at the minimum level hint towards a dialogue would definitely be differently worded than one that has no such intention. In any event the King is not going to onen a dialogue with us, whatever we state before the court, then it is better that we should also state our political [ideology] as clearlyaddressing it not to the King, but to the people in general. A soft statement in the present context is fruitful only when a corresponding response is expected from the other side. If that is not forthcoming, then a soft statement is worse than useless. It will definitely not be politic or in accordance with the revolutionary ethics. The palace is ominously silent and we are totally cut off from the outside world. W don't know what developments are taking place outside. Hence my dilemma as to the nature of the statement we have to make. Perhaps

the government is very shrewdly acting in keeping us in total darkness about the developments that must be taking place subsequent to our arrival at Kathmandu.

7th February 1977

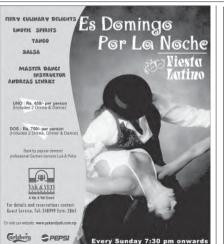
Sundariial: Did some washing-bathed. It continues to be cold. Water continues to freeze. A barber was sent and GM had his hair cut. I cut my hair myself, hence I did not make use of his presence. There was some quessing as why the barber was sent to us without our asking for him. Why are they interested in our looking trim. Will somebody see us from home? Then GM remembers that his shoes have not been delivered to him, or his lacket, even his watch. Hence we dismiss the guess.

Got three days newspapers together-yesterday and day before ing holidays they hadn't come. Yesterday was bida [holiday] some guruji had died day before. Chyanta Guruji perhaps. I knew him in 1st is one of the judges who tried me during Mohan S's time. [Mohan Sumshere, Rana prime minister at the time of the Negal-India Friendship Treaty, during whose reign King Tribhuvan went into exile, and who first enthroned King Gyanendra. During this time, the Nepali Congress had stepped up its activities to overthrow the Rana oligarchy. He was particularly nasty with me. Thereafter the revolution of 1950-51 he became friendly with me and wanted me to take his sons under my wing. Spent the afternoon reading the papers; took a nap of 20 minutes. Since vesterday I am perhaps just enough relaxed to get a midday sleep of 20 minutes. It used to be my practice, but since my detention this time I couldn't get a wink of sleep during the day time-because of high tension. The gradual resumption of

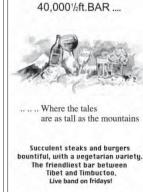
Since I had some bleeding form the nose-yesterday and today, I didn't do my usual pranayam of both the Sandyaa. I did usual exercise in the morning, but gave it up in the evening. The bleeding is perhaps due to cold weather and dry wind—or it may be due to some serious trouble. Although I have asked for a doctor, they don't send him. This time the medical facilities are not adequate and the service is not at all prompt. Considering the feudal treatment given to us, the noncompliance of our request for doctors appears to be in keeping with their policy of keeping us in total isolation. Since we arrived here the doctors visited only twice— one a general physician and the other a dentist. I get constant headache. It may also be due to cold: but it may be due to something else also. Combined with the bleeding of the nose, the headache may be a symptom of some real trouble

8th February 1977 A very sinister tendency on the part of the jail authority-whoever

they are-was evident today when I was told that we couldn't get writing materials without specific authorisation from the HQ. I had asked for some plain sheets of paper; they brought 6 sheets. I said I need 6 Quires [reams of 6 x 24 sheets] whereupon the captain gave me the whole information—that the matter has been referred to the higher authorities. I am aghast at this attitude. If I don't get writing paper, my life here will be extremely unbearable. GM suggests tha we should make use of the newspapers to write on. We should cut them to exercise book size and write our notes or our ideas on the blank spaces available on the printed pages. Now we will have to do that most likely. It passes my comprehension as to the motive of this restriction. I have been asking for a doctor to examine my nose which has been bleeding for some time. The doctor too is not sent. Is it a design to victimise us or is it a precaution against out possible effort to contact people outside though the doctor or to smuggle our notes and messages through pipes or the cook or the sweeper. Anyway I am greatly disturbed. I have been homesick the whole day and was essed and a little ill also: on top of this the captain informs us in the evening that we won't get writing paper without specific sanction from the HQ. It is very awful. We are in such a helpless condition. Sometimes the thought to go on hunger strike occurs to me, but such action would be nothing short of suicide and would be absurd, in view of our total segregation from the outside world. The King would be happy to let me die without the world knowing that I died as a result of hunger strike. I therefore rule out hunger strike. What else can I do here in this stark isolation? Sometimes-mostly immediately after lunch-I feel extremely helpless. My intellect, my analysis says that we are on the right path and that we will ultimately win. But my psychology- my emotional reaction- is unaffected by my reasoning. I remain psychologically disturbed. How to get over this psychological weakness? If only I could







still this psychological agitation!



Austin Powers in Gold Member at GAA Hall, Thamel, 23 August, 5PM, Rs 50 per head.

EXHIBITION Colorgraph prints by Ragini Upadhayay-Grela. 17 Auguat-15 September, Siddhartha Art Gallery, 11AM-6PM, except Saturdays. 218048

The Second Bagmati River Festival Kayak and raft flotilla starting from Sundariial and ending at

- Thapathali, 23 August, friendsofthebagmatinepal@yahoo.com

 Rain dance DJ Ozzie at th poolside lawn, Hotel de l'Annapurna, Rs 300, 2PM-7PM, 24 August
- SAAN St Augustine's Alumni of Nepal School Day dinner, get-together. 28 August, Wednesday, 6PM, Hotel Nirvana Garden, Thamel, dinner Rs 350 per head. saan_sasonians@hotmail.com or Razzu Tuladhar 9810-26357. Tickets also at venue.
- Teei & Food festival Celebrating the colour of Nepali women at the Shangri-la Kathmandu. 24 August 9AM-7PM Free entrance. 412999
- Father Watrin 3 on 3 Street Basketball Championship followed by dance party and concert featuring Albatross, X - marica, Nastic and more. GAA Hall, Thamel, 24 August, 1PM on, Rs 200. Cosmic Party 2002 Bowling party with DJ, lights, food, drink at Bowling Boulevard. 24 August, 3PM on. Tickets Rs 400 at Bowling Boulevard, Kantipath. mg@mail.com.np.

- ELD seminars 3 September: Conflict Management, 4 September: Negotiation, 5 September: Team Building, 2 6 September: Developing Project Proposals. Per workshop Rs 1,500, Rs 1,200 (NGO), Rs 900 (Student). Details at www.eld.oru.dk. early registration at eld@wilnk.com.nb. 541 613
- First aid and rescue at high altitude Free week-long training workshops by Jacques Beaume. 22 September onwards, Alliance Française, 241163

- The Jazz Commission at Fusion with Vidhea singing jazz, blues and more. Fridays, Fusion Bar, Dwarika's Hotel, 7PM on, 479488
- Bakery Café, Teku, Fridays Strings at the Nanglo Café & Pub, Darbar Marg,

New music at the Nanglo Bakery Cafés Thursdays The Thunders at The Sundays The Thunders at the Bakery Café, Baneswor. Shangri-La Re-Unites Prism Friday nights live at the Jazz Bar, starting 8 PM. www.hotelshangrila.com. 412999

- Ladies night at The Rox Bar Wednesdays. Women get a drink on the house, and after 8PM Teesta band plays. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 491234

 ❖ Mountain Madness Special Two-for-one cocktails at Rs 250, and BBQ. Kilroy's of Kathmandu,
- Thamel 250440
- Happy Hour at Splash Bar & Grill Buy one, get one free. Live music Wednesdays and Fridays with Barbeque, Radisson Hotel 5.30 PM-7.30 PM, 411818

- Buy one get one free Cuisine Du Jour, Shangri-la Kathmandu, Rs 700. 412999 Vegetarian specialties with membership discount for Nepalis and expats at the Stupa View
- Restaurant & Terrace Roudha 480262 Weekend lunch by the pool Includes swimming, Rs 700 nett per person, students get 50 nercent off with ID Dwarika's Hotel 479488

- Secret Garden weekend Local residents buy one night for \$99 plus tax and get the second at 50 percent, single or double with special discounted add-ons. Dwarika's Hotel.
- . Monsoon mists Horseshoe Resort, Mude two-and-half hours from Kathmandu. Nature walks, birdwatching, drizzle walks, Finnish
- sauna. resort@horshoe.wlink.com.np Monsoon Madness Buy a two-night three-day package for Rs 5000 at Shangri-la Village,
- Pokhara, get Rs 5000 in coupons for the Shngri-La in Pokhara or Kathmandu. 412999

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

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



CHILDREN'S

DUCATION



Just look at that satellite picture of the subcontinent taken on Wednesday morning. A great low pressure area is sitting pretty tight over northern India and this is the reason for the monsoon squalls of this week, which will continue intermittently into the weekend. This will be immediately followed by the big swirl in the bay which will arrive here early next week bringing more moderate to heavy daytime showers. This monsoon may have been late, but it's not giving up. But by midweek next week we may begin to see more of









Theories of Development: Concepts and Applications William Grain Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1980/1992

Re900 rom Locke and Rousseau to Piaget, Freud and Skinner, scholars have advanced our under-

tanding of psychological development. In addition, Grain discusses the idea of conditioning as advanced by Pavlov, Erikson's eight stages of life, Jung's theory of adulthood and Chomsky's theory of language development. Grain ends with an exploration of the relationship between umanistic psychology and developmental theory.

> Translation, Text and Theory Rukmini Bhaya Nair, ed Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2002 D- 965

This multidisciplinary theoretically sophisticated volume re-evaluates the paradigm of translation within the multilingual and cultural context of the Indian subcontinent. Translation is seen by the contributors as a mode of asking fundamental and difficult questions about cultural identity. In addition, they view translation as a bridge not only between languages, but also between divergent theoretical positions.



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CLASSIFIED

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A love triangle with a twist. What would you do i the one you loved was not actually the one you oved? What would you do if your best friend was in ove with the one you love? What would you do if ou knew your best friends are sacrificing their love or you? Raj (Hrithik Roshan), Pooja (Rani Mukherji) and Tina (Kareena Kapoor) are three best friends thrown into situations that time, letters love and separation create for them in Shimla and London. A Yash Chopra presentation, Mujhse Dosti Karoge is written and directed by Kunal Kohli.



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SOM BALE

NATURE

e day hundreds of years ago, it is said, that a tribal hunter called Keragomba Dorje was hunting in an alpine meadow in the Himalaya The hunter, chasing a wile blue sheep, came upon Milerapa deep in meditation. Before the hunter could kill his prey, the thoughtful Lama persuaded him not to do so. That day a hunter turned conservationist. Today in Manang's Nyeshang valley is a caw known after Milarepa's disciple. The lessons of Milarepa have stayed in Manang valley, where nature is still considered the abode of the spirit world and where all animals are

This, at least, is what I figured on after working in the rain-shadow valley for four years with the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation's (KMTNC) Appropriate Conservation Area Project (ACAP) in the early nineties. But I also learnt about hov occasionally, snow leopards are killed by hired shepherds mostly from adjacent districts, in retribution for the animals having attacked the villagers sheep, goats and expensive horses. In conservation ecology this is called "culling", and it stopped being allowed

in 1993, when ACAP set up office in the district. Although it is acknowland Flora (CITES) and in Nepal edged that a snow loopard attacks the tock only when its natural prey are hard to find, and that to protect the snow leopard means its habitat and Conservation (NPWC) Acr. But, since the inhabitants of neighbours all need to be protected

different In Manang, the chances of a snov leopard encountering livestock, rather than its natural prey, blue sheep, are far higher. Manang Valley supports arge populations of blue sheep—up to eight per sq km-but the number of livestock is equally high, and the biomass of yaks is almost three times as high as that of blue sheep. In addition because of the influence of tourism and changing lifestyle patterns, the number of sheep and goats being bred has increased; these animals are far more vulnerable to snow leopard attack than yaks.

There are currently 300-500 enow learneds_about one-tenth of the world's snow leopard population—in the 2,200 km sq Nepal's eight national parks, conservation areas and hunting reserves cover. And since 1973, snow leopards have been protected internationally by the

ntion on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna under the National Park and Wildlife

Manang depend on animal herding for too, the story in Manang Valley is a bit their livelihood, they've been peritioning ACAP for close to a decade now to allow the culling of problematic snow leopards to continue. Now for ACAP, or rather, the King Mahendra Trust, to allow this, it must first eet approval from the government, but none of Nepal's conservation laws address the possibility of culling endangered species, no matter how much damage they cause. And thus the stalemate continues and instead of conservation professionals understand ing more about the snow leopard, Manang and figuring out possible alternatives to this practice, they seen o know even less than they did before Just a couple of months ago, a collegence of mine rushed into my office to break the 'news' that some 20-22 snow leopards had been killed in

all over our small conservation

Win for Real

community. I was perplexed and

shocked by the news, not because so

local hunters who are now anyway almost non-existent in Manang. Moreover, in places like Manang, strong religious sentiments are agains such mass killing particularly given the snow leopard's legendary place in local folklore. Mananges believe that snow leopards (and domestic cars) an born to remove the sins of past lives: killing these animals means having their sins transferred to your own lif Another folktale describes the snow leopard as a 'fence' for crops, meaning that in the absence of snow leopards livestock would be free ranging and invade crop fields. So, folk wisdom, metaphorically, suggests that the presence of the snow leopard is an indicator of a decent livelihood. Even without any of this, ACAP has conducted hundreds of mobile conservation camps, household visits. street theatres and special classes at schools to create widespread awareness that it is illegal to kill snow leonards Manang. The rumour, he told me, was

One of the reasons such a baseless rumour takes root is that conservation agencies in this country tend to be somewhat oblivious to the work that

Contest extended

to August 31st



conservationists and managers. A quarter of a century after snow leopards n Nepal were first radio-tagged and efforts were started to know more about this secretive cat, they still did not know something very basic: that such massacre needed either a massive poisoning campaign or shooting fron the air, the tools and techniques for neither of which could conceivable work in a place like Manang. For another, less than 15 snow leopards may roam in the entire Upper Manang their fellow workers and agencies are valley. After all, it is just about 600 doing. This is in evidence even in His km sq. and only a third of it is suited Maiesty's Government, which does not tion by the endangered cats, ecologically speaking. The effort required to intentionally

recognise that the Annapuma Conservation Area has the same value for conservation as a national park hunt a snow leopard in such a wild, Annapurna, Nepal's largest protected desolate land is enormous, even for the area, is missing from the list, even though the project was one of the first that linked ecology and the economy in what has since become an internation ally recognised conservation model. Also since 2000 the King Mahendra Trust has initiated a \$2.1 million biodiversity project in Upper Mus with support from major donors. This is the most expensive undertaking in the history of conservation in Nepal devoted to the cause of the snow leopard. The effort to conserve the snow leopard simultaneously in Mustang and adjoining Manang With all these efforts, the truth about something like this snow

leopard rumour would be easy to find out, and the whole process of conservation, and reducing the conflic ween humans and animals would be significantly better informed, if not easier, if there were a well-coordinated central database for biodiversity, which is essential for the long-term management of the country's resources. In the absence of coordination and cooperation, any measures against enviror mental degradation tend to be short-

around. As for mistakes, it just becomes easier to hide them and longer to find out.

There's another hot rumour now the Nepal Country Action Plan, that i being drafted for the snow leopard. It is typically ironic that I did not hear about it formally in Nepal but at the recent Snow Leopard Survival Summit in Seattle in May, where I represented Nepal on behalf of the King Mahendra Trust So we have a management action plan. Now comes the simple matter of making sure the right hand knows what the left is doing. Snow leopards have a difficult enough time n very tough terrain. To do anything for them, we're going to need to be organised.

(Som B Ale is on the permanent staff of the KMTNC. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Biological Sciences at the University of Illinois in Chicago.)



23 - 29 AUGUST 2002 NEPALI TIMES



Under My Hat

bv Kunda Dixit

Guy

here is one day in the year when Nepali guys can make even bigger asses of themselves than they do the other days in the year, and that day is today. (And gals, I've just been informed, can make ienny asses of themselves)

But the question troubling all able-bodied Nepali males of reproductive age is this: are we really prepared for this year's Guy Jatra? Can we in our heart of hearts. say with full self-assurance that our level of idiocy meets international standards? Unfortunately, the answer to both questions is: What's that question again?

It is only now becoming clear that we have been seriously lay on the irreverence from in the last fiscal year, and to make up for this deficit the government has formed a 127-member All-Nepal Guy Jatra Celebration Standing Committee led by the Primeval Minister to mark this year's Cowdung Day with wilder abandon than ever before. All government orifices will be required to eliminate with colourful lights their buildings for three nights, national flags will be sent to the dry cleaners, and Nepali missions abroad will be using this opportunity to apprise the leaders of their host nations of the rapid strides taken by Nepal in the field of farce and buffoonery after the restoration of democracy.

Back home, all of us in the press are required to mark Guy Jatra by mandatorily publishing the following recent news items from the national press:

Politics No Laughing Matter: Minister KATHMANDU (RSS) - The Minister of Parody and

Satire has said that he fails to see the joke in the ongoing political crisis in the country, and has cautioned all citizens to refrain from laughing out loud in public since it would hurt the morale of the armed forces.

The minister made the remark after inaugurating a three-day interaction programme on the theme "Are Our Politicians Clowns?" in Sat Dobato Thursday during which participants could barely suppress their laughter and fell into the aisles clutching their bellies.

Answering questions from journos in a postinteraction ambush, the minister warned: "How can they expect politicians to be serious about their jobs when they keep poking funny things at us? Don't they know it tickles

CIA sues CIAA

IANGLEY, VA. (Reuters) - The Central Intelligence

for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) to the International Court of Justice in The Hague for infringement of copyright by adopting an acronym that

could "create confusion among customers". "We've been around for a lot longer, and the Nepali watchdog should have known better than to have a brand name so similar to ours," spokesman Stan Spooksky told a press conference at CIA headquarters at Langley Thursday.

Spooksky said that the CIA switchboards had "lit up like a fourth of July sky" after the CIAA watchdog announced a sweep of corrupt tax officials in Nepal. "A lot of people thought we

> were involved in the raids, and of course w are nowhere near that theatre of operations, we have our hands full here at home." In Kathmandu

> > a merger.

CIAA officials said they had received the court summons, but were not backing down. "If they don't like our acronym, tough,' said a CIAA operative, but conceded "We wouldn't mind dropping the last 'A', and negotiating

Nepal Has World's Largest Ass

KATHMANDU (Animal Planet) - The Guinness Book of World Records has added new entries from Nepal in its coming edition which includes a young Nepali scientist who has designed the world's fastest clock.

"It's a marvel of engineering, you just wind it up, and it will race against time to be ahead of clocks in any other part of the world," said Dr Baidyanath Upadhyayay of the Royal Nepal Academy of Scientific Technology. "This is another feather in Nepal's cap, since we already have the world's tallest dwarf."

In a separate development, a recent survey of wild asses in the trans-Himalaya have proved beyond doubt that Nepali asses are on average the biggest asses in the world. "Donkeys are usually small and stocky, but the hind quarters we measured had stature, and they made perfect asses of themselves," said veteran zoologist, Dr Roger Schnell.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) has been declared Nepal's most rightwing party, while the present government has been found to be the most-partisan partyless system in

rom ⊏>p1

The Dipankar Buddha was stolen from a family custodian in Nag Bahal ir Patan on the night of 17 January this year (see "Lost and Found Buddha". Nepali Times #94). It resurfaced when the German dealer tried to sell it to the Vienna Ethnographic Museum in April. But the Museum's curator for the Himalaya and South Asia, Dr Christian Schicklgurber suspected that the image may have heen stolen

"The art dealer called m and offered to sell me a golden Buddha head from Nepal," recalls Schicklgruber. "On 29 April, he came to Vienna and showed us his object. We were quite surprised. Never before had I seen anything quite so beautiful."

The Buddha's head turned out to be a rare, and larger-than-life size Dipankar Buddha mask from the 17th century which is venerated in the annual Samvak procession in Patan. The head is about one meter high made of copper and bronze, firegilded and painted. It is richly adorned with cut crystals, turquoise and other precious stones

"The art dealer wanted 200,000 Euros for it, a price which in international comparison didn't appear unreasonably high to me, in view of the rarity, age and quality of the object," Schicklgruber said. "We asked for a week of consideration. The dealer agreed and left the Buddha with us in our depot."

Now things had to move quickly. It had to be determined how the Buddha came to be in Europe, and whether it was stolen. Schicklgruber contacted a Nenal expert at the Department of Tibetology and Buddhism at Vienna University who in turn emailed a photo and description of the Buddha to a

colleague in Kathmandu

promptly the next day: yes, this was the very Dipankar Buddha stolen from Nag Bahal A Nenal nolice report of the theft was also sent. Austrian police and Interpol were then notified, and the Buddha was confiscated by court order to be stored at the museum until it could be legally repatriated to Nepal.

The Austrian state prosecutor began investigation, and lawvers in Vienna. Germany, and the Royal Nepal Embassy in Berlin have been looking at the legal implications. The Buddha consists of five components (head, crown necklace and ear pendants and all five bear the seal of Nepal's Department of Archaeology, which could be genuine or fake. The seal is required to take any religious object out of Nepal. The department was reportedly informed about the theft only on 15 March.

Did the five parts get their export-approval seals from the department before that day? And there are other questions: who were the thieves, was bribery involved, who were the middlemen, can the German dealer prove that he was acting in "good faith"?

But these questions don't trouble Schicklaruber He only wants to find out the fastest way to get the Buddha back to Nepal. He says, "This image plays an important role in the living. religious culture of Nepal in particular the Buddhists

Erwin Melchart is a journalist with the Vienna paper, Kronen Zeitung.



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