

Who will blink first in this tussle between the palace and the political parties?

But the UML, which would not benefit from reinstatement, is sticking to its demand

Ten days after the nine-member interim government was formed, the cabinet has met only twice. To get going, it needs clarity on its

Suddenly, no one is talking about elections. The political parties seem secretly relieved at their postponement, and the interim government has passed the buck to the parties. Only the donors and India still seem keen on

King Gyanendra is keeping his cards close to his chest. Is the palace conducting behind-the-scenes bargaining with the Maoists? Will they agree on a constituent assembly in exchange for berths for Maoist representatives in the interim cabinet? The king's cabinet appointees have been remarkably soft on the Maoists, never using the "it" word, address-

Does the king really have a trump card, or not? Either way, we'll know by December. ♦

DISUNITY IN DIVERSITY: An all-male gathering of six parliament parties on Wednesday, clockwise from foreground: National People's Front, Lila Mani Pokhrel (in white cap), Amik Sherchan, Chitra Bahadur KC, Pari Thapa, Nepal Workers' Peasants' Party, Narayan Man Bijukchhe, Chairyang Nigale, Nepal Congress, Ramsharan Mahal, Krishna Silautu, Govinda Raj Joshi, Arjun Narasing KC, girija Koirala, Sushil Koirala, Chandra Lokshu, UML, Subhas Nirwaga, Ishwar Pokhrel, Madhav Kumar Nepal, Bharat Mohan Adhikari, KP Oli, Yubraj Karki, RPP, Prakash Chandra Bhandari, Thapa, Bahadur Nath Samra, Sadbhawana Party, Farid Hishan Tripathy.

Suddenly, no one is talking about elections. The political parties seem secretly relieved at their postponement, and the interim government has passed the buck to the parties. Only the donors and India still seem keen on

King Gyanendra is keeping his cards close to his chest. Is the palace conducting behind-the-scenes bargaining with the Maoists? Will they agree on a constituent assembly in exchange for berths for Maoist representatives in the interim cabinet? The king's cabinet appointees have been remarkably soft on the Maoists, never using the "it" word, address-

Does the king really have a trump card, or not? Either way, we'll know by December. ♦

“The villagers’ support keeps me going..”

The villagers are devastated. The 45-year-old major was a benefactor: not only did the hotel provide employment, but he had helped renovate three schools in the area and given 35 girl students scholarships. He was working on an ambitious project to establish a well-equipped health post with a maternity ward which was going to be inaugurated after Tihar. The villagers can't think who will complete the hospital and help the schools.

and oppressed villagers are living, there is no lessening of support for the *maobadis*, there is no government, and there is no alternative for the people. They have nothing to lose. Keeping aside the morality and the methods of the *maobadis*, they seem to offer the only hope. I am keeping myself busy with the construction of our rural health centre...the villagers' support keeps me going..."

TOP CLASS
*Shoes that match
your style*

Men's Road
Tel: 04400 60000

Now to implement it....



An awareness program in Hetauda to warn women and men about the dangers of unsafe abortions.

PHEMLATA RAI eristent advocacy efforts by women's reproductive rights and health activists have finally paid off. The first hard-won results of their intense lobbying came this March, when parliament approved the 17th Amendment to the Muluki Ain, which for the first time in Nepal legalised abortion, if conditionally. Last month, the Bill finally became an Act after receiving the royal seal. But legalising abortion in some situations is not an end in itself. Public health workers say

that the hard part begins now—implementing the law effectively. Unsafe abortion is identified as a major killer of women of reproductive age in Nepal—studies say that as many as six women die everyday due to abortion-related complications. Knowledge travels very slowly here. Even court judges don't know, at the moment, that abortion is legal in certain situations," says Sabin Shrestha, an advocate associated with Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD). Shrestha and others fear that this lack of

knowledge means that women will continue to be victimised. An FWLD study report made public earlier this year is damning about the unbending attitude of the court judges all over Nepal towards women facing abortion charges. The study, which covers the period from 1997-1999, found that 68 percent of women facing abortion charges were convicted. In 1997, one in five women in Nepal's jails is incarcerated on the charge of abortion. Reproductive rights activists worry in private that the

The new law on abortion has many gaps, and the government doesn't seem too keen on making it work fast.

immediate approval from the palace following approval from parliament. But the amendment to the Civil Code that legalised abortion had to wait six months to get the royal approval. And in that time, virtually nothing was done to educate the general public or even the bodies that would be responsible for enforcing the legislation.

The new law does nothing for women currently in custody on abortion charges. "The present law fails to decriminalise those already in legal custody," says Shrestha. The law is completely silent about releasing those already convicted, and even about women currently

under trial. As with other crimes, women already convicted of abortion can only be relieved by a royal pardon on the recommendation of the cabinet. Those under trial can have their cases withdrawn by the court, again following a cabinet recommendation.

The women serving time aren't really in a position to demand that their situation be reviewed. A study by the US-based Centre for Reproductive Law and Policy with FWLD found that a majority of women on trial or in prison for abortion had no legal representation, and 60 percent of them never even went to school. These women

What the law says

Nepal's new abortion law might have gaps, but its basic provisions are considered by reproductive health and women's rights activists to be more liberal than those in other South Asian countries. Abortion is now legal under the following conditions:

- Up to 12 weeks for any woman.
- Up to 18 weeks of gestation if the pregnancy results from rape or incest.
- At any time during pregnancy, with the recommendation of an authorised medical practitioner, if the life of the mother were at risk, if her physical or mental health were at risk or if the foetus was deformed. (The law does not specify what degree of deformity would make abortion permissible.)

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

by DANIEL LAK

Valley of Unreality

I may be self-evident to many, even all too obvious. But it can be overlooked. There's Kathmandu, and there's Nepal. A deep and deep divide between capital and country is growing wider by the day, and into the gap flow the Maoists and the unmet aspirations of their constituency, the rural people.

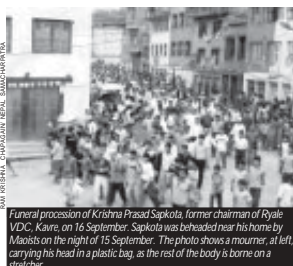
We can argue for hours about whether they actually support the Maoists or not. But one glaring, indisputable fact reality must be faced: the people of the countryside are not actively opposing the rebels, whether or not they back them.

On a recent trip to Mude, to look into the tragic death of Mohan Khatri (casualties of this 'people's war' always seem more tragic when they're known to you) we stopped many times to take the local temperature. Arbitrary, inaccurate, hopelessly shallow, our straw poll yielded of these and more, and yet I have no doubts about the sense of hopelessness and passivity that oozed from every shop, every bazaar, every chaupal.

In Mude, the people express sorrow over the death of a kind and active citizen. Mohan Khatri mattered to that town. Yet ask people why they believe he was murdered, and they mutter that he was doing the wrong by helping the army train its officer recruits. A few people hide behind their hands and condemn the Maoists who murdered Khatri, but no one thinks that anything can be done about it.

They laugh when you mention the police. They look mystified when questioned about the army's intentions, they have no idea if there are other brave souls who might resume Mohan Khatri's good works. As for the authorities in Kathmandu, "Government, what government," wheezed an old man, speaking around his cigarette, "there hasn't been any development, any government there for years."

Similar scenes and encounters abound in other places. Triplicate in Katre, under a fly of a shiny new training complex for Nepal UN peacekeepers, at least had a functioning VDC office. But no one wanted to



talk to strangers about Maoists. The most expansive response to our queries was a finger swirled in the air, meaning "they're all around." In Kuzhadevi village, alone a rural straggled just outside Panauti, what should be a prosperous community huddles in fear and anticipation. A local official talks volubly and anonymously about the deaths of VDC chairman Krishna Prasad Sapkota of the UML, a few months back. She was one of those few, one of the last probably, who stood up to oppose Maoist influence in his village. He was beheaded at midnight during the last Nepal bandh. Now his village waits for the next visit by those demanding money

There is Kathmandu, and then there is the rest of Nepal.

or recruits, and families quietly migrate to Kathmandu and poverty.

The unreality begins at Bhakpur and worsens as you drive past Thimi and Gathinagar, finally reaching Tinkune and dear old Kathmandu. Wai-wai and cola signs bloom like weeds, a mini-property boom sees paddies terraces fall to brick houses and shops. The roads are choked with vehicles, the air foul. The smell of money being spent fantastically before either official or unofficial tax collectors comes calling. Signs on government buildings boast of lavish and largely meaningless programs jointly funded with international agencies. The frantic bustle eclipses fear, the city ignores the tightening steel band that even now seems to be squeezing the edges of the Valley of Unreality.

In Kathmandu, a prime minister rightly calls for peace talks, and gamely promises elections and relief to the people. In the countryside, those who've long lost faith in the capital city's ability to solve their problems await—passively—the next instalment of their wretched fate. They've given up trying to influence their futures, unless forced to. The rift widens, and nature takes a vacuum, especially when it's ignored by those who have the means but not the will to fill it.

And I don't just mean the politicians. I mean everyone in this city. Why help the people when there's black money to spend, intrigue to enjoy, a looming threat to deny.

All this from a quick trip up the Arniko Highway to the road to Jiri. Imagine what it's like along the rutted road to Liliang, the track through Jajarkot, the trading trails of Pyuthan, Surkhet and Rukum. ♦

lack family support and access to social rehabilitation facilities.

The other glaring omission in the new law is that while it technically legalises abortion, it does not actually make provisions for improving access to safe abortions. The new law

fixes 12 weeks as the upper time limit for a woman to have a legal abortion, but often that's just not enough time for a rural woman who has to first make a tough choice, nearly always with no counselling or professional advice, and then take time out to travel elsewhere, funds permitting, to have the procedure. "The proportion of women approaching unqualified practitioners and outflow to India for abortion is not likely to drop immediately," says Anand Tamang, director of CREHPA.

In order to make safe abortion services more easily available, the new law allows trained health workers at health post levels to perform abortions. A 12-week time period is fixed as the safest period within which to have an abortion, and the technique is relatively simple. Activists like Tamang are satisfied with this provision, but caution that it needs to be revised in about five years to the WHO standard of 20 weeks. The overall improvement in health facilities, says Tamang, will likely allow for the change.

The majority of women in urban areas seeking abortion services are those with unwanted and mistimed pregnancies. A CREHPA survey shows that almost 43 percent of women seeking medical outlets reported dealing with clients for whom contraception had failed, and nearly three-fourth reported receiving clients with unwanted pregnancies.

The law was also put into place before the Ministry of Health could draft a new abortion policy. One of the most critical issues that will be addressed in the draft policy, consultations for which will begin next month, is pricing. One impact of the legalisation of abortion is expected to be a drop in the cost of the procedure. Before legalisation, an abortion in the first trimester used to cost Rs 7000 to Rs 10,000. The CREHPA 2000 survey found that the 52.5 percent of urban-based medical practitioners expected the cost in drop if abortion were legalised, while 38 thought it would "only to some extent".

Monitoring abortion practices will be another difficult legal challenge. Medical practitioners fear that Nepal will see a spurt of sex-selective abortion. According to the CREHPA survey, 36 percent of the surveyed doctors said sex selective abortion will increase "to a large extent". ♦

At any time during pregnancy, with the recommendation of an authorised medical practitioner, if the life of the mother were at risk, if her physical or mental health were at risk or if the foetus was deformed. (The law does not specify what degree of deformity would make abortion permissible.)

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortion is legally punishable if it is sex-selective abortion, or if it is performed without the consent of the mother.

Abortive attempt

Legalising it does not ensure accessibility, or affordability of safe abortion.

ARUNA UPRETI

A small, shy woman comes into our clinic in far-flung Nepal. "What is your problem?" I ask her. "I am pregnant, but," she breaks off. I figure she wants to know whether she is pregnant or not. "No, she says, "I want you to help me to get rid of this."

The health worker sitting next to me is shocked. "But, it's illegal. It's a crime." The patient looks puzzled. Isn't it true that the government has passed a new law now making abortion legal? The health worker says that's not true, where did she hear such a thing? Both looked at me. I asked the patient how the new abortion was not illegal anymore. "I heard it on the radio," she replied. The patient knew, but this health worker in far-flung Nepal hadn't yet heard that parliament had, indeed, passed the law. At that time two months ago, it still needed the formal approval of the king.

Most of us health activists think that our work is done when we lobby to change the laws. We think that by addressing the legal aspects of the problem, whereby law will be solved. Also, with everything else in this country, it's not the law that is the problem but its implementation.

And in this case, it is that even health workers don't know when the law has been changed. What is the value of all our lobbying and activism in Kathmandu if doctors and health workers haven't heard of it yet? The other issue is that even though abortion may be legal, most health posts like the one I was in do not have the proper facilities for carrying out the procedure.

The patient looked sad and worried, and slowly left the clinic. She probably went to a quick down the road, which is the reason why so many pregnant women die in this country because of unsafe abortions, and why the law needs to be passed.

We in Kathmandu think that if we know something, the whole country knows it as well. That is a

wrong impression. We now know that even within Kathmandu, and even among professionals knowledgeable does not travel. And in many cases this lack of knowledge makes the difference between life and death.

A few weeks ago I was on Channel Nepal to discuss the new law on abortion. When we were asked the question, one of the panelists said with a straight face on camera: "According to the law a woman can have abortion only after her husband gives her permission." I was quite astonished by his ignorance, and I asked that this section of the tape be expunged because it was patently wrong.

Nepal is a good example of a country where persistent advocacy efforts by women's reproductive rights activists and strong support by research findings have significantly influenced the government to reforming the abortion law. The challenge now is to disseminate accurate information among health workers, lawyers, police as well as activists and cadre of political parties.

The medical profession is as much in the dark as any one else about the provisions of the new law. One male medical student recently asked me: "Don't you think that it would be inappropriate to give legal rights to women on the issue of abortion?" My response was that the rights had already been granted. The priority now was to make sure that the services are available in the district hospital.

From field experience so far of the medical sector, it will not be easy for the government to implement this law. We may soon see that private hospitals will start providing abortions at high cost, government hospitals in cities will also have the service, but a vast majority of rural areas will be left out. Legalising abortion does not ensure accessibility, nor affordability. Posing the law was only the first step. ♦

(Dr Aruna Upreti is a women's health and reproductive rights activist.)

Annapurna to Everest Race

More than 30 runners from 8 countries and 5 Nepalis will do a high-altitude race from Annapurna Base Camp to Mt Everest Base Camp starting next week to kick off the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the ascent of the world's highest mountain.

The runners will race through six major Himalayan passes, including Thorung La, Larkya La, Lauribinyak, Chuguma La and descend down to the Khumbu Glacier via Gokyo and Kalpa Pattar. All the high passes are more than 5,000 metres altitude.

The Himal Race is billed as the "ultimate trail" by its organiser, Himalaya Racers Association and Mandala Trekking. The runners will first trek to Annapurna Base Camp on 31 October, from where they will begin running and finish up at Everest Base Camp in the third week of November.

Himalaya Racers and Mandala have in the past organised marathons, including the Annapurna Mandala Trail. (For further information: www.mandalatrek.com)

Jyoti Dudwai is back

The Nepali who has made public installation art his forte has returned once more from the United States to his motherland for a series of exhibitions on recurring themes of peace.

After a highly successful exhibition at Hanuman Dhoka in 2001, Dudwai will kick off his shows this week with a public art installation called "Remembering Peace" at Rani Pokhari 26-30 October 2002. He then goes on to Pharing to work on a unique Peace Grove concept 2-9 November.

The Rani Pokhari installation uses art to express the Nepali people's aspiration for peace. As a metaphor for renewal and healing, herbal flowering trees and fruit trees will be planted in juice bags around Rani Pokhari. "It symbolises the hopes for peace and regeneration in Nepal and across the world," says Dudwai.

The saplings will form a Peace Grove around Rani Pokhari, and on 2 November other saplings will be taken to Pharing for another Peace Grove forest reserve which will be maintained by Sarki and Kami women from the Seshnarayan Village Community.

Baburam's guru's school bombed

Maoists have continued their attacks on schools across the country by bombing the school in Kailali run by the high school teacher of their leader, Baburam Bhattarai. A dozen or so armed Maoists entered the school ground on the night of 16 October in Tikapur, threatened the teachers, ransacked the offices and blew up the main building after wiring it up with explosives.

The non-profit school was run by T Varughese, a south Indian teacher who had spent eight years at the Luitel School in Gorkha where Baburam Bhattarai was his student in the 1960s. Also in the same class as Baburam was the health minister in the interim cabinet and famous neurosurgeon, Upendra Devkota. After leaving Gorkha, Varughese had spent the past 25 years building and running three schools in Nepal's remote western Kailali district which focussed on education for underprivileged children.

Varughese was in the United States when the attack happened and the 500 students were on Dasain holiday. Sources in Kailali said the school had received several external threats in the recent past and was one of the last remaining non-government schools still open in the far-western district.

The school that was bombed was named after Khadga Bahadur Singh, who launched the Tikapur Development Project. The school was expanding fast, and a new wing had been added. Varughese was also planning to add a 10-12 section to meet the demand for students who would otherwise have to go to India or Kathmandu for further studies. These plans will now be shelved, it is learnt.

Varughese came to Tikapur in 1973 and first set up a high school, which was inaugurated by King Birendra and was later called Birendra Vidya Mandir and still has 1,000 students as well as a dormitory for out-of-town students.

Rumours in the air

Friends and well-wishers are concerned again about Subash Gurung, a Nepal national who pleaded guilty to the post 9/11 US federal offence of attempting to board an aircraft with a dangerous weapon. After working hard to get that Subash, who was cleared of any supposed terrorist connections when a US judge proclaimed at the sentencing that he had no evil intentions, they have been worried about rumours that the Nepal authorities plan to take Subash into custody once he arrives back in Nepal from Minnesota.

Apparently, though, they're just rumours. When asked, the Home Ministry, media outlets, and the Nepal Police told Nepali Times that they knew nothing about the supposed plans. Sentencing guidelines in the US would normally have called for a five-month sentence for a first-time offender with no prior record. Earlier, the court also ordered psychiatric treatment for Subash, which, his friends say, helped him greatly.



The economics of politics

The week Nepalis were left without a government brought news of the biggest foreign investment in the country. Australia's Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation announced it would begin constructing the \$860 million West Seti hydro-electric project in 2004 and start running it four years later.

The company has been working on the 750 MW project in the far-western development region since 1996. So we shouldn't read too much into the fact that a prime minister representing the western extreme of the country has been succeeded by someone from the same region. (Actually, this is the second time Lokendra Bahadur Chand has succeeded Sher Bahadur Deuba in nearly six years.)

The timing of Snowy Mountain's announcement is propitious for pondering the money-politics link from a different perspective. Chandra's hands are full. Worse, they are tied by perceptions of illegality at home and lack of enthusiasm abroad. His room for manoeuvre in the mortified mainstream may be severely circumscribed. The Maoists, freshly certified as a party, the wealthiest rebel movements in Asia, might continue to see greater advantage in keeping their war machine running. Commercial considerations can confer political legitimacy. An

affluent agglomeration of Nepalis seems dead against reviving the politics that existed before 10.45 PM on 4 October. The business community was the first organised group to welcome the palace's freshly certified as a party, the wealthiest rebel movements in Asia, might continue to see greater advantage in keeping their war machine running. Commercial considerations can confer political legitimacy. An



Foreign investors are looking for politically stable countries, not places with free press where citizens are allowed to vote.

begin warning politicians not to count on their patronage in the next elections. One industrialist threatened to produce explosive diaries that would rattle the political establishment. His threat, repeated over several newspaper interviews, carried clear traces of revolution with how leading politicians had become successful merchants as well. His refrain: For people trying

and his allies characterised our conflict as one between an elected government and rebels bent on subverting democracy. Deeper down, though, the dispute had economic roots exacerbated by Belgium's regional divide. The multi-million-euro arms contract has been awarded to Fabrique Nationale Herstal, headquartered near Liege in the Wallonia area. French-speaking Belgians accused their Flemish colleagues of trying to sabotage the fragile Wallonian economy.

How foreign investors view Nepal's two giant neighbours could clarify our understanding of the economics of our politics. In the past 10 years, India has attracted an estimated \$30 billion in foreign investment, split evenly between direct and institutional investment in equity markets. China has raised over \$300 billion in foreign direct investment alone.

India attracts foreign investment of \$30 per capita, compared to China's \$497. With 150 million subscribers, the Indian's largest e-commerce market, compared to India's six million. There are a million Internet connections in India as against 30 million in China. (And we thought everybody was listening in to everybody else up north.) You could insist that China began liberalising its economy a full decade before India did. For that argument to hold, though, you'd have to be reasonably confident that, by 2012, India would be where China is today. Are you?

If not, here's the next question: What helped China overtake the United States the top of AT Kearney's Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index (Nepali Times #115, The World Paper)? Robust economic growth? Entry into the World Trade Organisation? Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Olympic? All three. But before all that, a relatively stable political environment, according to foreign investors.

Translation: Tibet and Tiananmen Square are just quaint attractions in the world's fastest-growing market for both inbound and outbound travel.) A plethora of parties, a strong legal system, English education and a free press don't necessarily create a congenial investment climate. This should worry Nepal's politicians more than our economists. ♦

Finest Convention Hotel on the foothills of Shivapuri National Park in Kathmandu

Park Village Hotel & Resort

Budhanil-kantha

- FULL FEEDING BANIAN CONVENTION CENTER WITH 5 MEETING HALLS
- 48 IN-LAKE ROOMS
- 2 RESTAURANTS
- SWIMMING POOL AND HEALTH CLUB
- 6 ACRES OF ARBORETUM
- OPEN AIR THEATRE
- AND NATURE UNLIMITED

www.kghhotels.com



Tel: 375200, 375279 Fax: 371656, Email: park@kgh.com.np

Double Lunch Delights
Buy one, get one free!

Garden Terrace

Step into the Garden Terrace for excellent Buffet Lunches from around the world. International Buffet Lunch for Rs.125/- only per person. Menu changes daily. For reservations call 277800 or 8122



Garden Terrace, Nepal Tel: 975-277800, 277801, 277802, 277803, 277804, 277805, 277806, 277807, 277808, 277809, 277810, 277811, 277812, 277813, 277814, 277815, 277816, 277817, 277818, 277819, 277820, 277821, 277822, 277823, 277824, 277825, 277826, 277827, 277828, 277829, 277830, 277831, 277832, 277833, 277834, 277835, 277836, 277837, 277838, 277839, 277840, 277841, 277842, 277843, 277844, 277845, 277846, 277847, 277848, 277849, 277850, 277851, 277852, 277853, 277854, 277855, 277856, 277857, 277858, 277859, 277860, 277861, 277862, 277863, 277864, 277865, 277866, 277867, 277868, 277869, 277870, 277871, 277872, 277873, 277874, 277875, 277876, 277877, 277878, 277879, 277880, 277881, 277882, 277883, 277884, 277885, 277886, 277887, 277888, 277889, 277890, 277891, 277892, 277893, 277894, 277895, 277896, 277897, 277898, 277899, 277900, 277901, 277902, 277903, 277904, 277905, 277906, 277907, 277908, 277909, 277910, 277911, 277912, 277913, 277914, 277915, 277916, 277917, 277918, 277919, 277920, 277921, 277922, 277923, 277924, 277925, 277926, 277927, 277928, 277929, 277930, 277931, 277932, 277933, 277934, 277935, 277936, 277937, 277938, 277939, 277940, 277941, 277942, 277943, 277944, 277945, 277946, 277947, 277948, 277949, 277950, 277951, 277952, 277953, 277954, 277955, 277956, 277957, 277958, 277959, 277960, 277961, 277962, 277963, 277964, 277965, 277966, 277967, 277968, 277969, 277970, 277971, 277972, 277973, 277974, 277975, 277976, 277977, 277978, 277979, 277980, 277981, 277982, 277983, 277984, 277985, 277986, 277987, 277988, 277989, 277990, 277991, 277992, 277993, 277994, 277995, 277996, 277997, 277998, 277999, 278000

We take pride in jobs well done.

jayraj@mos.com.np
Phone: (01) 521393, 543017, 547018
Fax: 977-1-536390
JAGADAMBA PRESS



More traffic jams

The total number of vehicles registered in Kathmandu Valley and surrounding areas increased by nearly 16 percent in the past year, according to the Department of Transportation. At this rate, the number of vehicles on the streets of Kathmandu will double in the next five years. Motorcycles increased by over 20 percent, and two-wheelers now make up nearly 70 percent of all vehicles in the capital.

There are about 50,000 trucks, cars, jeeps and vans in the capital and nearly 136,000 motorcycles. The government registered 369 new diesel mini buses, but is still refusing to allow a prototype electric bus. This means more traffic jams, and more polluted air.

LIC getting into reinsurance

The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India first came to Nepal in 2001, but is now considering setting up a reinsurance company and a mutual fund here. LIC wants to get together with General Insurance Corporation and also set up the first housing finance company in Nepal, according to media reports in India. Nepal could become the first overseas provider for LIC Mutual Fund and LIC Housing Finance in the world. It is partnering with Nepal's Vishal group. It also plans to expand its investments into Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

Calcutta holiday traffic hit

Despite assurances that Indian tourists entering Nepal are no longer required to carry passports or voter ID cards, the message doesn't seem to have reached Calcutta.

And this severely affected the flow of Indian tourists to Nepal during the Purnima holidays last week, according to travel agents in Calcutta. Bengali families with children were finding it difficult to arrange the documents, and this adversely affected their travel plans, according to Dilip Sengupta of Kundu Travels. Together with fears of political instability, Nepal-bound holiday traffic was down 70 percent from last year. Royal Nepal Consul-general in Calcutta, Ghanashyam Lalmsal, told The Times of India that the document requirements had been imposed "with mutual consent" between India and Nepal.

Pressure cooker sales plummet

The manufacture and sale of pressure cookers has dropped dramatically in the past year since the Maoists started using them for explosives and the security forces restricted their availability in the marketplace.

Pressure cooker factories in Birganj, Butwal and Biratnagar have started closing down. Two factories in Birganj that used to produce 380 cookers a day and employed 70 workers have closed down. Brenda Kumar Jaiswal of Indian Industries says she stands to lose millions in investment.

Many downstream industries that supplied raw materials to the cooker factories are also going out of business. The only place where cookers can still be sold is in Kathmandu, everywhere else there are restrictions. In the absence of pressure cookers, fuel consumption has gone up.

NEPAL IN THE FOREIGN PRESS

TAIPEI TIMES

IAN BARTHOLOMEW

Nepal has had a rough year with massive flooding and an upsurge in violence by Maoist insurgents. So the trekking season, which runs roughly from late September through to early December, opens, businesses, which rely heavily on the surge of tourist traffic during the time, face bleak prospects as cautious travellers find safer destinations.

But it is an ill wind that brings no good to anyone. The trekking season is the lifeblood of the kingdom's seemingly endless political difficulties. It is a time when they can avoid the crowds, even along some of the most popular trekking routes. "It's an opportunity to leave the mountains to yourself," said a lone Australian trekker met on the Annapurna Circuit late last month. The circuit is often disparagingly labelled "The Coca-Cola Trail" because of the relative ease of procuring material comforts along the way.

Passing through the police checkpoint outside the town of Chame late on a wet, blustery afternoon, only three other trekkers had passed that day according to the police log, which the border troops were more than willing to show us. "Normally at this time [late September], we can expect up to 300 people to stay overnight in Chame," said the proprietor of the Sanghes Hotel, where our group of three were the only guests.

The Maoist troubles here do little to affect the area around Annapurna, but talking the bus out from Kathmandu and the trekking at Besiashar, around a seven-hour bus ride away, the interminable police and army checkpoints were a constant reminder of the kingdom's political malaise. Tourists were generally treated with courtesy by the sometimes dangerously under-equipped troops, and even the Maoists, according to Tika Raj, a trekking trip operator in Kathmandu, generally only request "donations" from trekkers. Last time we met with them, each hour and the guide we



then \$100. They even gave us a receipt in case we met with other Maoist groups," he said. For an upcoming trek around Manaslu, he had advised his clients to have some spare US dollars on hand.

Along the well-established route of the Annapurna Circuit, such dangers seem far away, as trekkers hike from one comfortable tea-house to the next. In the 20 years since the circuit has been opened to tourists, the windmills insect-infested mud huts with wooden bunks have become more amenable to tourist tastes. Solar-heated hot water is one of the great luxuries of the trek, and the price of a hot shower is just Rs 30 for a triple room.

We had set off early, and soon found ourselves fighting for breath as we fought our way up a steep ascent. Above us, the top of a ridge of Australian and one from Oman on the fifth day of our trek, after a blustery day with only intermittent sun, there was a general rush for the showers and smug congratulations afterwards. In the evening, we were all warm and dry, and the very limited supplies of warm water. The camaraderie of the trail is also a large part of Annapurna Circuit's appeal. Sitting down over

Rx for Nepal

Can we use this time to chase good ideas with good money?

After the institution of the interim government in Nepal, the Beed has been bonded with questions about the future of the Nepali economy, and developments in general. But, the festive season has perhaps turned the Beed temporarily into an optimist. So here's my suggestion: why aren't we asking what opportunities this situation provides, instead of looking at it from the traditional Nepali perspective of failure and disaster.

While an efficient democratic system is often held to be the foundation of a good economy, it isn't necessarily, evidently, that economies only flourish under a participatory democratic political system. Look at Singapore or China, or the complexity of the Indian economy. Strong political will can override the limitations of any system. A political system by any old name is still a better governance.

If it's true that elections aren't possible before November 2003, let's just put up with the interim government and get on with preparing for our future which, one way or the other, will eventually come to pass. Do we really need a bicameral legislative system or can we do with fewer lawmakers. Do we need the multitude of ministries and 75 districts that divide administrative and government costs?

Do we really need a planning commission? Perhaps a single ministry can take care of finance, local development, planning, implementation and control.

Eminent Nepali scholars have dealt with all these matters—Dr Harika Gurung on district divisions, Madhukar Rana on the integration of ministries, Dipak Gyawali on restricting the possibilities of making politics a life-long profession. Nepal academia comprises people who can hold their own even outside lecture halls. If the interim government recognises them, and the donor community can fund well-advised, if radical ideas, this phase will be worth it.

The prescriptions for the economy are clear: improve revenue, reduce costs, decentralise decision-making and punish the corrupt. Governance, foreign investment and a conducive business environment will follow automatically. It's vital to reduce the cost of government, and continuously monitor corruption. One way to begin doing this is legitimising campaign finance and demanding transparency.

We need most of 15 decentralised financially autonomous regions in the country. Parallel to this, the central government needs to be reduced drastically to 10 ministries, and departments within ministries need to be slashed. A donor-supported enterprise development

and training fund can be created by the government to take care of government servants who are let go. Pension money outflow would go down, and perhaps a lot more would be available for remaining employees to function efficiently, possibly through a substantial performance-based increase in emoluments. Maybe we'll finally realise how weird it is that offices in urban areas close at 4 PM in the winter. Fewer parliamentarians will mean fewer ministers, too. A unicameral 125-member House should dovetail with the division of local government, the key to development and empowerment. Revenue collection needs to be reorganised and GDP must be examined in light of total revenue collection. Increased revenue may come from higher land revenue taxes and no income tax, or through expanded economic activity that emerges out of conducive tax laws.

The Beed has discussed all this before, but this provides a good opportunity to pull everything together. There is an opportunity for administrative and other reforms. The interim government can set the stage for democratic institutions, including the political parties, to contribute better after the next elections. ♦

(Readers can post their views to arthabeed@yahoo.com.)

Finding your own Nepal

With political problems keeping tourists away, this is probably one of the best times to visit the Himalayan kingdom.

town of the same name where the real people lived. The Jagat we passed through was largely for tourist consumption.

Many of the locals we met along the trail were there solely to cater to the needs of trekkers. A baker in Manang, who managed to produce a chocolate brownie to die for, said that apart from the trekking season, he lives in Kathmandu. Asked how hard it was to yak Kharka, the most major stop along the trail, he shrugged. "I have never been there," he said. "Getting to Manang is quite difficult enough."

Along the path of the beautiful trekking world, some of nature's greatest wonders lie, sometimes dimly among the clouds, sometimes pressing against you, their massive proportions terrifying and beautiful. The high point of the trail, in every sense, is the crossing of Thorung La at 5,400 m. From Manang (2,540 m), it normally takes two days of climbing to reach the staging point at Chashu Phedi (4,450 m).

Around 20 trekkers would cross the pass the next day, but spread along the interminably rising trail, a black line of wet rock and scuttling snail-moon and difficult snow. Buses may feel completely alone, the only sound your own laboured breathing, the creak of your harness and the occasional rattle of rock displaced by a heavy footfall.

From the pass, the long descent to MuktiNath, 1,600 m below, brings you out of the wild and back to the relative ease of the tea-house circuit. At MuktiNath we stayed at the Hotel Bob Marley, which seemed too incongruous to bypass in one of the region's holiest sites on the very edge of the Tibetan plateau. Here we were invited into a Tibetan nunnery, and on the outskirts, watched the arrival of pilgrims who visit the MuktiNath temple complex that has structures sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists.

After the high pass and the closest approach to the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas, you descend into the valley of the Kali Gandaki River, which boasts the deepest river gorge in the world and some outstanding white-water rafting on its lower reaches. The Annapurna Circuit is only a small slice of the enormous diversity that Nepal has to offer. Even the presence of the Beed seems to offer more of a thrill to most tourists rather than a real threat. That the violence and political instability are very real seems readily hidden behind the offer of magnificent scenery and the sense of adventure. It's rather like the town of Jagat. The facade is more than adequate, and the harsh reality of poverty and dirt all but invisible unless you take a wrong turn. ♦

A lavish new book takes a nostalgic look back at the Rana century



Balkrishna Sama's hypothetical painting of all nine Rana prime ministers.

KUNDA DIXIT
 ove them or hate them, but you can't ignore them. The legacy of Rana rule remains everywhere from the imposing loads of Singha Darbar, the presence of Ranas at the top echelons of modern Nepal's business, army and police, and the Rana family tree, which is intertwined with the present members of the Shah dynasty. All this makes for fascinating history that has been documented in research papers, academic treatises, a best-selling novel, a Nepali movie, and recent Rana nostalgia in architecture.

But surprisingly no one has, until now, attempted to put together a coffee table book on the history, culture, lifestyle and even cuisine of the Ranas—written by the Ranas themselves. Enter Princess Jumi of the former Indian princely state of Sarsa visiting Kathmandu two years ago for a Worldwide Fund for Nature conference. "She said how come there is no book on the Ranas," recalls Gautam Rana of Baber Mahal Revisted. Gautam already had a well-developed interest in his clan's heritage—when he returned to Nepal after completing a management degree in Germany in 1979, he was dismayed to see Kathmandu Valley rapidly losing what old charm it still had left. In 1998, he began reconstructing the stables and cowsheds of his ancestral palace to develop an upmarket shopping complex of boutiques, art galleries and restaurants called Baber Mahal Revisted.

"When she said that, I thought let's do it. But where was the money?" explains Gautam. A large-format, hard cover illustrated encyclopedia of the Ranas was going to cost a packet. Luckily, in stepped the Swiss banking group Credit Suisse, which was interested in backing the project because the proceeds from the sales were going to help the conservation of Kathmandu Valley's unique urban heritage. With Credit Suisse bankrolling the printing in Europe, Gautam raised money from other illustrious Ranas who were going to be co-authors: Prabhakar Rana of the Soaltee Group and RPP politician, Pashupati Rana.

"Pretty soon, I realised I may have bitten off more than I could chew," admits Gautam, who hired help for the editing, design and photography from India's APCA

group, but was himself responsible for the research and coordinating the contents. The result is a well-crafted work that is like a time capsule taking readers back to the extravagance, intrigue, hopes and achievements of those 104 years. The authors have tried not to gloss over the raw ambition, greed, and, yes, lust that drove the power struggles in the extended Rana clan. But the overall impression is still a somewhat sanitised retrospective of those years. Even the decadence comes across as photogenic. Gautam isn't defensive about that, he says: "Some Ranas of my generation feel very apologetic, but there is nothing to feel

guilty about. We have an eclectic and cultured past, and that should inspire us to help build the country today, and conserve our heritage." Despite being an "inside story" by members of the clan vilified in post-1950 history books, the history chapters in *The Ranas of Nepal* are an objective and credible assessment of the period. Co-author Prabhakar Rana, great-grandson of Jodha Shumshere, actually lived in Singha Darbar until the age of 11. Pashupati Rana, grandson of the last Rana prime minister, Mohan Shumshere, was present as a boy of four at the first coronation of King

Gyanendra in 1950. Both have contributed chapters on history, architecture, and lifestyle. Besides the research, Gautam helped track down rare photos, paintings and artefacts from private collections, and also wrote the chapter on Rana jewellery. The book's lavish visuals with early sepia photographs, period portraits from private collections bring this history alive. The illustrations are intelligently grafted into the text (edited by Brinda Datta and Dubey Bhagat), as are the contemporary photographs by Indian photographer Prashant Binjari.

The book begins at the



Jodha Shumshere's tiger skins.



Dhir Shumshere's 17 sons.

beginning, with the royal rivalries among the Rajput rulers of Udaipur that drove one particular family of courtiers to the Himalaya, all the way up in Jumla. From there they migrated eastward to Kaski and on to Gorkha. The Kunwar helped King Prithvi Narayan in his conquests, and Bal Narsingh Kunwar was made governor of Jumla. But in the purges that followed the downfall of Bhimsen Thapa in 1848, Bal Narsingh's son Jung Bahadur emerged as a master manipulator who, through their charisma, craftiness and courage, wormed his way upwards taking full advantage of the savage power struggles among the descendants of Prithvi Narayan Shah and their consorts.

Jung Bahadur is at the centre of this swirling tale of backstabbing intrigue, conspiracies, alliances, finding himself right in the middle of vicious infighting between a powerful queen and her paramour, the king, and the crown prince. At gunpoint, Jung is forced to shoot his own uncle, the prime minister, and is then caught up in two massacres at the Kot and at



Padma Shumshere's throne.

Bhandarkhal. He sends the queen and king into exile, installs the crown prince on the throne and makes himself prime minister. Thus, at age 29, Jung Bahadur Kunwar launches the Rana century

in 1845. He was also the first subcontinental royal to visit Britain and France, driven by a desire to bypass the obstructive dictates of Calcutta by dealing directly with London. Once there, he received royal treatment. One gets the feeling reading these tales of massacre, assassinations and chronic infighting that contemporary Nepali rulers are just following in the footsteps of their ancestors—maybe they are hardwired to be divisive and selfish. A paragraph from the book, describing the conspiracies of the royal court could very well have been written about today's Nepal: "He (Jung Bahadur) brought order to a Nepal on the brink of anarchy. Nobody can condone the means he used to achieve this end. However, it begs the question: could it have been achieved by any other means?"

It was perhaps inevitable that when Jung died during a hunting trip in Chitwan in 1877, his British enemies started squabbling for power. Jung's brother, Dhir, installed Jung's son Rana Uddip Singh as successor,

while he manoeuvred to take over. Suspecting a plot, he beheaded two dozen courtiers and managed to carve out a place for himself and his 17 sons in the succession. The clan was thus effectively split between the Jung Ranas and the Shumshere Ranas. By 1885, matters reached a head again and Dhir had his six sons kill their uncle, Rana Uddip Singh and remove all the descendants of Jung Bahadur's other brothers from succession.

Rana power transitions were messy affairs, and watching all this from the background was the British regent at Lhasa. We see how British India tried to influence events in Kathmandu, and this has familiar echoes today. When Bir Shumshere sided with Jung and exiled him to India, the British refused for five months to recognise Bir as leader. And when Jung died, Rana preparations to overthrow Bir Shumshere from Indian soil, the British arrested him while he was planning to march into Nepal with his armed followers. Sound familiar?

Bir Shumshere built Nepal's first hospital as well as the Darbar School, for which imported teachers from England. He was succeeded by the flashy Dev Shumshere who in turn was replaced by the throned and astute Chandra Shumshere, whose 37-year reign was marked by uncharacteristic stability and development. He established Nepal's first college, streamlined administration, built suspension bridges all over the country, installed Nepal's first hydropower plant in 1911 (from domestic coifers, without foreign aid), and named the light powered by electricity generated by it after himself ("Chandrayojni"). He sent architects to Europe and horticulturalists to Japan for training. He also built a 1,400-room palace for himself, which ended up being a contribution to the nation—I know Singha Darbar. On the diplomatic front, Chandra Shumshere managed to convince the British to officially agree to Nepal's independent status and got them to put a tin writing in the 1923 Anglo-Nepal Treaty of Friendship.

Chandra was succeeded by Bhan Shumshere, Jodha

Shumshere, Padma Shumshere and finally, Mohan Shumshere. But time was running out, the end of Empires was near. Although they tried to modernise Nepal with industrialisation, banking, railways, urban water supply, and even a liberal constitution, it was too little too late. Mohan Shumshere had to deal with newly-independent India and grapple with democracy-minded Nepalis whose demands sounded uncannily similar to today's discourse: set up a constituent assembly and form an interim government.

The book also delves into other massacres: that of tigers, rhinos and other wildlife in hunting expeditions in honour of visiting British royalty. There is a dramatic picture of Jodha Shumshere posing in front of pelts of a hundred or so tigers. Good thing many Ranas have now moved away from hunting towards nature conservation.

The rest of the book looks at Rana architecture, and mentions unsung Nepali engineers like Kishore Narsing and the legendary Jigal Shastri, known more popularly as "Shajuman". However incongruous the wedding cake Rana palaces may have looked when they were built, the authors argue that the palaces "seem to have achieved their own particular balance with the environment" with their use of local construction material and the incorporation of Nepali features such as courtyards, verandahs, and south-facing balconies.

The chapter on Rana

jewellery traces the history of the Rana crown and how it evolved and bulged with gems and diamonds in 104 years (only to be sold to a Parisian jeweller in the mid-1950s). An error creeps in here—the bird of paradise plum is wrongly identified as coming from New Zealand. It is actually native to Papua New Guinea. Many of these gems, precious stones and ornaments were brought into Nepal by Indian royalty fleeing Mughal invasions. Other jewellery came from the Lucknow loot during the mutiny, of which the soldiers and officers got to keep the gold and silver while jewellery went to the royal coffers.

There's more: Rana cuisine, Rana lifestyle, Rana fashion, Rana art, and short biographies of some prominent living Ranas. The book also has a useful abridged family tree of most Ranas from Jung Bahadur's father to Siddhartha Rana, Prabhakar's son, so readers can navigate through the book's confusing genealogy, and untangle the complex web of Rana intermarriages with the Shah dynasty.

This hefty book with a hefty price tag will be available at Everest Book Shop, Baber Mahal Revisted from mid-November. Proceeds of the sales will go to the Kathmandu Valley Conservation Trust, which has renovated numerous temples, sattals and baha in Kathmandu Valley.

The Ranas of Nepal by Prabhakar SJB Rana, Pashupati SJB Rana, Gautam SJB Rana. First edition. Naef, Kister S.S. Editore, Genova, 2002. 262 pp.



Prabhakar Rana



Pashupati Rana



Gautam Rana

Nearly 160 years after Jung Bahadur Kunwar (on cover, above) started a dynasty of hereditary prime ministers, and 51 years after the end of Rana reign, comes a book as opulent and sumptuous as the era of Nepali history that this remarkable family came to dominate.

SURYA LIGHTS GRIND

3rd August, Saturday, 2 p.m. onwards at Hyatt Regency poolside

The only party where you can tango in breast stroke

It's poolside mania with dance, ground shaking music by DJ Raju Singh, food and drinks. Plus tonnes of prizes and a free dip in the pool. Ready for the grind?

For further details and tickets contact: Kantasheel Enterprises (Pvt.) Ltd. Event Management Group. Tel: 350 9710

STATUTORY DIRECTIVE: SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

Carlsberg Green Bar of the month

FUSION BAR
AT SWANSEA HOTEL

Enjoy in Fusion Bar. It's a chance to get a chance to win either Carlsberg or a new driver. With a new driver, you can win a new driver. The questions and win Carlsberg or a new driver.

ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITION AND AUCTION

- Imagine: Your photos will open my life 400 children from 45 countries, including 15 working and school-going children from Nepal display their work. Until 1 November, GTZ office, Near Bhawan, Sanga, 539129
- Raw Material: From the road in Asia Travel collage by Margi Schaff, Indigo Gallery, Naxal, 8AM-6PM daily, 413580

EVENTS

- The greenest patch Weekend lunches in the oldest and largest garden in Nagarkot at The Fort Resort, fort@mos.com.np, 226799
- Bodhiacharyavata Lessons on Mahayana Buddhism, a guide to the Bodhisattava's way of life. In Nepal by Khenpo Vagindra Shila at the Akeshore Mahavihar, Pulchow. Saturdays, 4PM-5PM. Free, open to all.
- Weekly dialogues on life and living and books and audiotapes at the Krishnamurti Study Center, Dhyanakuti, Swayambhi, Saturdays 1PM-5PM, 227704.

MUSIC

- Live music by Catch 22, Friday nights at the 40,000 1/4 ft Bar, Rum Doodie Restaurant, Thamel, 414336

DRINK

- Ladies night at The Rox Bar Wednesdays. Women get a drink on the house, and after 8PM. Tests hand plays. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 491234
- Friday Indulgence Irish music from An Fainne, tasting with 12 Scottish single malt, Rs 999. The Piano Lounge, Hotel Yak & Yeti, 248999

FOOD

- International Food Festival With children's activities and games for adults. Rs 50 for adults, Rs 25 for children under 4. Proceeds go to the KMTNC zoo project. Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 26 October, 11AM-5PM, 491234
- Chef special variable lunch at discounted rates at Dwarika's Hotel, 479488
- Indian Food Festival with chef Manu Sukka and until 30 October. Hotel Yak & Yeti, 248999
- Vegetarian specialties and clay oven pizza at Stupa View Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha, 480262

GETAWAYS

- Thank Goodness it's Friday Package for local residents, includes BBO, overnight stay and breakfast. \$125 per couple, \$95 single, nett, Dwarika's Hotel, 479488
- Trust your sixth sense Indulge the other five at The Old Inn, Bandipur, the ancient hilltop town near Dumre, Pokhara Highway, Contact Himalayan Encounters, Thamel, 417426.
- Shivapuri Birdwatching, short hikes, writing, 20 minute drive, 10 minute walk from Kathmandu, two acres at 6,000 feet on the edge of the Shivapuri National Park. Rs 1,850 per person with dinner and breakfast, Rs 925 per child 5-14 years, Shivapuri Heights Cottage, info@escape2nepal.com
- The Great Godavari Getaway Special weekend packages including room with breakfast and dinner, 25 percent discount on health club facilities. Godavari Village Resort, 560675
- Writing Retreat Full board package. Aesthetic living, innovative thinking, creative writing and nature at Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, 375280

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

HITS DEPRIVE A CHILD OF EDUCATION AND YOU DEPRIVE THE NATION.

NEPALI WEATHER by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Foggy mornings of winter are already here, as that ink spook of white in this satellite representing Kathmandu valley shows. Expect delayed morning flights, plummeting maximum temperatures. The mist is confined to Himalayan valleys, and the rest of north India is dominated by a wide high pressure zone. Off in the Bay of Bengal coast of Andhra Pradesh is a low pressure circulation that is not quite a cyclone. This may bring us some moisture incursion later next week.

KATHMANDU VALLEY

Fr	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
22-12	23-12	22-12	23-11	23-10

BOOKWORM

Family Matters Rohinton Mistry
Faber and Faber, London, 2002
Rs 750

Mistry's eagerly anticipated third novel goes back to the author's vintage territory—Paris in Mumbai, their fragmented families and tenuous communities. An old Parsi widower and patriarch is haunted by memories of the past. A broken ankle sets into motion a series of events—a great unravelling and a revelation of the family's loveless past—that leads to the narrative's final outcome.

Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia Ahmed Rashid
Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 2002
Rs 472

Rashid, who previously unravelled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, now investigates the five Central Asian republics adjacent to Afghanistan that were part of the former Soviet Union. Based on groundbreaking research and numerous interviews, Jihad explains the roots of fundamentalist rage in Central Asia, and suggests ways the threat can be neutralised through diplomatic and economic intervention.

The Algebra of Infinite Justice Arundhati Roy
Viking Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 2001
Rs 472

A collection of Arundhati Roy's political writings so far: The End of Imagination: The Greater Common Good, Power Politics: The Ladies Have Feelings, So, The Algebra of Infinite Justice: War is Peace. The essays are carefully researched and closely argued, and deal with big ideas. India's devastation of its nuclear bomb, the downside of corporate globalisation, and the US government's 'war against terror'.

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

CLASSIFIED

Terrace flat available on short-term lease. One bedroom, one living room, spacious kitchen, toilet/bathroom, hot water on tap and a wide beer terrace. Lots of greenery, great view of sunset, good price and some chill people around. Call Mani Rai 424877 or Dinesh 425677.

For sale Dining table and six chairs, deep-freeze refrigerator, Kenwood mattress because leaving the country. Contact Paula at 530297

Contact www.kopialcnic.com

Beautiful land for your dream project! Bird breeding? Flower/Fruit Cultivation? Ayurvedic Clinic? Meditation Center? Terraced land, 2 1/2 Ropani, next to a wild running brook! Absolutely breathtaking location. Only 20 minute drive from Kathmandu city to this treasure property! Serious buyers, Please call : Niraj 981024067 Email: niraj_pahkari@hotmail.com

House for rent in Jawalakhori centrally located, spacious old Rama bungalow (59861 sq.ft) with big garden.

For insertions ring NT Marketing at 543333-36.

- garden, ample parking space. Total land area- 50860.23 sq.ft. Suitable for offices. Serious enquiries: Contact S. Rana between 7-8:30 am and 5:30-8 pm Tel: 521128/546857

Foot-Reflexology: stressed or tired? UPLIFT YOUR SPIRIT FROM YOUR TOES UP. email: buddhasfeet@yahoo.com or ring 429391

Nagarkot Special Naked Chef Bed and breakfast, three-course gourmet dinner, Rs 800 per person. Room Rs 300 only. For Nepalais and expatriates. 680006, 989107153

K-Tool Beer and Steakhouse not the "longest", "highest", "tiniest" or any other superlative. Just a relaxed, easy-going bar and restaurant with the coldest beer and juiciest steaks this side of the moon. By the Kathmandu Guest House, 433043

Visit Ground Zero Fine wines, designer candles, cards, exclusive Nepali paper products, silver jewellery, wooden items, perfumes and more. Darbar Mall, Margo, opposite Hotel de l'Annapurna

Minority Report

Based on the short story by Philip K Dick, Steven Spielberg's Minority Report is set in a 2054 Washington DC judicial system in which killers are arrested and convicted before they commit murder using a psychic technology. John Anderton played by Tom Cruise is the head of this Pre-Crime unit and is himself accused of the future murder of a man he hasn't even met. With seemingly no way to defend himself against the charge of Pre-Crime, which he is expected to commit in just 36 hours, John must trace the roots of what brought him here. Could the system be wrong?

Starring Tom Cruise, Colin Farrell, Samantha Morton, Peter Stormare, and Max Von Sydow.

JAIN NEPAL CINEMA

Spiderman: 12 noon, 3PM
Minority Report 8:00PM
Telephone booking: 442220
Online booking www.jainepal.com

BBC on FM 102.4

Mon-Fri	0615-0645	BBC World Today
Sat	0615-0645	BBC Reporting Religion
Sun	0615-0645	BBC Agenda
Daily	2045-2115	BBC gñrl : Jf
Daily	2245-2300	BBC gñrl : Jf
Sun-Fri	0740-0800	Itgñ s/f
Daily	0800-0830	8jnl
Daily	2000-2030	cñsf s/f

Radio Sagarmatha

P.O. Box 6958, Bakhundole, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel: ++977-1-545680, 545681
Fax: ++977-1-302227

E-mail: radio@radiosagarmatha.org
www.radiosagarmatha.org



Art in a bottle

Nepali artists are finding new outlets for their work.

Three young painters, Erina Tamrakar, Pramila Bajracharya and Sunila Bajracharya, are now also designing wine bottle labels. Their artworks now grace bottles of Nepal-made wine of Canadian vintage. Inspired by their paintings at an exhibition in February at the NAF A Car Gallery, Canadian Consul Carla

Hogan Ruffels bought work by each of the three women. The artists assumed that their paintings would simply hang in a quiet corner of an expat residence. Imagine their surprise, then, when they were told that their paintings would be used to sell wine. "This is an honour for us, as well as a great promotional opportunity," says Erina. As their work received more

attention, the trio were presented with a unique proposition: an exhibition at the newly-opened Kashmandap Art Studio, which combines the aesthetic pleasures of an art gallery with sociable café culture. "The gallery was opened to help promote young artists. In the coming days we also hope to hold photography and design exhibitions," says Ellen, a partner in the studio. For Sunila and her

Three young women are helping revitalise the Nepali art scene.

colleagues, this was a chance to reach out to more people with their art, take it out of the sometimes sterile environs of highbrow galleries. "Artists sometimes think that showing their work in gallery cafes diminishes its value," says Sunila. "But this kind of thing is commonplace abroad, and we support the idea because the gallery is trying to promote the new generation of artists, enthusiasts and art buyers." In addition, Erina conducts art classes for beginners, as well as colloquia for more advanced enthusiasts. The show is on at the café gallery until 30 October, and displays 13 oil paintings, of which three are already sold. Erina's works are mainly based on the everyday lives of women. Pramila focuses on semi-abstract faces. All three women studied fine arts at the Lalit Kala Campus.

Kashmandap Art Studio 42690



Breaking News

Now available at your favourite store

Bluebird

Trio of Trios

Join hands to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

Hit the high notes this November with Yak and Yeti's Annual Music & Food Festival. An evening of Jazz, Rock, R & B, Blues and Classical music performed by three international bands from France, UK and Australia. It's an evening of great music, culinary delights and high spirits.

Supporting at The Gardens, Friday 1st November 2002, 6.30 pm onwards.

Tickets: Rs. 1200/- net per person (inclusive of all beverages and extensive buffet)

ARTISTS

FRANCE: Daniel Givone Trio - Gypsy & Swing Jazz

UK: Astral Break, Billy Page featuring Anna, Ozzy Bayden & Jane Guffy - Jazz, Rock & Soul

AUSTRALIA: Ian Farrington, Janette Richards, Colin Krome & Rhonda Voge - Rock, Blues & Jazz

YAK & YETI

For more information and other promotions visit our website: www.yakandyeti.com

Or call guest relations 248999 Ext. 280

Part proceeds go towards: FNUD (Forum for Women's Law and Development)

Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

;-)

The mass-murder of goats this Dasain, and their consumption, did not leave much time for our technicians to get seriously down to the task of rebuilding the nation. But I am confident that by the latter part of this decade they should be able to do so. Caught up in all the festivities, one important anniversary slipped by largely unnoticed. It was the 20th anniversary of the first ever use of an emoticon in an email message in 1982.

Nuclear scientist #1: Wahey, wahey you lazy #5!&1* Orangutan :-)

Nuclear scientist #2: Ha! Ha! Ha! Groovy! See what I mean? The beauty of the smiley emoticon was that you could hurt the worst insults ever invented, casting serious aspersions about your interlocutor's female ancestors, if any, and if you stuck a little smiley at the end, all would be forgiven.

The world has moved on, of course. And the primitive BBS of 20 years ago have given way to the internet, search engines, personalised sites, and chat rooms. I entered one of these chat rooms recently, and realised just how advanced the language of the internet has become as youngsters communicate with each other about matters of vital importance to the future of the world. Here is a short extract from one such chat room which is open 24 hours of every solar day:

Enter LOVER BOY:
LOVER BOY: Hi guz

GEEK: I really think ratifying the Kyoto Protocol is the only way to prevent the unpredictable side-effects of climate change.

GOONDA: Whaddiz? ur in wrong room, get out of here.

CHOR enters room.
CHOR: That is like so totally uncool, man.

LOVER BOY: Hi gaiz.
YAMRAJ enters room.

YAMRAJ: Wutz kookin, guz

LOVER BOY: asf?
LOVER BOY: gaiz, PM me
GOONDA: lol
GOONDA leaves room
CHOR: goonda's gone z loo
PINKY: no, goonda gone z PM
PINKY: mwahahahaha
LOVER BOY: hey Yamraj you gay or gal?
YAMRAJ: lol
GEEK: The only way to address the greenhouse effect is if America cuts carbon emissions by 5% of 1991 levels.

PINKY: ok g2g
PINKY leaves room.

LOVER BOY: au reservoir, pinky c u later
LOVER BOY: anyone still here of the female species

GOONDA enters room.
GOONDA: am back yar

YAMRAJ: ya im phemale
LOVER BOY: les go PM

Unfortunately, the vocabulary of our future stars is constricted by the limitations of the qwerty keyboard.

We need to give expression to the vast array of emotions and hormones that flow through these chats, and here is where emoticons can play an important role. We also need to move beyond smiley to other emoticons more relevant to the times. Here is a sample:

Wild boar emerging through fog
Baseball pitcher blowing bubble gum

Mahatma Gandhi
Hare Krishna devotee snoring

Railway porter at Howrah Station
Sher Bahadur upon learning that he just got the sack

KP Bhattarai addressing press conference while chewing paan

The new Minister of Women and Social Welfare

Ex-minister appealing at CIAA hearing

Adolf Hitler on a bad hair day

NEPALI SOCIETY

Moving mountains

Babita Lama may be small and fragile, but she moves mountains. Providing health care in her native Humla would intimidate anyone, but for Babita, it's just in a day's work. The nearest functioning hospital from Humla is on the Indian border, a two-week walk over rugged mountains. The child mortality rate here is 300—three times the national average. Babita decided very early on that she didn't want to be a famous doctor in the capital, she wanted to help the people in the village where she was born.

And it took a decade of focussed work that allowed her to fulfil her dream. When she started out, with a one-room clinic in Humla's Turpa village, there was no shortage of patients: mostly children with acute respiratory infections and gastric disorders.

In 1994, she set up the Nepal Trust to manage community activities in Humla. Today, there are four Nepal Trust clinics which are run jointly with the district administration. School girls from grade eight to ten volunteer in the clinics and learn early basic health tips. But finding educated girls is difficult in Humla, so the trust made a small compromise—in their Limi clinic, a five-day walk from Simkot, they also train school boys.

"If I'd had somebody to guide me, I would have studied public health," says this mother-of-two of her only regret. Babita is now looking forward to handing over her clinics to the volunteers she

has trained. There is one nagging worry: the insurgency has already pushed back the trust's programme of expansion by a year. But she's not deterred. "All you need is a sense of purpose and commitment," she tells us. "The rest will follow."

Arabic Food Festival

Soak into the mystical ambience of the Arabian Nights. Taste belly dancers. Sumptuous culinary delights. Argosia (hookah) with sweetened tobacco. Crackling Bonfire... set amidst the tranquil greens of the Gokarna Forest.

Time: Launch 12.00—1.00 pm
Dinner 6.30—10.00 pm

Tickets: Rs. 150/- net per person or Rs. 220/- net per couple includes complimentary 2 glasses of soft drink (valid till 12 years 30% discount)

Date: 29th October, Sat Oct 6, 8th & 9th November 2002

Venue: Rasini Lodge Gardens
La Meridien Gokarna Forest Resort
For Tickets Contact: La Meridien Gokarna
Sarnali Road, Kapatole
Rasini Resort, Pune

For details and reservations contact: 451212-6

KINLEY
Purified Drinking Water

शोपा-शोपामा
विश्वास!

DOUBLE शुद्धि!

Rs. 15/-
बottle

Purified Drinking Water from **THE HIMALAYAN ROYAL**

RADO
SWITZERLAND

INTEGRAL

TOTALLY MADE OF HIGH-TECH CERAMICS
SCRATCH-PROOF SAPPHIRE CRYSTAL
FOUR GENUINE DIAMONDS
TRIPLE SAFETY GLASS MADE OF TITANIUM

Authorised Sales & Service
Sonus Centre
KUNJAPOKHARI, TEL: 222539; BISHAL BAZAR • Shop no. 29, New Road, TEL: 221971
Burbird Department Store • Tripureswar, TEL: 228833 Ext. 5418; Durbar Marg • TEL: 242821

www.rado.com

We are also at **DUREAN MARG** (in front of Wimpy). The most convenient shopping place - free from parking problems.