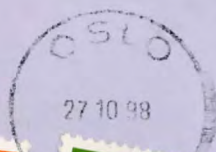


Norling, Dag
John Collets Alle 46
0852 Oslo.



Apost

"Hamro Patrika"

Norge-Nepal foreningen
Postboks 155
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MEDLEMSKONTINGENT:

Enkeltmedlem	kr 100,-
Familie	kr 150,-
Organisasjon	kr 300,-

Postgirokonto: 0802 420 2438

Program for møtet 28. oktober 1998

- * Årsmøtesaker: Godkjenning av årsberetning og regnskap, valg av nytt styre og votering over kontingentsatser og vedtektsendringer.
- * Anne Horgheim holder foredrag (med video) om tuberkulosekontroll i Nepal. Horgheim, fra Landsforeningen for Hjerte- og Lungesyke, har jobbet to år med tuberkuloseprogram i Nepal.
- * Kaker, kaffe/te og utlodning.

Vel møtt i Norge - Nepal foreningen!



Nr. 4. oktober 1998

**Velkommen til årsmøte
i Norge-Nepal foreningen
onsdag 28. oktober 1998 kl. 19⁰⁰
i Bygdelagssamskipnadens hus
Nordahl Brunsgate 22, Oslo**

**Foredrag med video v/Anne Horgheim:
"Tuberkulosekontroll i Nepal"**

Neste møte blir torsdag 3. desember 1998

NORGE-NEPAL FORENINGENS STYRE

Navn	Adresse	Telefon og faks	
		Jobb	Privat
Ingela Flatin (leder)	Tangenvn. 204, 1450 Nesoddtangen	64 94 98 26 faks. 64 94 07 60	66 91 29 08
Nikolai Arnø (kasserer)	Fossekallen 32, 3034 Drammen	32 24 64 13	32 81 86 39
Cathrine Reid (sekretær)	Røa terrasse 6, 0755 Oslo		22 50 09 95
Kirsten I. Greiner (redaktør)	Landingsvn. 84, 0767 Oslo		22 14 11 01 faks. 22 14 11 01
David Durkan	Lars Muhles vei 10, 1300 Sandvika		67 56 56 34
Christine Engen	Haxthausensgt. 1, 0263 Oslo		22 44 42 04 92 210 057
Anuradha Gurung	Kristian Køllesvei 7, 1335 Snarøya		911 49 347
Chandika Olsen	Sandefjordgt. 3 d, 0464 Oslo		22 18 00 45
Narendra Kumar Shitaula	Kringsjå stud.by 1357, Sognsvn. 218, 0864 Oslo		22 18 79 51
Sigrun Eide Ødegård	Pilestredet 103, 0358 Oslo	22 77 99 44	90 982 846

PERSONER MED VERV UTENFOR STYRET

Roy Friis (revisor)	Peiskrokvn. 8, 1482 Nittedal	22 93 71 04	67 07 69 08
Wenche Fossum (valgkomite)	Bjørnestupet 25, 1453 Bjørnemyr	66 91 68 77	
Thronde Berge Larsen (valgkomite)	Dannevigsvn. 12, 0463 Oslo		22 71 98 73

Nepal nr. 152

KTM Post. By a post Reporter.
Kathmandu 9.sep.98

UNDP har offentliggjort 1998 Human Development Report. Rapporten inneholder Human Development Index (HDI) som rangerer 174 land etter forskjellige utviklingskriterier. Nepal har forbedret sin stilling det siste året, men ligger likevel nest dårligst an av de asiatiske landene.

Hamro Patrika er Norge-Nepal foreningens medlemsavis som utkommer fire-fem ganger i året. Forespørsler angående avisen og foreningen kan rettes til styremedlemmene.

①

If two men on the same job agree all the time, then one is useless. If they disagree all the time, then both are useless.

- Darryl Zanuck

THE KATHMANDU POST FRIDAY, JULY 17, 1998

Absurd scheme

Nearly 2.7 million youth are in search of employment in some form or the other. The harsh reality is that not many of them may be fortunate enough to secure a job in their entire life time. What is more, the figure mentioned above is conservative. It is not for nothing that a few vacancies that appear in newspaper columns attract applications in the thousands. The scenario is gloomy indeed.

As though this were not enough, politicians in power seem to take the problem of growing unemployment as an academic issue and end up experimenting with it, not to mention the attempt to politically capitalize it. Not to go too far back, Sher Bahadur Deuba, during his innings as prime minister, took all the trouble to set up an Employment Promotion Commission in 1997 under his own stewardship and announced that more than ten thousand unemployed youths will get the jobs each year.

Granted that not many jobs can be created in our type of shaky economy. But the people at the helm of affairs could stick to what their predecessors had pledged to the electorate as a matter of policy both short and long term. Deuba had pledged to compile the relevant data on unemployment even as he vowed to impart suitable training to the unemployed. Loans from financial institutions to enhance skill was an additional promise. Much water has flown under the Bagmati bridge since but virtually nothing has been achieved in this particular area after Deuba. Neither the Lokendra Bahadur Chand nor the Surya Bahadur Thapa-led governments

have carried out any follow up measures on this issue.

Now, probably as a part of political sloganeering comes the foreign employment scheme. Under this unwarrantedly optimistic scheme, the government expects to provide foreign employment opportunities to at least two hundred youth from each of the 205 electoral constituencies well before the next general elections. Even if the government succeeds in meeting its populist budget announcement that will obviously involve picking up party activists there will still be millions of unemployed youth left in the country.

Perhaps the time has come for politicians to take the public posts they occupy more responsibly. Every one knows that, jobs as such, cannot be created by anyone at a short notice. The only thing that creates jobs is faster economic growth. And to record it political establishment must pave way for an excellent business and manufacturing climate through legislation and cross party consensus. This will demand an element of disinterestedness in leading politicians when it comes to talking with other parties and clearing projects of national significance which are crucial for more investment. As of now, the impression is that politicians are there for perks rather than to serve one's fellowmen and they are not driven by strong economic sense. In other words, the fault lies with the inherent wisdom of the administrators rather than with the job market that is in a state of infancy.

②



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Husk at vi har nye møtelokaler!

Saker til årsmøtet 28. oktober

Kirsten I. Greiner

Nytt styre

Ikke på valg: Ingela Flatin (leder)
Kirsten I. Greiner (redaktør) - slutter som redaktør f.o.m. 1999.
Foreslått som nestleder.

Narendra K. Shitaula
Christine Engen

På valg i år: Cathrine Reid (sekretær) - stiller til gjenvalg.
Anuradha Gurung - kom inn for Tove C. Kittelsen i 1997. Velges formelt inn i styret i år. Foreslått som ny redaktør.
Nikolai Arnø (kasserer) - stiller ikke til gjenvalg.
David Durkan - stiller ikke til gjenvalg.

Går ut av styret: Sigrun Eide Ødegård
Chandika Olsen

Seks personer skal altså velges inn i styret på årsmøtet. Cathrine og Anu kan fylle to av plassene, og dermed gjenstår fire. Styret har gitt valgkomiteén navn på flere aktuelle kandidater som vil bli oppringt før møtet. Har du lyst til å være med? Ring en av oss i styret eller valgkomiteén! Vi har faktisk mye moro og hygge i tillegg til de praktiske og faglige oppgavene. Vi søker spesielt en ryddig og samvittighetsfull sjel som ny kasserer!

Vedtektsendringer

Ønsker du å komme inn med forslag til vedtektsendringer? Fristen gikk egentlig ut 1. oktober, men har du noe på hjertet, kan du kontakte Ingela eller noen andre i styret snarest.

Styret foreslår å presisere en del av paragraf 3 i vedtektene:

«Dersom en person melder seg inn i foreningen på årsmøtet eller etter årsmøtet, kreves ikke kontingent for innværende år. Dersom kontingenten da betales ved innmeldelsen eller før årets utløp, skal den gjelde som kontingent for det følgende år.»

Styret foreslår følgende nye tekst:

«Dersom en person melder seg inn i foreningen på eller etter årsmøtet, kreves ikke kontingent for innværende år. Hvis det nye medlemmet betaler kontingenten ved innmeldelsen eller før årets utløp, skal den gjelde som kontingent for det følgende året.»

Styret foreslår å endre en annen del av paragraf 3 i vedtektene:

«Medlemskapet opphører dersom medlemskontingenten ikke er betalt i løpet av det året den gjelder for eller etter første kontingentpurring i det nye året.»

Her er vedtektene uklare: hvilket år skal kontingenten gjelde for hvis man står som medlem ett år uten å betale og så betaler etter kontingentpurring i det nye året? Betaler man da for året som har gått eller for det nye året? Med romslig tolkning av paragraf 3

kan en person i prinsippet stå som medlem uavbrutt, men bare betale annethvert år.

Styret foreslår dermed følgende nye tekst:

«Medlemskapet opphører dersom medlemskontingenten ikke er betalt i løpet av det året den gjelder for, eller snarlig etter første kontingentpurring i det nye året. Ved betaling i det nye året, betraktes kontingenten som etterbetaling for året som gikk.»

Med «snarlig etter første kontingentpurring» forstås senest innen neste utsending av Hamro Patrika og/eller møteinnkalling. Har vi ikke hørt noe innen den tid, stanser vi utsendingen av Hamro Patrika og betrakter medlemskapet som opphørt. Etterbetales kontingenten, vil medlemmet også få tilsendt innbetalingblankett for det nye året.

Med dette forslaget ønsker styret å forbeholde foreningens tjenester til betalende medlemmer.

Årsmøtesak; kontingentforhøyelse

Styret foreslår å høyne medlemskontingenten f.o.m. 1999. Kontingentsatsene er ikke vedtektsfestet, men endring av kontingentsatser skal ifølge vedtektene votes over på årsmøtet. Satsene er ikke endret siden 1991. Foreningen snurrer jevnt og trutt rundt - uten store endringer i kassabeholdningen fra år til år. Vi skal ikke være et overskuddsforetak, men noen ekstra kroner er ønskelig, bl.a. for å kunne betale litt av foredragsholderes reiseutgifter.

Styrets forslag til kontingentsatser er:

- Enkeltmedlem: kr. 125 (fra kr. 100)
- Familie: kr. 175 (fra kr. 150)
- Organisasjon: kr. 300 (ingen endring)

Forslag eller innvendinger rettes til årsmøtet.

1998 APRIL HIMAL 11/4

The Kathmandu Post reports that Crown Prince Dipendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev attended a tourism fair in Berlin, apparently the first time Nepal's royalty had gone anywhere to promote an industry. Which is all very well, but I am just a bit confused (and

hence undeserving of any plaque of appreciation from any quarter) when the paper reports that, "During the visit, Crown Prince distributed plaque to about three hundred tourism entrepreneurs and media persons at a programme organized by Visit Nepal Year '98."

Dasain for de rike

(KTM Post) Kathmandu, 13.sep.1998 - Mens de rike er travelt opptatt med å handle nye klær og pyntegjenstander til Dasain, har høytiden blitt en vanskelig tid for de fattige. Tre måneder før Dasain reiser Gyan Bahadur Bhandary fra Narayanghat til hovedstaden hvor han pleier å tjene 5-6.000 rupies. Bhandary's kone og småbarn forventer fargerike sløyfebånd, nye klær og en geit til festmåltidet. Men etter to måneder i Kathmandu har han knapt tjent nok til retur-billetten. Hovedstaden preges av økonomiske nedgangstider og stengte klesfabrikker. Det har blitt vanskelig for arbeidsfolk å overleve her. Bhandary fikk jobb i Shivpuri, men ble snytt på lønnsutbetalingen. Han lurte på om han skal kjøpe en geit for å ofre under Dasain - å spise kjøtt i høytiden er en prestisjesak for både fattig og rik. "Vårt samfunn er slik at mennesker til og med tar opp lån for å redde æren", sier Bhadary.

NYTT FRA NEPAL

 Kirsten I. Greiner

Parlamentet i opprør over Local Autonomy Bill

(KTM Post), Kathmandu, 9/10/11/13.sep.1998 - Forslaget om større selvstyre til lokale myndigheter skaper furore i parlamentet. Stridens kjerne gjelder en klausul i lovforslaget Local Autonomy Bill. Klausulen foreskriver at valgte lokale politikere og tjenestemenn automatisk vil miste sine posisjoner hvis de forlater det partiet de ble valgt fra. Lovforslaget er blitt holdt tilbake i Utviklingskomitéen de siste årene fordi medlemmene ikke kom til enighet. Vanligvis lar medlemmene partipolitikken ligge under arbeid i komitéen, men denne gangen valgte de å votere over den omstridte klausulen. Med overveldende margin vedtok man å utelate klausulen fra lovforslaget, som deretter ble lagt fram for diskusjon i Representantenes Hus (HoR). Opposisjonens reaksjon var overveldende. Med representanter fra Communist Party of Nepal (UML) i spissen, saboterte opposisjonen enhver diskusjon og behandling av lovforslaget i parlamentet. De forlot umiddelbart plassene sine, ropte slagord, skapte støy og kaos og ødela inventar. Oppførselen førte til fullstendig blokkering av enhver saksbehandling og det endte med at Deputy Speaker Lila Shrestha Subba måtte utsette diskusjonene hver dag i en uke. Etter gjennomgang skulle lovforslaget votes over i parlamentet.

UML støttes av en fraksjon fra Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) i sin kritikk. Også Nepal Sadbhavana Party (NSP) uttrykker skepsis mot forslaget. Regjeringspartiet Nepali Congress (NC), som ønsket klausulen fjernet, får følge av den andre RPP-fraksjonen.

Både RPP og Communist Party of Nepal er splittet det siste året. Utbryterpartiet Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) - ML på folkemunne - har delt kabinettstoler med regjerende NC og en RPP-del. Tilbake i opposisjon står Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) - UML på folkemunne - og den andre RPP-delen. Disse opposisjonspartiene motsetter seg å utelate klausulen fordi de frykter at mange av deres lokale representanter vil gå eller har gått over til ML og RPP-delen som nå er i regjeringsposisjon. Klausulen ville begrenset ytterligere flukt fra UML og tvunget hundrevis av ML-medlemmer fra sine posisjoner i lokale organer.

Statsminister Koirala kritiseres

(Explore Nepal Weekly, Vol. 6 No. 34, 8.sep.1998) - Like etter at statsminister Koirala (NC) omfavnet sin tidligere erkefiende på venstresiden, kritiseres han og avkreves forklaring av skeptikere i eget parti, deriblant tidligere statsminister Sher Bahadur Deuba. Koirala har dannet regjering i samarbeid med en del av RPP og utbryterpartiet CPN (ML). Skeptikerne innen NC er en uensartet gruppe uten leder, men den kan vokse til en frisk maktblokk i stand til å true Koirala's posisjon i framtiden. De hevder at ML vil nyte makten og samtidig tillate at folket blir lei av NC-styre. NC-ML regjeringen vil fungere

dårlig p.g.a. gjensidig mistillit, mener de. Begge partier er konstant på vakt overfor hverandre - de sjekker hva den andre gjør og har ikke tid til å arbeide og tjene folket. Pro-Koirala gruppen tror statsministerens trekk vil bedre partiets posisjon og hjelpe NC til å gjenvinne den tapte majoriteten i parlamentet. Men paken med venstresiden kan koste Koirala dyrt i et senere parlamentsvalg. Dagens regjering spås å overleve maksimum ett år.

Nepalesiske og indiske maoister former "felles front"

(KTM Post) Kathmandu, 14.sep.1998 - Ekstreme maoist-grupper i Nepal og India har besluttet å forme en "felles front" som skal operere langs den indo-nepalesiske grensen. Opplysningene kom fra Bishnu Shrestha, talsmann for Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), etter et fjorten dagers seminar i Calcutta, der to indiske maoistpartier og CPN (Maoist) deltok. Framtredende nepalesiske politikere uttaler at de ikke hadde kjennskap til seminaret om "Folkets krig i Nepal". Undergrunnspartiet CPN (Maoist) startet "folkets krig" i februar 1996. Kilder i politiet har lenge hevdet at våpen beslaglagt fra maoistene er produsert i India. Revolutionary Front, en gruppe ekstreme partier på venstresiden i indisk politikk, har offentlig gitt sin støtte til maoistenes opprør og herjinger i Nepal. Flere steder i Bihar (India) er det observert mange veggmalier og plakater til støtte for CPN (Maoist) sine aktiviteter i Nepal.

Uren matolje tar liv

(KTM Post 2.&10.sep.1998) Kathmandu, 1.&9.sep.1998 & (Explore Nepal Weekly, Vol.6 No. 34, 8.sep.1998) - Nepal rystes av nyheten om uren matolje på markedet. To personer er innlagt på sykehus i grensebyen Birgunj. Begge har symptomer på vattersott som innebærer unormal oppsamling av væske i kroppshuler og -vev. Et par antatte tilfeller er rapportert i Terai. Vattersott har til nå tatt livet av over femti mennesker i India. Årsaken til dødfallene er uren sennepsolje man mistenkte også var på det nepalesiske markedet. Handelsmenn kunne lett fristes til å sende oljen til Nepal hvor lovverket er mindre effektivt og administrasjonen har dårligere oversikt.

Først flere dager etter nyhetsoppslagene, satte myndighetene igang undersøkelser. Landbruksdepartementet innrømmet en generell mangel på kontroll av matvarer, men insisterte på at den urene oljen ikke hadde nådd Nepal. Innenriksdepartementet ba distriktstjenestemenn om å utføre tester på oljen, samt å stoppe importen fra India. Testene fra Central Food Research Laboratory viste at 30-50% av prøvene var urene og ikke kunne godkjennes. Nepal Food Technicians Association har nå bedt folk kun handle de matoljene som er testet og merket. Lokale myndigheter har stengt Shushil Industries etter at deres matolje "Rajhansh" viste seg å være blandet med mineralolje.

Bekymringen er stor blant folk flest, spesielt fordi det konsumeres store mengder matolje under høytidelighetene og festivalene på denne årstiden. Man frykter også at forretningsfolk vil skjule sine lagre av uren olje, for så å selge dem når blesten omkring problemet stilner. For å unngå dette, ønsker mange at næringsmiddelkontroll skal være en kontinuerlig prosess. Salg av urene, utgåtte og dårlige matvarer er blitt et vanlig trekk i markedet, men det finnes få mekanismer for å kontrollere slik praksis. I Nepal er tilgangen på matolje 5.000 tonn mindre enn etterspørselen, noe som har nødvendiggjort import fra ulike deler av India.

Flom tar veier og hus

(KTM Post sep. 1998) Syangja 1.sep./Tikapur 10.sep./Birgunj 11.sep. 1998 - Omkring femti personer har mistet livet i Syangja som har vært herjet av flom og jordskred. Antallet savnede er foreløpig ukjent. Store landområder står under vann og hus, skoler, templer og broer er ødelagte. Folk er bekymret for at råtnende dyreskrotter skal føre til epidemier. Myndighetene har mobilisert politi og helsearbeidere samt utkommandert Royal Nepal Army for å hindre ytterligere ødeleggelser. Et firma som arbeider med vannkraftprosjekt i Kali Gandaki har stilt 50 av sine ansatte til disposisjon for redningsarbeid.

Kraftig regn og flom i slutten av august har ført til ett dødsfall og skader for millioner av rupies i Parsa-distriktet. Avlinger er tapt, land satt under vann og 162 hus ødelagt. Noen hundre tusen mennesker rammes av at Padma Road, den 62 kilometer lange hovedveien, ble skadet av kraftig nedbør. Kun 10 kilometer mellom Birgunj og Gardaul er kjørbare. Ødeleggelserne har ført til mindre aktivitet i distriktshovedkvarteret fordi færre kommer for å registrere land, fremme saker for retten osv. En offisiell delegasjon inspiserte nylig området og de nødvendige midler er avsatt til reparasjoner.

Også Kaliali er preget av monsunens krefter. 105 familier er hjemløse etter at de ble ofre for flom og erosjon fra elvene Karnali og Mohana.

Journalister dømt

(KTM Post 2.sep.1998) Kathmandu, 1.sep.1998 - Kathmandu District Court har funnet tre journalister skyldige i manglende respekt for retten. De tre er en reporter, den utøvende redaktøren og styreformannen i den statseide Gorkhapatra Daily. Dommen ble gitt på bakgrunn av et nyhetsoppslag der man hevdet at flere dommere mottok lønn for oppdrag som ikke eksisterte. De tre ble idømt bøter på Rs. 500 hver, mens journalisten som skrev artikkelen fikk 5 dagers fengselsstraff i tillegg. Kathmandu District Court tilbød betinget dom dersom avisen trykket en uforbeholden unnskyldning. Isteden velger avisen å anke rettens kjennelse.

Drept av heroin-sukkertøy

(KTM Post 2.sep.1998) Kathmandu, 1.sep.1998 - Kathmandu District Court har midlertidig løslatt Sanjay Lacoul (19) som er anklaget for å ha drept tre av sine søstre og en kusine. Lacoul tilsto for politiet at han så de fire dø etter å ha spist sukkertøy som inneholdt beroligende midler og heroinpulver han selv hadde blandet. Likevel nekter han å ha hatt noe med dødsfallene å gjøre. Jentene, i alderen 16 til 24 var uvitende om den dødelige blandingen. Hvis Lacoul dømmes for drapene, kan han vente to års fengselsstraff. Han er i tillegg siktet for å putte heroin i sukkertøyene, noe som kan medføre fengsel i ytterligere 5-10 år. Det er også tatt ut tiltale mot Shukra Bdr. Limbu som leverte heroinet til Lacoul.

Mann bak salg av jenter arrestert

(KTM Post) Kathmandu, 13.sep.1998 - Politiet har arrestert gjengleder Krishna Pariyar (27) og hans bror Bishnu Pariyar i forbindelse med salg av nepalesiske jenter til bordeller i India. Brødrene opererte flere steder i Nepal og leide kontorer i Kathmandu, Narayanghat og Birgunj. Krishna Pariyar sier han har drevet virksomheten de siste seks årene. Han innrømmer å ha lurt med seg og solgt tolv uskyldige jenter fra ulike deler av landet til en bordell i Bombay. Arrestasjonen skjedde etter at en av jentene ble reddet ut av bordellen. Hun ankom organisasjonen Maiti Nepal som informerte politiet. Ni av jentene er nå tilbake i Nepal. Anuradha Koirala fra Maiti Nepal mener Pariyar's gjeng har solgt 30-40 jenter til India.

Indiske tyver i Nepal

(KTM Post) Morang, 17.sep.1998 - Folk i Sunsari-distriktet på grensen til India, har fått bedre sikkerhetsordninger etter at de lenge ble terrorisert av indiske tyver. Indere i grenseområdet pleide å spionere i de nepalesiske landsbyene om dagen, for deretter å returnere natterstid og stjele husdyr, matkorn, penger og personlige eiendeler. Tyvegodsset ble fraktet til India. De engstelige nepaleserne sov om dagen og våket med en khukuri til forsvar på natten. Men mobilisering av politistyrken og etablering av mange politiposter har skremt inderne. Antallet tyverier er kraftig redusert og folk i landsbyene føler seg trygge igjen.

Malaria, japansk hjernehinnebetennelse og kala-azar på frammarsj

(KTM Post) Hetauda, 15&17.sep./Janakpur 15.sep./Nepalgunj 17.sep. 1998 - Malaria, japansk hjernehinnebetennelse og kala-azar dukker nå opp igjen med voldsom styrke etter å ha vært under kontroll en periode. Disse insektoverførte sykdommene er skyld i mye lidelse og mange dødsfall i Nepal.

Hvert år rapporteres det om 10.000 tilfeller av malaria i Nepal. Malaria var utbredt i 50-årene og forårsaket mange dødsfall i Terai. Etter igansettingen av Malaria Eradication Programme i 1958, sank antall malariatilfeller med 99% til 2518 tilfeller i 1970. I 80-årene økte hyppigheten voldsomt, med store epidemier i Nepals vestligste regioner. Man klarte delvis å kontrollere malaria en tid etter 1985, men i 1991 registrerte man hele 29.000 tilfeller. 70% av nepaleserne bor i malaria-utsatte områder.

Japansk hjernehinnebetennelse bryter ut som årlige epidemier og forårsaket 407 dødsfall i Nepal i 1997. Samme år ble det rapportert om ca. 3000 tilfeller av hjernehinnebetennelse, det dobbelte av året før. Siden begynnelsen av sommeren har 44 personer dødd av hjernehinnebetennelse i Nepalgunj. Spesielt japansk hjernehinnebetennelse er i ferd med å bli et alvorlig helseproblem i Nepal. I 1997 døde omtrent halvparten av de som fikk sykdommen. Japansk hjernehinnebetennelse er utbredt i 22 distrikter i østlige, midtvestre og vestligste Terai. De mest utsatte områdene er to distrikter helt vest i landet, to i midtvesten og to i den østlige regionen. Ti millioner lever utsatt for japansk hjernehinnebetennelse.

Kala-azar overføres av sandfluer og forårsaker bl.a. feber, forstørret lever og færre antall blodlegemer og -plater. Uten behandling kan sykdommen ha dødelig utgang.

Hyppigheten av kala-azar har økt til epidemi-lignende proporsjoner med 39,14 tilfeller per 10.000 innbyggere (1 av 255). Sykdommen var utbredt på 50-tallet, men forsvant så og si i 60-årene. Dermed ble ikke kala-azar betraktet som noen stor helsefare. Men på slutten av 70-tallet avsluttet man insektspraying på grunn av færre malariatilfeller og kala-azar dukket opp igjen tidlig på 80-tallet. Sykdommen er hovedsakelig utbredt i de sørlige lavtliggende slettene i østlige og sentrale regioner (elleve distrikter i Terai) som grenser mot kala-azar-herjede Bihar i India. Seks millioner bor i områder med kala-azar. Totalt 11.216 tilfeller, hvorav 300 dødsfall, ble rapportert mellom 1980 og 1996.

Det ikke er rapportert om tilfeller av dengue-feber i Nepal. Antakelig vil situasjonen endres p.g.a. det store antall insekter som effektivt kan overføre sykdommen. Dengue-feber var i full sving i India i 1995-96.

Ny radar på Tribhuvan

(Kathmandu Post) Kathmandu, 9.sep.1998 - Det nye radarsystemet på Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) er offisielt åpnet. Ekspertene mener de to verste flyulykkene i Nepals historie - da maskinene til Thai Airways og Pakistan International Airways i 1992 fløy inn i fjellene under innflyvning til TIA - kunne vært unngått med det nye radarsystemet. Japan har bidratt med 35 millioner US\$ til innstilling av radaren som dekker et område på 90 km. fra Kathmandu. Ekspertene sier imidlertid at dagens radar bør kompletteres med nok et radarsystem. Dette kunne plasseres på høye fjelltopper og supplere TIA's slik at hele landet dekkes. Radaren er hovedsakelig til nytte på internasjonale ruter, da de fleste innenriksflyene ikke har tilstrekkelig mottakerutstyr.

BA for ingeniører

(KTM Post) Kathmandu, 14.sep.1998 - 41 studenter fra Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering ved Kathmandu University får nå Bachelor of Engineering grader - de første Electrical Engineering grader gitt i Nepal. School of Engineering tilbyr en fire-årig utdanning; ett år fellesprogram fulgt av tre år med spesialkurs og prosjektarbeid. I startfasen har man hatt problemer med å finne kvalifiserte og erfarne lærere, få tak i spesialutstyr og etablere strukturer for ledelsen. Pragmatisme og stor besluttsomhet har imidlertid løst vanskelighetene. Universitetet prøver å oppmuntre studentene til å gjennomføre høyere grader gjennom stipender fra universiteter i utlandet. Snart vil School of Engineering tilby høyere grader i samarbeid med universiteter i Norge og India.

Pottemakere på utkikk etter ny jobb

(KTM Post) Janakpur, 14.sep.1998 - Pottemakerne i Terai forlater sitt tradisjonelle yrke til fordel for annet arbeid. I dag erstatter nepaleserne leirkrukker med billige og sterke husholdningsartikler av aluminium og stål. Nye produksjonsteknikker benyttes for å framstille gudefigurer. I tillegg er etterspørselen mindre p.g.a. svekket interesse for religiøse tradisjoner og ritualer. Til tross for dårlig inntjening prøver noen keramikere å opprettholde yrket ved å lage gudefigurer til festivalsesongen og utføre andre jobber resten av året. Man frykter at pottemakeryrket vil forsvinne om ikke myndighetene sørger for nødvendig skolering og markedsmuligheter.

Barnearbeid

(KTM Post) Kathmandu, 13/14/15/17.sep.1998 - Ifølge forskning utført av CWIN, en NGO som arbeider for barns velferd, er 15% av alle nepalesiske barn engasjert i farlig arbeid. De fleste jobber i teppe-fabrikker, gruver, sigarett- og alkoholindustrien og mursteinsproduksjon. Omtrent halvparten av alle nepalesiske barn arbeider og 26% av de mellom seks og fjorten år er frarøvet skolegang. The International Labour Organization (ILO) opplyser at av Nepals 6,23 millioner barn er 2,6 millioner økonomisk aktive, uavhengig av om de går på skolen eller ikke. Nirmal Pandey, medlem i National Planning Commission, sier at ideelt sett burde barnearbeid elimineres, men når de rådende forhold umuliggjør det, må man fokusere på å sikre at barnearbeiderne ikke utnyttes. Nå etterlyses bedre mediadekning av temaet og det er igangsatt et program rettet mot å mobilisere mediene. The Children at Risk Group/DANIDA arrangerte nylig et tre dagers program for å sette barns rettigheter i fokus. Under markeringen ble det hengt opp bannere i gatene, utdelt flyveblad og vist barneteater.

Ingen sterk kvinnebevegelse i Nepal

(KTM Post) Kathmandu, 9.sep.1998 - Mer enn 60 delegater fra SAARC-regionen deltok nylig på et arrangement for å markere Beijing-konferansen. Under møtet nevnte visestatsminister Shailaja Acharya at ved fjorårets lokalvalg var 20% av plassene i lokale styringsorganer reservert kvinner. Dette var et betydelig gjennombrudd fordi 36.000 kvinner nå er i politiske og administrative stillinger på grasrotnivå. Acharya innrømmer likevel at kvinners lederskap ikke har evnet å forandre bevisstheten om kvinners roller og ansvar. Man har ikke klart å skape en velorganisert og levedyktig kvinnebevegelse. "Dette har rystet nepalesiske kvinners håp og forventninger", sier hun. Bevegelsens elitepreg og urbane trekk er noe av forklaringen på at man ikke fikk en sterk kvinnebevegelse som evnet å presse samfunn og regjering. "Inntil kvinnene mobiliseres fra grasrotnivå til politisk nivå, er det lite sannsynlig med store endringer", sier Acharya. Minister for Kvinner og Sosial Velferd, Meena Pandey, opplyste at hennes departementet nå har offentliggjort en Nasjonal Handlingsplan (National Action Plan - NAP) for likestilling.

Nytt og nyttig: NepalNet

(KTM Post) Kathmandu, 17.sep.1998 - The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) har lansert NepalNet; en internett-basert web-side som gir tilgang til informasjon om bærekraftig utvikling i Nepal. NepalNet inneholder web-sidene til de 31 nepalesiske medlemmene og er finansiert av The International Development Research Centre of Canada. Blant medlemmene finner man statlige og ikke-statlige organisasjoner, akademiske institusjoner og forskningsinstitutter. Tilsammen reflekterer de en ekspertise som spenner fra jordbruk, økonomi og miljø, til kjønn, juridiske forhold og politikk. NepalNet inneholder et stort informasjonsarkiv om Nepal, sortert under ni utviklingssektorer (med videre linker). Her er det også mulighet for Nepal-interesserte å diskutere og utveksle kunnskap.

Fighting over a bill

By A Staff Reporter

What the parliament saw on Thursday, would go down in the 8-year-old period of multi-party democracy in Nepal as one of the most shameful happenings. It was not that scuffles, heated discussions, seizure of the rostrum and disruption of the parliamentary proceedings had not happened before, but it was the first time when MPs and ministers resorted to fistfighting and vandalising the property within the hallowed halls of the House of Representatives..

When the proceeding on Thursday ended barely about 20 minutes after it started, several rows of desks were smashed and almost 30 mikes were damaged, 13 of them beyond repair.

The incident happened after the speaker of the parliament gave permission to table the bill for local self-governance to the Minister for Local Development Keshab Lal Shrestha.

The bill, though was passed by the Development Committee of the Parliament by a majority vote, was opposed by the UML and the RPP (Thapa) for one provision, which deals with the switching of the parties by the local elected officials.

The UML had wanted an anti-defection provision be included in the bill to block probable defection of its locally elected officials. If they did they would lose their seats, the UML had demanded. But the Nepali Congress and especially the ML, wanted the bill as it was — the bill

Wednesday September 23, 1998

Independent



LAWMAKERS DASHAIN GIFT! The nation hung its head in shame Sept.17 due to the uncoouth and unparliamentary behaviour displayed by some of our parliamentarians. They resorted to violence and vandalism in the House causing severe damage to public property. The fault, perhaps, lies in us for having elected such street wallahs. one wonders what the *pan-chewing* K P Bhattarai has to say about the incident. Or is he going to say this is just another excuse in parliamentary process? The likes of Bhattarai should be reminded that to acheive democracy is one thing, to keep it is another.

remaining silent about the defection of the locally elected officials. That means the defection to other parties is not illegal.

In this context the UML may be right that the distortion seen in the national politics should not be allowed in the local government. But it had its own interest in doing so. It fears the locally elected officials might defect to the split-away ML, as the latter is in power.

The UML had won the majority seats in the local government in the last local election. And it sees them as an advantage in the next general election.

Actually, when the bill was first devised during the Congress government, it had remained silent about the switching of the parties. But the provision was inducted in by the Chand-UML government. After the present government came, the Development Committee of the parliament, where the ruling coalition has a majority amended the bill back to its original form.

However, the UML had tried to block what was already passed by a parliamentary committee and the majority decision in democracy. The ruling party also committed mistake by trying to take a short-term political advantage out of the bill. Even the speaker, who had tried to find a consensus, did wrong by allowing to table the bill in a highly charged atmosphere, knowing that the something unpleasant is bound to happen.

MP Khovari at sticky point

By A Staff Reporter

Infamous lawmaker Khovari Raya known for his notoriety with wine and women has yet again gotten himself into a sticky situation. Two separate cases, one for attempted murder and the other for possession of illegal arms, were filed against him Sunday.

MP Raya had reportedly blank fired rounds of bullets while emerging out of Moon Sun Disco, Kamaladi late Friday night. It is alleged the youngest of the parliamentarians Raya got into a quarrel as the guard delayed to open the gate in time.

Koirala: Whose side is he on?

By A Staff Reporter

Even as Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala flies in today (Tuesday), after attending the NAM Summit in Durban, South Africa, he may be heading for a turbulent political weather back home.

Just last week, former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, directly challenged the present leadership by accusing it of straying from its "mainstream thought", specially after the restoration of democracy. He quite surely was pointing an accusing finger at party president and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and what detractors dub as his "kitchen cabinet".

Then some MPs, who were ousted from the minority government in the reshuffle to include the ML MPs, are also up in arms against Koirala. Dhundiraj Shastri, who was in the Group of 36, that was instrumental in the fall of the Koirala government in 1994, seems to be leading the pack of this lot. Those opposing Prime Minister Koirala and his close circle of advisors within the party feel that Koirala is promoting only his kith and kin and ignoring others. In fact, when Koirala led the majority government from 1991 till 1994, even top party leaders like Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and late Ganesh Man Singh had expressed their dissatisfaction with the way he ran things. In fact, Singh, who was called the "Father of Democracy" after the 1990 people's movement for the restoration of multi-party democracy, even left the Nepali Congress in disgust after his differences with Koirala couldn't be resolved. Singh was one of the founders of the NC and what a difficult decision it was for him to leave this party for which he fought for so long, specially at that late stage in his life, can easily be guessed. But going by things, it seems Koirala supporters were glad to see him go when he left the party.

Koirala definitely seems to be headed for rough times as soon as he comes



back, even though now he has the support of the ML, as its MPs have been inducted into the government.

Koirala's decision to give top position to Shailaja Acharya, now Deputy Prime Minister and also bring to the political forefront Sujata Koirala, seems to be drawing the ire of many. While Acharya is his niece, Sujata is his daughter. The younger leaders like Deuba and also former Home Minister and now Supplies Minister Khum Bahadur Khadka, think the party president is trying to make the Nepali Congress a party of the Koiralas! These two are among the front runners to lead the party after Koirala. But till now, there is also no doubt that there is no one person who enjoys the respect as Girija Prasad Koirala does within the party and its supporters. He probably has the widest political base nation-wide and can rally the supporters of the party most effectively. Shahstri, Khadka, and Deuba can't boast of similar organisational skill and political support.

But the question remains, how long can Koirala last?

Maoist misadventure

By Dhana Thapa

All seems quiet on the Maoists front at the moment. But is this a lull before the actual storm. There actually are conflicting reports coming in. In fact security officials here have been alarmed by reports that Indian Maoists too will be joining hands with the insurgents here and start terrorist activities in border areas.

Terrorist activities carried out by this group have affected more than 27 districts, including sporadic incidents in the Capital city.

Many observers, including human rights groups, blame the government policy and police brutality for the increase in Maoists activities. Of course, innocents have been killed by the Maoists too. But according to most reports, the government security forces killed more than 400 people in the last four months alone. The harassment and

brutal methods have backfired and created more sympathisers. After all, the poor people mired in poverty needed just one push to step over and become extreme left terrorists.

Now there are reports that even the army has been mobilised in Far Western Nepal. But before doing that, policy makers should realise that that will be the last option before the government. After this there will be no comeback. The country will be engaged in an actual civil war. Do we want such a situation?

Like it has been mentioned innumerable times, winning the people of those areas, by channelling development activities there, will be more effective than just using brute force.

Talk Back

Robin Marston
Kopundol,
Lalitpur.

Garbaged tourism

From everyone's point of view the timing of the current strike (by garbage pickers) is unfortunate.

This Thursday (24 Sept) the first ever Austrian airlines flight is scheduled to land at 10 am carrying tourists and a delegation of press and travel agents.

At 2:10 same day the Dutch airline Transavia also arrives on its maiden flight from another of Europe's great cities - Amsterdam. On board will be 110 Dutch Travel Agents.

These are the agents who it is hoped will be selling Nepal over the coming years. 25 press members from the leading Dutch travel papers and journals will be accompanying the group.

When they leave the airport, they will be greeted more - by garbage, piles of stinking garbage on every street corner. These photographs will go back to Europe, and what will be the impressions and memories of the visiting agents and press?

Not only does this bode ill for the tourism sector but it casts severe negative impact on the population of the valley, as we approach the biggest holiday festival period of the year.

Cleaning up the Augean Stable

Again the Auditor General's Report has portrayed a gory picture of the country's financial and economic situation. Every page and even almost every paragraph of the 1,200-page report speaks volumes about the irregularities, corruption, misappropriation of funds and arrears in the government. There is virtually no sector that has not been indicted by the report of financial irregularities. But the report, which was submitted to the King a fortnight ago, has hardly caused a stir in the government and the parliament.

Just how big is the level of corruption? A few examples highlighted in the report would be enough to answer that query. Last year four ministers took Rs. 850,000 rupees in the name of medical treatment. The cabinet gave Rs. 410,000 to three ministers for medical treatment. Even an assistant minister's wife got an economic assistance of Rs. 150,000. There are practically hundreds of MPs and ministers who have gobbled up tens of millions of rupees in the name of medical expenses. Medical facility is one of the most misused of all the facilities by the MPs.

Not to talk of the 'Pajero' facility, the demand of pension to the MPs after they lose the election is also there! The report has also pointed out that the MPs have taken more than Rs. 10 million as salary of their assistants, many of them without appointing one.

The government has failed to increase the revenue collection. The revenue leakage has increased by 800 per cent in the last eight years. One tax-payer evaded Rs. 46 million tax in collusion with the officials, another importer could get his goods worth of Rs. 26 million into the country without them getting checked.

Innumerable times, the ministers, MPs and others talk loudly about checking corruption. However, they have failed to put into practice what they preach.

It is certain that the whole lot of the state machinery are corrupt there is little inclination to fight corruption. Will the people have to start another revolution to clean up this Augean Stable? ■

Govt, FNCCI could come to agreement on VAT

By A Staff Reporter

The agreement between the government and the FNCCI may be finalised by this weekend after Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat gives his final nod. According to reports, the businessmen have managed to win huge concessions from the government.

According to unofficial disclosure of the agreement, the threshold of the VAT has been increased from Rs. 3 million to Rs. 4.5 million.

The new arrangement has allowed businessmen not registered with VAT to import goods worth of Rs. 1.2 million a year.

But they will have to pay 5 per cent income tax at the point of entry. However only VAT-registered ones will be allowed to import goods from the third countries.

The limit for compulsory account for VAT-registered businesses are also increased to Rs. 10 million from Rs. 2 million.

The government has waived VAT from 32 districts. However, businesses like cigarette, alcohol, cinema, contract and tourism-related will have to pay VAT in those districts also.

Sprinting to Everest

By A Staff Reporter

Who can climb Mt. Everest, the world's highest peak, in 18 hours?

Kaji Sherpa is trying to create a record by climbing the Everest in 18 hours. The expedition is organised by Gorkha Brewery, the brewer of Tuborg and Carlsberg beers, and named as 'Tuborg Speed Expedition '98.

The idea for the expedition was proposed by May 29 Memorial Trust, formed to commemorate the day when man first conquered over Everest in 1953, and Gorkha Brewery is promoting this as its own ambitious project.

Abortion: An expediency

By K C Bhatt

The Independent Wednesday September 16, 1998

In the recent past, a lot of debate has taken place about the prospects of legalising the hitherto illegal abortion.

It is fallacious that if the moralist oppose abortion on ethical grounds, the feminists favor it as an instrument of women empowerment. In actuality both these approaches are unwholesome and parochial, oblivious of the implications of their own conspicuous prejudices, particularly when they are considered from different perspectives. Abortion, with its' human factor, would be seen as something more than an ethical issue or an issue of feminism.

In such a backdrop therefore, the issue has proved to be an emotion provoking one and all the debates have only attributed in establishing a stalemate, that in turn contributes in maintaining the status quo in which abortion remains socially condemned and therefore illegal.

The illegality of abortion has resulted in several anomalies in the context of Nepal. A prime example is the majority of the female occupants who are in Nepali jails not for committing some heinous crimes, but because they have indulged in abortion.

Quite a significant number of young female lives are lost in Nepal, during their potentially most productive years due to clandestine abortions, mostly in the unsafe hands of unqualified persons.

Quite often, new born babies are abandoned by their hapless mothers, unable to bear the burden of an illegitimate child in an unforgiving society. It may be naive to assume that, in spite of its' illegality, abortion is not practiced in Nepal. In fact most of the unwanted pregnancies of the higher income and thus the privileged group of the society, are safely terminated by expert physicians secretly and safely. It is mostly the poor and the weaker section of the society, that suffers the ambiguity and hypocrisy of the laws and the social taboos of abortion.

In order to avoid abortion, it is imperative to avoid unwanted pregnancies. Introducing sex education to the people at large during their formative years would go a long way towards that end and as will the easy accessibility; to the instruments of contraception and informed counseling about the uses of same. It needs a lot of imagination and hard work on the part of the opinion builders and the policy makers to make it a long term solution. ■

Austrians keen to boost Nepalese tourism

By a Post Reporter Kathmandu Post

KATHMANDU, Sept 9 - Austrians have shown keen interest to share their experiences with Nepalese with a view to enhance Nepali tourism industry, says Professor Kurt Luger, chairman of Eco-Himal, an Austrian society for ecological cooperation.

Austria receives 17 million tourists annually whose population is estimated to be only 8 million. Their main source of income is tourism. The Austrian INGO Eco-Himal-Society for Ecological Co-operation Alps-Himalaya is currently implementing an eco-tourism project in Rolwaling and Tama Koshi valley in Dolakha district.

"Our objective is to create an attractive 'green' product for the trekker and at the same time to initiate a process of sustainable village development," said tourism researcher Patricia

East. Tourism is seen as a potential source of income for a population which has little or no access to the cash economy, East viewed. Eco-Himal has also been working in the Khumbu region, providing electricity to the Sherpa villages around Namche Bazaar, it is said. Since the village households have electricity, firewood consumption has been reduced by 30 percent, Chairman Luger said.

"By using electricity from the 600 KW Hydel project, trekker can enjoy hot showers above 4000 metres. This is a contribution towards making the Everest region more competitive vis-a-vis other tourism destinations". There are more chances of coming Austrian tourists due to Austrian airlines commencing its flights between Vienna and Kathmandu from September '98. □

Infants deprived of life-saving vaccine

By a Post Reporter Kathmandu Post

KATHMANDU, Sept 9 - Health officials in Kathmandu always claim that the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) is doing well in all districts of the country. But fresh reports from far-flung districts reveal that thousands of infants are still deprived of life-saving vaccination against deadly diseases. According to our Mahottari correspondent, Rabindra Upreti, due to the carelessness of Public Health Office (PHO), about 40,000 infants and children from all the 76 villages of Mahottari district are deprived of this facility for the past three months. And PHO officials are still not clear on why the immunization programmes stopped and when will it re-start. Meanwhile in Kathmandu, health officials flatly deny the reports that the EPI has been disrupted in Mahottari.

EPI, started in 1978 under the initiative of UNICEF, aims to immunize Nepali children

all over the country against deadly diseases such as typhoid, tuberculosis, polio and measles. Young women of child-bearing age are also given anti-tetanus vaccines under the programme.

Government health officials blame the weather for the difficulties.

Contrary to what health officials claim, locals in Mahottari say that, unlike in other districts, there was no damaging floods or incessant rains in Mahottari during this monsoon season. Meanwhile, reports from Jajarkot in the mid-western Maoist insurgency-hit district reveal that the health posts there have turned into rest houses for the guards. "All the 13 health posts have turned useless with no health services. Similar is the plight of EPI", reports Harihar Singh Rathour, our Jajarkot correspondent. Health officials and locals in Jajarkot blame "Kilo-Sera-Two" a government launched operation to control Maoist insurgency, behind this sudden standstill in health services. □

Safa tempos may run in the city

Kathmandu Post

By Surendra Phuyal

KATHMANDU, Sept 17 - After months of foul-ups, delay and a general lack of enthusiasm on the part of Vikram Tempo owners, donor agencies are contemplating a change in strategy in their bid to put more environment-friendly three-wheelers on the streets of Kathmandu.

Instead of trying to convince Vikram Tempo owners to convert old dilapidated tempos into battery-powered ones, donors are thinking of luring Vikram Tempo owners into buying new battery powered tempos.

The rationale: as more and more new battery-operated tempos begin to ply on the streets of Kathmandu, the older smoke-belching Vikram Tempos would gradually be phased out.

The move, if successful, would put more cleaner, and efficient electric tempos on the streets of Kathmandu, helping to reduce the Valley's air pollution. Experts say, diesel-powered Vikram Tempos are a major source of air pollution in the capital. Currently, about 10,000 such three-wheelers are in service in Kathmandu.

"We are planning to give up the idea of converting old Vikram Tempos into SAFA tempos", says Saroj Neupane, an official with the Royal Danish Embassy. The Danish aid and development agency DANIDA is spending Rs 25 million on a pilot project to convert 100 polluting Vikram Tempos into cleaner battery-operated Safa tempos. The project is being executed by the Ministry of Population and

Environment (MOPE).

"Instead we are thinking to provide subsidised and affordable loans to honest tempo drivers and owners to buy new SAFA tempos. Actually, concerned officials like Neupane have little choice but to change strategy. Despite an advertisement blitzkrieg some months ago urging Vikram Tempo owners to come forward for interest-free loans to convert their vehicles into cleaner Safa tempos, there was very little response. Experts say, part of the reason for the lack of interest is the substantial costs of conversion. It costs Rs 350,000 to buy a Vikram tempo, and as much to go for conversion.

"Which Vikram tempo owner can afford to pay that much an amount--irrespective of whatever percent subsidy the government provides for loans", questions Ashok Raj Pandey, Managing Director of Nepal Electric Vehicle Industry (NEVI).

Another reason for the delay was the complex bureaucratic work required to get things done.

But just when donors are changing strategy, officials at MOPE claim the bureaucratic delays are finally over and that conversion of old Vikram tempos into SAFA tempos could begin in a few months time. According to MOPE Under Secretary Purushottam Kunwar, "the conversion work will begin within three-to-four months." □

Nepal facing an uphill battle to conquer Everest's litter problem

FINANCIAL TIMES WEEKEND AUGUST 15/AUGUST 16 1998

Binod Bhattarai on the trials of disposing of mountains of rubbish left by climbers

Nepal is to reinforce its attempt to clean up the national park around Mount Everest - dubbed the world's highest garbage dump by critics - with a ban on the sale of bottled drinks.

From Monday, beer and fizzy drinks will be available only in cans in the 1,148 sq km World Heritage Site.

Roughly 3,000 people in about 40 settlements live within the Sagarmatha National Park - Sagarmatha is the Nepali name for Mount Everest - and some 18,000 tourists, usually with two porters or guides, visit the region every year, generating tonnes of rubbish.

"The bottle piles have become a major problem," says Mingma Norbu, executive director of the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC), which has been campaigning for the ban. "They don't decompose, are heavy, expensive to transport and we have more bottles than can be reused locally."

During the three main tourism months, each lodge along the main trekking routes generates about 15,000 empty bottles, according to the SPCC. At high altitudes

it takes for ever for waste to decompose: traditional composting toilets do not work and toilet paper takes about 30 years to disintegrate above 4,000m. Oxygen bottles discarded by expeditions have also accumulated at camps on the ascent to the Everest summit.

With an initial \$30,000 (£18,000) grant from the Worldwide Fund for Nature, the SPCC, set up in 1991, began by removing waste from the Mount Everest Base Camp, at 5,450m.

Waste left behind by mountaineers for more than three decades was collected and carried down to lower altitudes for disposal: paper was burnt, organic waste was buried and glass and cans were dumped in pits.

Soon empty bottles began to fill up the pits and the SPCC had to try crushing them to reduce volume. But digging more pits in an alpine, land-scarce region was difficult, time-consuming and expensive.

Since private helicopters began flights to the region in 1994, the SPCC has flown out about 60 tonnes, but a stockpile of another 34 tonnes of using special charters to ferry bottles already piled up

bottles has already been collected, and the committee says there could be as many uncollected bottles lying around in the hinterland.

The SPCC calculates that would cost about \$64,000, which it does not have.

The government charges a minimum of \$50,000 for each expedition to Mount Everest. It ploughs back 30-40 per cent of this and other tourist fees to support the SPCC's work. On average, the SPCC spends about \$15,000 cleaning up the park every year.

"We had identified bottles as a major problem when I was leading a clean-up team to Mt Everest back in 1984," says Prachanda Man Shrestha, now director general of Nepal's department of tourism. "Earlier they were being recycled for domestic use; now even that demand is saturated."

All tourists who stop at the SPCC's information centre at the Lukla airstrip and Namche Bazaar are told of ways to dispose of waste. SPCC inspectors also trek to high-altitude camps to check compliance with the government's litter rules. Expeditions that do not comply forfeit a \$2,000 deposit. □

Rs 550 m goes in drain as MPs enjoy comfy ride

By Binaj Gurubacharya

KTM Post 25.4.98

KATHMANDU, April 24 - Duty concessions on imported vehicles provided to lawmakers and other high officials have cost the treasury a whopping Rs 550 million, according to estimates.

Calculations done on the basis of published reports show that the duty waivers have resulted in revenue losses of Rs 350 million on vehicles imported by lawmakers. The losses total Rs 200 million on those vehicles imported by high government officials.

Altogether about 400 vehicles, mostly luxurious sports utility vehicles and cars, have been imported in the last two and a half years since the government waived off duties on vehicles imported by lawmakers and high officials.

The duty concessions have, however, been immensely unpopular among common citizens because lawmakers have misused the vehicles with impunity, renting them out for outrageous sums while at the same time refusing to let go of their government-provided cars and jeeps.

The negative publicity surrounding the whole issue made it easy for the new Girija Prasad Koirala government to do away altogether with the concessions. In its first cabinet decision the Koirala government cancelled the concessions. In another major decision recently, the government has also decided to confiscate all public vehicles taken away by former ministers and officials.

Thus, Khum Bahadur Khadka who headed the Home Ministry and bossed around the cops for the past

few years could soon be running away from them if he fails to return the three government vehicles he still has in his possession.

The former minister has three such vehicles, RPP MP Mirza Dil Sad Beg has three and Buddhiman Tamang has three more of these government vehicles. Prakash Chandra Lohani, Mahendra Raya, Hridayesh Tripathi, Siddharaj Ojha and Purna Bahadur Khadka have two each while Keshar Bahadur Chand, Shivraj Subedi, Krishna Prasad Gautam, Ramjanam Chaudhari and Surendra Hamal have one each parked at their garages.

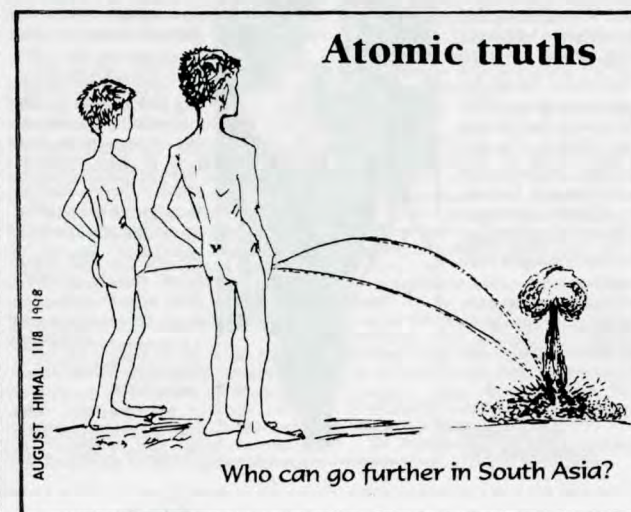
And the worst part is most of these people already have their own vehicles imported under the duty-free facility. Of the 260 parliamentarians, records show that over 210 have used their privilege.

"They give their own vehicles on rent and misuse the government vehicles," said director of the Central Service Department (CSD) Bharat Mani Risal.

Besides the lawmakers, special class government officials, court judges, heads of committees and commissions, Royal Palace officials, Royal Nepal Army officials and even former officials and diplomats were also given the facility to import vehicles at a nominal 10 percent duty.

The rationale for the cabinet decision to provide such facility two years back was to allow parliamentarians a chance to get their own vehicle in order to minimize use of government machinery. But the move has completely backfired leading to the cabinet decision to cancel duty waiver facilities. ■

Atomic truths



Comrade Lama

WHEN ON 5 May 1998, Amar Lama stepped out of prison a free man, his release was greeted with disbelief by the Communist Party of Nepal (UML), and its breakaway faction, the CPN (ML). Lama was no ordinary prisoner. For all of five years his fate had been inextricably linked with an incident that has haunted Nepal on and off during those years. On 17 May 1993, a Mitsubishi Pajero carrying the all-powerful General Secretary of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML), Madan Bhandari, and the Party Organiser, Jeevraj Ashrit, plunged into the Trishuli river at Dasdhunga in central Nepal. The sole survivor of the accident was the driver, Amar Lama.

Lama's deposition before various investigation commissions was that on trying to wipe the vapour off the windscreen on that rainy day five years ago, he had lost control of the vehicle and it had fallen into the river.

After the initial shock, talk began of the senior communist leaders having been assassinated and suspicion quickly fell on Lama, for the simple reason that he had survived. General Secretary Bhandari's wife, Vidya Bhandari, immediately after the accident had publicly vouched for Lama's integrity as a party faithful, adding that he was "like a brother" to her. Her tune, and that of the party that she became increasingly active in after her husband's death, however, changed soon enough.

The investigative commission set up by the then Nepali Con-

gress (NC) government attributed the accident to the carelessness of the driver. It was not a verdict that the opposition CPN (UML) was willing to accept, for in the meantime, the communists had formed two separate commissions, both of which suspected foul play behind the incident.

The CPN (UML) took to the streets immediately after the government commission submitted its report on 17 June 1993. Luckily for the then Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala (back in the seat once again today after four years), even as the protests were intensifying, huge cloudbursts wiped out road links with the capital and large parts of the country's eastern plains were inundated. In the face of the national calamity, the communist agitation lost steam, and was stopped altogether after an agreement was reached to form another commission under a Supreme Court judge. This time the CPN (UML) would have a say in its formation.

However, before the commission could submit its report, the CPN (UML) itself came to power in November 1994 affirming that the "accident was a conspiracy". And when the commission did present its report, the government sat on it for a month before going public with it. The commission, much to the CPN (UML)'s discomfort, dismissed the conspiracy theory. And although the communists officially accepted the report, they made it an article of faith that the Dasdhunga mishap was part of a conspiracy, to be resurrected whenever it suited them.

Meanwhile, the Chitwan District Court charged Lama with

murder, sentenced him to life imprisonment, and confiscated his property. This ruling, approved by the Appellate Court, was unprecedented given that under the circumstances the accused should have been tried under laws governing a traffic accident, not murder. In desperation, Amar Lama appealed the judgement in the Supreme Court.

It is interesting to note that, save for one, the various human rights organisations in Nepal did not raise a single voice against the way Lama had been treated by the law. The left-leaning organisations would have nothing to do with Lama given their proximity to the CPN (UML), while the others were inexplicably silent on Amar Lama's incarceration. The only consistent voice against Lama's treatment came from the well-known senior scholar-statesman, Rishikesh Shaha.

When the Supreme Court took cognisance of Lama's appeal and reduced his sentence to two years and a fine of 500 rupees, he had already served four years, 11 months and 19 days behind bars. He was released on the same day of the Supreme Court decision.

The expected protests (which even included a statement from Vidya Bhandari, now a CPN-UML member of parliament) were, however, muted. As a CPN (UML) leader puts it: "Had the Party been undivided and not busy bickering between themselves, the Supreme Court decision would have become a much bigger issue. But now they are making perfunctory statements just to keep the party workers happy."

A self-proclaimed Gandhian, a free Amar Lama says, "CPN (UML) has taken charge of the government two times after the Dasdhunga accident. They used government machinery to investigate the accident. But they could come up with nothing. They have used me and this incident merely to pull down the Congress government."

Lama now plans to enter politics, although he has not yet made up his mind which party (of the left) he will join. He would do well to carefully choose his options.

-Rajesh Ghimire



End of ordeal:
Lama walks free.

The Best Of Village Tourism

TRAVEL / TOURISM

By B.M. Dahal

FOLLOWING the implementation of the concept of village tourism in Sirubari (an attractive traditional Gurung village of Syangja district), the local people of Timaldanda area of Kabhrepalanchowk district have also begun showing interest to receive the foreign visitors.

Currently, 30 houses of Arubote, Narayansthan and Thuloparsel villages have constructed two extra rooms for the visitors. The local people have also managed necessary infrastructure like toilets, piped water and solar system at homes. The foreign guests visiting the villages will be staying as family members in the houses of the local people. So far, the rooms have been prepared to accommodate over 60 visitors in the villages. The residents of the neighbouring villages are also enthusiastic to attract visitors.

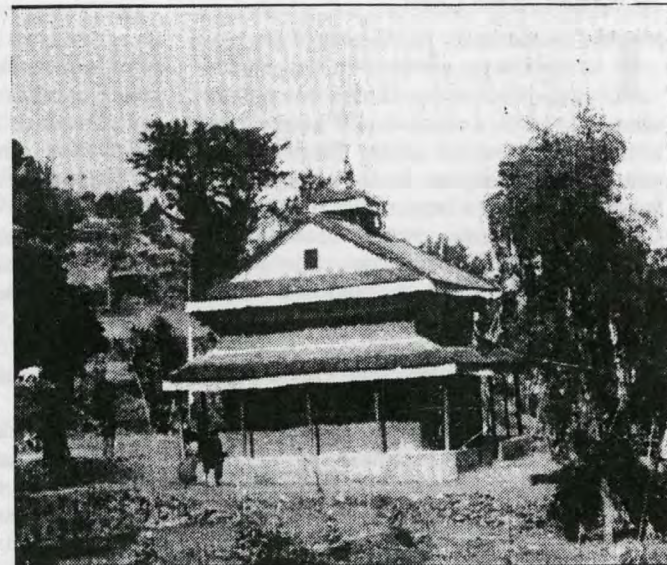
A nine-member local tourism development committee has been formed under the chairmanship of the Thuloparsel VDC chairman Iman Singh Lama to promote tourism business in the area. The committee will also work towards generating awareness about the importance of tourism business among the local people and give hospitality training to them. Apart from this, the committee is entrusted with the responsibility of fixing the prices of rooms and delicacies and charging them from the visitors.

Says chairman Lama, "The committee sends visitors as guests to the local people who will have to provide quality service to them. The room owners are not allowed to charge extra money from the guests. The committee will take money from the visitors. And it will set aside about 25 per cent of the total income to develop infrastructure in the village. The remaining 75 per cent money will be given to the respective room owners."

The groups of visitors will stay for two days and three nights in the villages.

Similarly, a village tourism committee has also been formed in the central level under the chairmanship of tourism entrepreneur Sant Lama. The committee is expected to carry out marketing and promotional activities to attract visitors to the villages.

Lying about 70 kilometers east from the capital city of Kathmandu, Timaldanda and its vicinity are inhabited by the Tamang. This area encompasses seven Village Development Committees.



Attractions at Timaldanda of Kabhre Palanchok.

Since a motorable road has linked Kathmandu with Narayansthan village of Timaldanda area, one can visit the village via Dhulikhel and Piple within three to four hours. The visitors can also go to this area through Dolalghat from where it takes about two hours of rafting in the Sunkoshi river.

The major attractions for foreign visitors in the area are the traditional Tamang culture and the view of typical villages. As Timaldanda lies at a height of about 2,150 metres above sea level, a panoramic view of the Himalayan range and the Sunkoshi and the Rosi can be seen clearly.

"We have known that our culture, huts and farmyards can attract foreign visitors. So, we are committed to bringing in visitors. Now we local people are working to promote our village as a tourist destination," says a local youth who has been working with a travel agency here in Kathmandu.

On the request of the local people, a French social organisation named 'Sister Association' has agreed to develop two cable cars over the Sunkoshi river to promote tourism business in the area. A three-kilometre long cable car line will link Ranidanda to Thuloparsel. Likewise, a

five-kilometre long cable car line be developed to join Chapakhauri and Narayansthan.

The French organisation is also involved in providing non-formal education to the local women.

Moreover, Timaldanda area is full of monasteries, stupas and unique types of caves. So, the area is a mixture of natural and cultural heritages.

According to Kunga Dubsang Lama, chairman of a local Lokeshwar Dhyana Gumba committee, the demons used to oppress the people. To protect them from the frequent attack of the demons, Guru Padma Sambhava was introduced in the area after the demise of Lord Buddha.

The people in Timaldanda area seem to be attracted towards coffee and the apple farming.

"Apart from coffee farming, the local people of this area are attracted towards tourism which alone can uplift their living standard. The traditionally preserved Tamang culture not only attract foreigners but also the people from other parts of the country," says Dr. Surendra Bhakta Pradhanang, chairperson of Kathmandu Research Centre.

Dr. Pradhanang had motivated the local people towards village tourism. □

NEPAL FORGETS TIBET

Kathmandu is closer to Beijing than to Lhasa.

by Kanak Mani Dixit

Till as late as the first decade of this century, the government in Kathmandu paid tribute to the Chinese court. Once every five years a party would head out of Kathmandu overland across Tibet, bearing gifts, taking three years for the round-trip to Beijing. A practice begun after 1791 when Chinese forces, responding to Tibet's call for help in what was turning out to be a very one-sided Nepal-Tibet war, reached within a day's march of Kathmandu before Nepal sued for peace.

China is still extracting tribute from Nepal today, albeit in a slightly different guise. These come in the form of the reiteration of the refrain: "Tibet is a part of China; Nepal will not allow any anti-Chinese activities from its soil; Tibet is a part of China..."

No matter whether it is King Birendra, prime ministers, trade delegations or journalists' groups who go visiting Beijing, the Chinese never fail to extract this oral tribute, which is mouthed as a matter of course. Needless to say, this does not do much to enhance the Nepali self-image.

Poor sense of self has of course long afflicted Kathmandu's foreign policy generally. It is a far cry today from those heady days of the early 1960s when Nepali leaders such as Bishweswar Prasad Koirala, Nepal's first popularly elected prime minister, stood tall and self-confident, side by side with a Jawaharlal Nehru or a Zhou Enlai. It was back then that Nepal's China policy was designed, to be sure, taking into consideration the Cold War and the Sino-Indian rivalry. Nepal was having to prove its sovereign status to a sceptical India, and also needed China desperately to balance India's overwhelming presence in its economic and political life.

But even back then, China had implicitly

recognised that Nepal fell within India's sphere of influence. According to the recently published memoirs of Koirala, *B.P. Koirala ko Atmabritanta*, 1998, when he had visited China during his brief tenure from 1959 to 1960, Zhou Enlai himself had acknowledged as much. Referring to the volume of Indian aid to Nepal, the Chinese premier had indicated that Beijing's contribution would have to be slightly less. When Koirala asked why, Zhou replied: "It will not be good either for you or for us... We should not compete with India in providing aid to you."

Chinese crutch

Times have changed, and Nepal's own sovereign status is unquestioned. At the same time, the ability to play China and India against each other has diminished considerably (despite the immediate downturn over the course of May 1998). China now has, in so many words, conceded the south of the Himalaya as outside its immediate area of influence and interest.

This in itself need not be a matter to make Nepali policy-makers disconsolate, for it provides an opportunity for smart diplomacy to take the place of an outdated equidistance policy. It should be possible for Nepal to fashion an independent and self-confident regional policy for itself without the need of a Chinese crutch.

As far as Beijing is concerned, meanwhile, the place of Nepal in its scheme of things has diminished considerably over the years and today the importance is only in relation to activities that may be carried out from the south against its presence in Tibet. That, and the activities of Chinese construction companies and contractors in Nepal.

One may, of course, forgive Shital Niwas

(the redbrick palace where Nepal's foreign ministry is housed) for not taking the initiative in defining a more self-confident approach towards China. It is the members of the Nepali intelligentsia and media which show an even greater lack of imagination. Since the diplomatic shackles binding the foreign ministry do not affect them, they could conceivably have taken an independent stance on China and Tibet.

They could, for example, dare speak on matters such as cultural inundation or the Han migration into Kham and Amdo, the matter of religious freedom and human rights, or the socio-economic conditions within Tibet. They could also raise discussion on Tibet's distinct identity within China, and the quantum of sovereignty that might be appropriate, something that even the Dalai Lama is willing to consider. They could, perhaps, speak up on allowing the Dalai Lama to visit Nepal on a purely religious mission, as is the formula employed elsewhere.

All this is, of course, what the Kathmandu intelligentsia *could* do. The reality, however, is that any person who raises one of these points is immediately, and contemptibly, tarred as a "Free Tibet wallah".

(Interestingly enough, B.P. Koirala recalls in his just-published memoirs, "...For one thing, because we were socialists we were for Tibet's independence and we believed that the Chinese action was an aggression... When the talk turned to Tibet, I told Jawaharlal Nehru, 'You have given Tibet to China on a silver platter.' To which he replied, 'So, am I supposed to send an army to put the Dalai Lama on the throne?' My answer was, 'There is no need to send in the army. But you have given international endorsement to the Chinese action, you have recognised it. And you are also telling us to leave China to do what it will...'")

When in their bilateral banquet toasts the diplomats drink to the "age-old ties between Nepal and China", they mean, more than anything else, the historical links of Nepal with Tibet. But the lack of interest of the Nepali educated class towards Tibet over the last half century has accelerated the eclipse of Tibet from the Nepali mind. This, despite the fact

that the most popular ballad in the Nepali language continues to be *Muna Madan*, the tragic tale of a Kathmandu trader who leaves his family to go trade in Lhasa.

Mao badges

Today, Tibet has become so remote that Nepalis do not even know enough to take pride in the fact that much of the great religious high art of Tibet, in bronze or canvas, have their origins in the great cultural outpouring of the Kathmandu Valley. For centuries, Nepali traders supplied Tibet with goods from India and maintained a strong mercantile presence in Lhasa and other towns on the high plateau, to the extent that Nepali coins were standard currency. The cross-border interactions between the 'Tibetan' regions of northern Nepal and Tibet have naturally been intense.

Much of the cultural, economic as well as cross-border community links were abruptly terminated with the Chinese takeover of 1959. During the Cultural Revolution, Nepal's hills were flooded with Mao badges, which pushed Kathmandu to counter with King Mahendra badges. For a while in the early-1970s, the Kathmandu government did look the other way as the Central Intelligence Agency, with connivance of Indian agencies, supported Tibetan insurgents in attacking Chinese convoys and installations from bases in Nepal. However, this did not last long; pressured by China, the Nepali army saw its only combat action in this century when it did away with the Tibetan insurgents in 1974.

There is a highway, of course, which links the Tibetan plateau with the Ganga plains through Kathmandu. However, as the route is roundabout, Nepal's Tarai has not been able to utilise it fully to supply its surplus agricultural produce to Tibet. A more direct road, planned in 1960, was shelved because of Indian misgivings that such a road would mean direct Chinese military access to the Ganga plains.

The road is finally being built with Japanese aid, as a single-lane feeder road. There is cold comfort in this, however, as a more direct route from Lhasa to the Indian plains is

in the offing. The roads are already complete on both sides, taking the Chumbi Valley route from Tibet, and into the Siliguri railhead in the Duars either via the Nathu La or Jelep La passes (in Sikkim and West Bengal's Darjeeling district, respectively).

Only diplomatic niceties having to do with Chinese lack of formal recognition of Sikkim's incorporation into India is said to be stopping the border from being opened. When that happens, the trade conduit from Tibet to the sea will open, and Nepal which has been the historical custodian of trade with Tibet will be left out in the cold.

Tibet is a vast storehouse of natural resources, and its economy will rise sooner or later. But because the Nepali government and intelligentsia have forgotten Lhasa, the Nepali links to that city are by now tenuous. The private sector has come up with no initiative to maintain a presence in Tibet's growing market, nor has the government embarked on any effective economic diplomacy which could mature to the benefit of Nepal in the long run.

Trade with Lhasa

The bulk of the economic advantages of Tibet's opening will, of course, now be picked up by the Han Chinese whose influx has turned Tibetan demography on its head. What is left over, will be picked up by Marwari and other Indian businessmen who are bound to land up in Lhasa before long, and certainly once the Siliguri-Lhasa route is operational. At best, then, Nepal will remain a transit point for the western high desert of Tibet (or Changtang), rather than the populated and productive eastern regions of Kham and Amdo.

The lack of erudition and imagination which marks Nepal's foreign policy in so many other areas is also clear and obvious in the case of China/Tibet. The blacking out of Tibet from the Nepali mindset means that, when the time comes, Nepal will lose out to India in taking 'advantage' of Tibet. The traders in Siliguri are gearing themselves up, while Nepalis stick to the refrain "Tibet is a part of China..."

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HIMAL 11/6 JUNE 1998

GORKHA

Gorkha is a hill bazaar and the ancestral home of the Shah dynasty which rules Nepal today. It is from here that King Prithvi Narayan Shah started his conquest of the country's various tiny kingdoms and unified them into a single nation, Nepal. Perched one thousand feet above Gorkha Bazaar, the palace dominates the surroundings and is visible from all around the area. It is regarded as a holy shrine by many and from here, visitors can get fantastic views of lush green valleys and the Himalaya beyond. The palace also boasts beautiful architecture.

Even though only Hindus are allowed to enter the palace premises, it

is worthwhile walking up the stairs for the view. A holy cave is situated just below the palace where once lived a saint named Gorakhnath from which the town earned its name. Visitors will enjoy strolling around Gorkha Bazaar which is located below the palace. Its fine architecture and cobbled lanes are reminiscent of a time long forgotten.

To get to Gorkha from Kathmandu, rented cars, taxis or public buses are available at the main bus station at Gongabu. Visitors should buy their tickets in advance since the buses leave at 7 am every morning. On your arrival in Gorkha, you can make a selection from a wide range of lodgings which provide cheap as well as expensive accommodations. VISIT NEPAL -98

Gift som syv-årig

Af Anne Dehn

NEPAL VISION

Shyam Lal Rijal er far til 31 børn. I en alder af 74 år, hvor det sidste skud på stammen kom til for fire år siden, fortæller han med lys i øjenene, at nu er han endelig glad, da mange af hans senere børn er forblevet i live. Det tager en times tid at gå til Shyams hjem fra Bhimad, den lille by i midt-hillsområdet i Nepal, hvor jeg bor. Jeg er taget af sted i skumringstimen, hvor luften er klar, og hvor stilheden er larmende. Gåturen foregår på smalle, mudrede stier mellem to meter høje majsplanter og overrislede rismarker, der er ødelagt af insekter.

Hjemme hos Shyam

Shyam flyttede herved fra bjergene for 10 år siden. Huset startede som en kvægstald. Efter at resten af familien ankom, ændredes kvægstalden til en mere permanent beboelse, og køerne, gederne og honsene har nu et andet sted at bo. Der bor 13 mennesker i huset, bla. Shyams 2. kone, der er den eneste af hans koner, som lever endnu, hans søn og svigerdatter og flere af Shyams små børn, som forundret står og stirrer på os.

Bange for konen

Jeg bliver anbragt i huset, og Shyam begynder at fortælle sin historie: "Jeg blev gift første gang, da jeg var syv år gammel. Mine forældre havde arrangeret mit ægteskab, og min tilkomne var tolv år gammel. Hun flyttede hjem til vores familie efter brylluppet". "Jeg var bange for min kone. Hun var meget mere moden end jeg. Så når vi lagde os for at sove, plejede jeg at trække godt



ind omkring mig og gemme mig inde ved væggen". Shyam og hans kone griner.

"Jeg giftede mig igen, fordi min første kone fødte mig elleve børn, hvoraf kun den ene var en søn. Min anden kone har givet mig seksten børn, men i en vis periode døde mange af dem, mens de endnu var små. Dette bekymrede mig så meget, at jeg holdt op med at spise, og jeg kunne ikke sove. Så jeg overvejede at blive yogi, og leve for mig selv". "Da mødte jeg min tredje kone, som var meget smuk og sund, hvorfor jeg giftede mig med hende. Vi fik fire børn. I dag er jeg en lykkelig mand, fordi jeg har fået så mange børn, og jeg har treogtyve børnebørn og otte oldebørn".

Arrangerede ægteskaber

Børneægteskaber i Nepal er ikke et daglidagsfænomen. I dag er det forbudt ved lov, hvilket ikke var tilfældet i 1928, da Shyam blev gift for første gang. Børneægteskab har især fundet sted blandt ortodokse højkastehinduer, da det har været en religiøs værdi at give sin datter bort, før hun fik menstruation. Og der var en praktisk værdi i at bortgive sin datter tidligt, da det i højere grad sikrede, at hun var jomfru. Arrangerede ægteskaber er derimod

yderst almindelige. Forældrene til den kommende brud og brudgom forhandler fx. om, hvem der står for hvilke af bryllupsudgifterne osv. Arrangerede ægteskaber finder kun sted indefor de enkelte kaster.

I storbyerne i dag ses dog flere og flere såkaldte *love-marriages*, som dels finder sted på tværs af kastesystemet, og dels på grund af de grænser som de forskellige etniske grupper sætter. I følge lovgivningen i dag er både bigami og polygami forbudt. Dette forbud har sine modifikationer, såsom at en mand er berettiget til at tage en anden kone nummer to, hvis hans kone nummer et ikke kan føde ham nogle børn. Sjældent indvilliger den første kone i skilsmisse, da det sætter hende i en social og økonomisk meget svær situation.

Derfor opstår bigami. Nogle steder i Nepal findes også polygami, hvor en

kvinde er gift med flere brødre fra samme familie.

Børn i høj kurs

Børn er i høj kurs i Nepal. Døtrene er især en sikker arbejdsinvestering, indtil de bortgiftes til en anden familie. Piger har mange arbejdsopgaver, såsom at hente vand, foder til dyrene og at passe mindre søskende.

Sønnerne er forældrenes alderdomsforsikring, hvor det er sønnernes opgave, dels at passe deres aldrene forældre, dels at tænde forældrenes ligbål, som sikrer forældrene adgang til det videre og bedre liv efter døden.

Gennemsnitligt føder nepalesiske kvinder ca. seks børn. Dertil skal beregnes - for at anvende et kynisk ordvalg, som beskriver en kynisk virkelighed - at børnedødeligheden i Nepal er en af de højeste i Asien. □

JANAKPUR

Janakpur is the capital of the ancient state of Mithila and the Janaki Temple, located in the center of the city, is well known in the Hindu Kingdom. Sita the wife of the legendary hero Ram was born in Janakpur. Throughout the year, many pilgrims come to pay their respects to Ram and Sita who are the main religious attractions in Janakpur. The city is thronged by worshippers and visitors alike especially during the festival of *Bibah Panchami*. This annual festival is celebrated on the occasion of Ram and Sita's marriage and their wedding ceremony is enacted throughout the week. During this period, the city is enlivened by the wedding festivities.

VISIT NEPAL 1998

Ram and Sita (Janaki) are the two central characters of the great Hindu epic *Ramayan*. In the story, Ram strings a bow that originally belonged to Lord Shiva the Destroyer and in the process, the bow breaks into three pieces. One piece flies up to heaven. Another falls down into the depths of the underworld. Today, there is a huge pond called Dhanush Sagar above the very spot. The third piece flies to present day Dhanushadham, about 40 kilometers from Janakpur. There, visitors will see huge rocks shaped like a bow. Thus, after Ram's successful attempt to string the bow, Janaki's father, King Janak gives his daughter's hand in marriage to the brave prince of Ayodhya.

Running hot

A ride on Nepal's forgotten railway

Shangri-La Oct-Dec 1997

by Vivian Yonzon

Janakpur, the holy city of Lord Ram and Sita in the southeastern Terai, is shrouded in a veil of early morning mist. But its people are already up and about as we arrive at the railway station at the northern extremity of the town.

Kari Mansoor and Bahadur Sahani are up early too. They sit atop a dozen sacks full of maize on the station platform. They are unskilled laborers from Chakkar, a village 9 km away. Having toiled for eight straight days in the paddy fields at Lalbandi, a two-hour bus ride from Janakpur, they are now going home with their earnings. The maize will feed them and their families for three or four months after which they will have to return seeking other work.

There are many like Kari and Bahadur who have spent the previous night on the platform in order to catch the morning train. They will get seats if they are lucky. Otherwise they will have to stand all the way or climb on the roof which, although less crowded, will become pretty hot as the day wears on. We will be taking the same train, all the way to the Indian railhead of Jaynagar 29 km away.

A few minutes after our arrival,

there is a piercing hoot and the simultaneous clanging of a bell as the train, parked overnight in the maintenance shed 300 m away, begins to pull slowly towards the platform. As if some magical chord has been struck, the entire station suddenly bursts into a frenzy.

People pour into the platform from all directions. There is much running, shouting, shoving and waving as men, women and children vie with each other to position themselves along the edge of the platform. Everyone wants to step into the train first in order to secure seats for themselves.

The 10 "official" coolies at the station, lazing till then under the cool shade of one of the huge banyan trees on the platform, are also galvanized into action. They rush back and forth from the platform bent under huge loads. They appear not unlike a convoy of busy ants.

With everyone aboard and the initial ruckus over, vendors appear on the scene. They materialize out of nowhere. One pops up right in front of my nose in the crowded compartment, his wicker basket tilted at an angle making it very easy for me to see inside. But I am not much of a peanut eater.

There is a first class compartment too towards the end of the train which has cushioned seats and where the air-conditioning works. A bit expensive but affordable if you are not a regular commuter. However, my friend and I decide to travel second class simply because this is where the action is.

Life in Janakpur revolves around the famous Ram and Janaki temples and the sacred ponds. Life in the outlying areas, on the other hand, revolves around this 60-year-old railway. Although no Orient Express, the train is as important an institution as Janakpur's places of worship for rural dwellers.

With another deafening honk, a hiss and a clank of metal, the train, powered by a six-cylinder, 400.5 horsepower diesel engine, at last begins to move. The narrow-gauge track runs almost in a straight line except near Janakpur Airport where it veers gently southeast and then makes a beeline for the Indian border.

The train is soon clattering through the countryside. Well-trodden foot trails run on either side of our train at most of the places where, considering that there are only stretches of paddy fields around and few signs of villages or houses, pedestrian traffic is quite noticeable. We pass men, women and children, an occasional bicycle, and even a few farm animals sauntering nonchalantly amidst the steady flow of humanity. Only they know where they come from and where they are headed to.

We have picked up speed and are now swaying considerably from side to side. The grating of steel turns to an occasional rumble as we pass over a bridge. Earlier, the Station Master at

Janakpur Mr. Ramesh Timilsinha had informed me that although the engine is capable of higher speeds, the uneven tracks permits a maximum speed of only 20 km an hour. Exceeding this limit can derail the train. I only hope that the driver does not get the sudden urge to push the throttle a notch or two.

Even at this speed, however, the introduction of the diesel engine two years ago has improved the train timings considerably. "When the steam locomotive used to ply this very route, arrival and departure timings were very uncertain. Sometimes the train did not even arrive for an entire day," Mr. Timilsinha had mused.

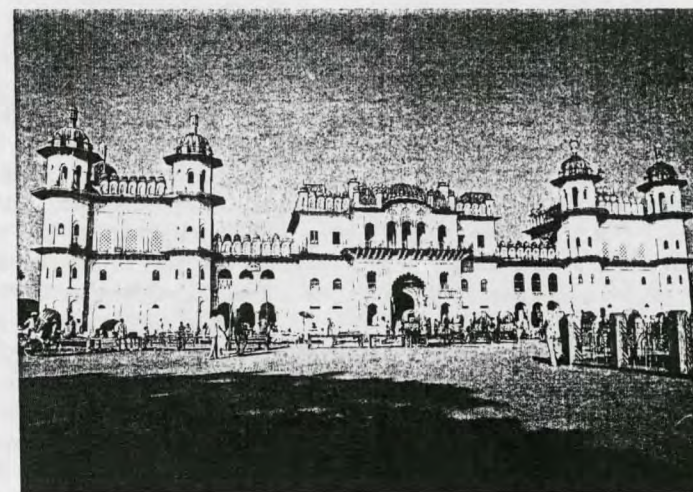
A welcome breeze has suddenly sprung up. In spite of this, it has become a trifle warm. I can now see that thick cloth umbrellas have sprouted over the heads of some of the commuters hanging outside the compartment doorways and many of the 30 odd on the roofs.

Only one fan at the other end from where I am standing is working. I look up longingly at the dead contraption directly over my head willing it to somehow start spinning. People around me are staring at me and giving knowing smiles. Perhaps we might have to change our compartment at Parwaha, the first stop, provided we can find a less crowded one. Things are beginning to get quite sticky here.

Parwaha is a clearing. The only concrete building here is the ticket counter belonging to the railway. On either side of the building are five or six thatched-roof mud-walled houses which serve as stalls selling tea, biscuits, cigarettes, tobacco and other refreshments. A mother waiting to get

on the train gives her son a stinging smack because he wants something which she has no intention of buying. The shriek of the train, however, drowns out the poor boy's cry of pain.

Baidehee and Mainathpur further up are similar to Parwaha except that they have more shops. The train disgorges a lot of passengers at these two junctions but even more get on board.



The Janaki temple in Janakpur is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Sita

It is gloriously hot now and the number on the roof has dwindled considerably.

Villages come and go at more frequent intervals now - Pipra, Kuwagaon, Haldia and other smaller ones consisting of a handful of houses. We pull into Khajuri after exactly one hour and 45 minutes since we started from Janakpur. Khajuri is much bigger. There are more concrete structures here and a large depot. Because of its proximity to the Indian border (less than 2 km), it once was the maintenance center for Janakpur Railway during the days of the steam engine.

Khajuri is also a graveyard. Most of the eleven steam workhorses which

served the railway for more than 50 years lie in state here. Many of them have turned into empty and rusty metal carcasses with creepers and grass growing on them. I can read the word "Germany" on one of them. Krishna, Sita Ram, Mahabir and Chandra are the only four which still look intact. But their insides are slowly rotting away and they will certainly not be

able to withstand the forces of nature for long.

We cross the India-Nepal border at Okorha and enter Jaynagar, a sleepy town in the Indian state of Bihar. Most of the shops are shuttered when we arrive. Maybe the heat has driven everybody indoors. The meter-gauge Eastern Indian Railway service from Jaynagar runs west to link with the broad-gauge line at Darbhanga from where numerous tracks fan out to various Indian cities. Together, they provide a convenient route network for Indian pilgrims coming to Janakpur. There will be many who will travel this route to the holy city during the Bibah Panchami festival in December. ▼

Stein W. Bie

Boken om yak

Jeg hadde sett alle de store kvegrasene, men aldri yak. Før jeg kom til Nepal. Den store, raggete og bredskuldrete oxen kan i vill tilstand veie nesten 1 tonn. Den var et overveldende syn på beitemarkene over Kali Ghandaki. Som uroksen selv. Visste du at det er 14 millioner tam-yak i verden? At nærmere 4 millioner av disse er i Tibet, og i delområdene Qinghai (4,5 millioner) og Sichuan (3,4 millioner) i China? Og at de lærde strides om hvorvidt det er 19 000 eller 9 000 rene yak i Nepal? Bhutan og India har henholdsvis 30 000 og 31 000 yak. Men bestandene av ville yak er sterkt truet, etter hensynsløs jakt i viktige bestandsområder i Tibet og Kina etter 2. verdenskrig. Imidlertid er det nå opprettet vernesoner som bedre skal sikre det genetiske mangfoldet hos yak - det er i dag flere ti-tusen ville yak i live, og det er flittig bruk av innfangete vill-yak til styrking av avlen.

I anledning av sitt 50 års-jubileum har FAO utgitt trolig den første moderne engelskspråklige oversikt om denne sjeldne kvegrasen, forfattet av to sentrale husdyrfolk med svært ulike utgangspunkt: Professorene Cai Li fra Sichuan i China og Gerald Wiener fra Edinburg i Skottland. De har trålet verdenslitteraturen, hvor særlig kinesisk- og russisk-språklige publikasjoner dominerer, og kombinert dette med sin egen innsikt. Det meste du noengang vil trenge å vite om yak finner du i denne boken. Om du noengang klarer å få tak i alle de originale referansene, er en annen sak. For i "Guoyu Chuyu"-boken fra 841 før Kristus er det en utførlig beskrivelse av yak-hold i Sichuan, og i geologi-boken "Shanhaijing Zhongshanji" fra 400 f.Kr. beskrives hvordan despotiske herskere fordrev det nomadiske Qiang-folket med deres yak fra gullrike områder.

Du kan også lese om hvordan yak kan krysses med både europeisk kveg (*Bos taurus*) og indisk kveg (*Bos indicus*), og også med europeisk og amerikansk bison, og hvordan yak-okser er blitt trenet fra ca. 1970 til å bli sædgivere for kunstig inseminasjon. Og om at yak-okser hater å bli klappet på hodet. Boka inneholder også detaljerte beskrivelser av hvordan melk, kjøtt, ull, skinn, horn og bein utnyttes i tradisjonell og moderne yak-hold, og om yakens evner til å bære kløv, være ridedyr, og trekke plog og vogn. Selv om det er mange tekniske detaljer som en ikke-landbruksfaglig kanskje bare vil skimle, er likevel boka også egnet for den interesserte lemperson som ønsker å vite mer om dette husdyret som har vært ryggeraden for økonomien for Himalayas fjellfolk.

Det er et eget avsnitt om yak i Nepal (av D.D. Joshi), med mange referanser til moderne studier der. Det er flere yak-krysninger i Nepal enn rene yak, men selv om de lærde strides om antallet, er det helt klart at siden 1960 har det vært en dramatisk nedgang i yak-hold, da det var 200 000 renrasete og krysningsdyr. Turistindustrien i Nepal har skapt et kjøpekraftig marked for yak-smør og yak-ost, og også for bruk av yak som kløvdyr. Men redusert kontakt



Tamyak-områdene i verden. (Illustrasjon fra boken)

med Tibet og Bhutan utgjør en genetisk trussel for Nepals yak, for innavl ser ut til å være økende. Nepal har sammen med ICIMOD (den internasjonale forskningsinstitusjonen i Khatmandu) og FAO startet et program for å møte denne trusselen, og å skape et bedre økonomisk grunnlag for yak-hold, uten å ødelegge den livsstil, med årlige vandringer fra dalbunnen om vinteren til sæterdrift i stor høyde om sommeren, som har skapt yak-kulturene. Utfordringene innenfor yak-hold likner på mange måter de vi kjenner fra hjemlig tamreinsdrift. Yak har i Nepal, Tibet, Kina, Mongolia, Bhutan, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan og deler av den russiske føderasjon dannet grunnlaget for nomadiske kulturer som har vanskelige kår i en verden i endring. Mye tyder likevel på at dersom yak-hold kan knyttes opp til kontanthusholdningen, har yaken få konkurrenter i utnyttelse av de alpine beitemarkene som er dens naturlige hjem.

Dette er boka du bør lese før du møter din første yak eller drikker din første kopp te med yaksmør, men også for deg som allerede har beundret dette praktfulle, men stundom gretne, dyret på dine vandringer i Nepals fjellverden.

Li, Cai & Wiener, Gerald (1995): The Yak. RAP Publication 1995/25. FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand. 237 sider. ISBN: 974-89351-0-8.

(Bokhandelen din kan bestille boken, men du kan også få den direkte fra FAO/RAP, Maliwan Mansion, 39 Phra Atit Rd., Bangkok, Thailand (fax: +66 2 280 0445) eller FAO Publications, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, I-00100 Roma, Italia (fax: +39 6 522 55649)).

PS! Hvis du er virkelig interessert i yak bør du vite at det nylig dannete "International Yak Information Centre" nettopp har utgitt 1. nummer av "International Yak Newsletter" (Nr. 1, september 1995), med artikler om yakens oppførsel, om eggstokker hos yak, yak som guddom i Yamantaka-dyrkingen i Tibet, om yak-lær og mange andre ting som kan opplyse og forundre. Du kan få tidsskriftet ved å skrive til: The Secretary, International Yak Information Centre, Gansu Agricultural University, Lanzhou 730070, P.R. China (fax: +86 931 766 8010)