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MEDLEMSKONTINGENT:

Enkeltmedlem kr 125,-
Familie kr 175,-
Organisasjon kr 300,-

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Program for møtet tirsdag 24. oktober 2000

- Elisabeth Jacobsen (UD) er underdirektør og nestleder i Asia-desken i UD. I UD har hun i mange år arbeidet med forskning, utviklingspolitikk og multilateral bistand gjennom FN-systemet, samt tjenestegjort tre år ved FN-delegasjonen i New York.
- Anne Glad Fredriksen (NORAD) er landansvarlig for Nepal og Kambodsja i NORAD. Hun har tidligere jobbet tre år for UNDP (FN's utviklingsprogram) i Laos.
- Kaker, kaffe, te
- Utlodning

Norge - Nepal foreningen



हाम्रो पत्रिका
HAMRO PATRIKA & VARAVIS
ORGAN FOR NORGE-NEPAL-FORENINGEN

Nr. 4, September 2000

**Velkommen til møte
i Norge-Nepal foreningen
tirsdag 24. oktober 2000 kl. 19³⁰
i Bygdelagssamskipnadens hus
Nordahl Brunsgate 22, Oslo**

**"Norges samarbeid med Nepal"
Foredrag ved
Elisabeth Jacobsen (UD) og
Anne Glad Fredriksen (NORAD)**

Neste medlemsmøte blir 28. november 2000

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

E-post adressen til Norge-Nepal foreningen
Foreningen har opprettet en e-post adresse: norge_nepal@hotmail.com
Foreningens styre har adgang til kontoen og den vil bli besvart med jevne mellomrom. Vi skal gjøre så godt vi kan med å besvare henvendelser.

Årsmøtet flyttet

Etter rådføring og samsvar med foreningens revisor Roy Friis har styret besluttet å flytte årsmøtet til første møte i 2001. Valg av det nye styret og valgkomite vil skje på årsmøtet.

Om foreningens medlemmer ønsker å ta opp emner på årsmøtet, vennligst ta kontakt med leder, Kirsten I. Greiner.

Hilsen styret

Bilder til kalender

Tusen takk til de av foreningens medlemmer som har sendt inn bilder til kalender. (Se Hamro Patrika, nr. 3, 2000). Styret oppfordrer flere medlemmer å sende inn bilder.

Hilsen styret



Takk !

Styret takker Arun I. Gurung for sitt verv som styremedlem. Arun ble valgt inn i styret ved årsmøtet i 1999.

Det bhutanesiske flyktningproblemet

Europa ber India om å bidra til en løsning

Kathmandu, 14. september 2000

The Kathmandu Post

Fritt oversatt og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

EF har bedt indiske myndigheter ta politisk initiativ for å komme nærmere en løsning på det bhutanesiske flyktningproblemet i Nepal. EF ber om rask repatriering og har vedtatt en resolusjon som respons på "common motion for resolution" framsatt av EF's parlamentariske grupper.

"Indian authorities should take full account of the humanitarian situation of the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal," står det i resolusjonen vedtatt i Strasbourg. EF har tidligere vedtatt en resolusjon som fordømmer Bhutan's apati overfor repatriering av flyktningene.

EF ber alle parter, inkludert internasjonale donorer, om å finne en snarling løsning, spesielt sett i lys av at nesten ett hundre tusen mennesker er nektet sine rettigheter de siste åtte årene. EF ber også bhutanesiske myndigheter om å akseptere UNHCR's kompromiss vedrørende definisjonen av "familie-enhet" – sentralt for å avgjøre hvem som tilhører ulike kategorier flyktninger med ulike retter i forhold til repatriering. Nepal har allerede akseptert kompromisset om definisjonen av "familie-enhet".

EF beklager den offisielt godtatte, men ulovlige, okkuperingen av land som tilhører de fordrevne. At flyktningene har mistet hus og eiendom, vil ifølge EF vanskeliggjøre framtidig repatriering.

EF uttrykker stor bekymring for økende problemer med å skaffe til veie nok mat og utstyr til de syv flyktningleirene i Øst-Nepal. Det blir nevnt at både UNHCR and WFP (World Food Program) føler det stadig vanskeligere å finne midler til å drive leirene. De siste månedene har WFP arbeidet for å unngå matmangel. EF er en av hoveddonorene i arbeidet med de bhutanesiske flyktningene. EF har allerede gitt 11 millioner euro og planlegger å bidra med ytterligere 1,5 millioner euro i nær framtid.

Maoists trapper opp voldelighetene

Kathmandu, 25. august - 5. september 2000

The Kathmandu Post

Fritt oversatt og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

Etterhvert som muligheten for dialog med myndighetene svinner i det fjerne, trapper maoistene opp sine aksjoner i hele landet.

Bare i løpet av et par august-dager døde syv personer som følge av kamper mellom politi og maoister. I samme periode eksploderte en rekke bomber i hele 17 ulike distrikter – også i Patan og andre steder i Kathmandu-dalen.

Noen ganger kommer maoistene i grupper på mange hundre personer, andre ganger opererer de færre sammen og angriper sine mål med bomber og håndgranater. En buss ble nylig bombet – likeledes en plastfabrikk, et verksted og kontorene til en bonde-organisasjon. Maoistene fortsetter sine angrep på politistasjoner og offentlige kontorer, og det er stadige sammenstøt mellom politi og maoister. Selv noen barneskoler er angrepet med bomber den siste tiden. Maoistene går også nye veier idet de nylig ranet en bank og en gruppe trekkingsturister.

Mange distrikter opplever maoistenes herjinger for første gang i disse dager. Det virker utvilsomt som om maoistene får sterkere fotfeste i stadig flere distrikter i landet.



Peace in Pieces

Kathmandu, September, 2000

Everyone agrees there can't be a military solution to the Maoist problem. But peace efforts only get lip service as both sides sharpen their knives.

BINOD BHATTARAI with SHIVA GAUNLE

This is how violently destructive civil wars begin: when hardliners call the shots, vested interests benefit from an escalation of violence, and those who call for a negotiated settlement are not taken seriously. Peace is on everyone's lips: they're just not doing much about it. One politician more than any other has staked his political career on peace: Sher Bahadur Deuba. But he is caught in a web of intrigue within his own party, and can't make his move. "The talks are now at a standstill," Deuba admitted to us in a candid interview.

It has been a year since then-PM Krishna Prasad Bhattarai gave his protégé the mandate to seek a negotiated solution, and put him in charge of a peace commission. There were a flurry of chits between him and Maoist leader Comrade Prachanda, then for the past four months: nothing.

The Maoists are really not in a big hurry to talk. They have already made their political point by stating their willingness to negotiate, even as they plan for their post-monsoon offensives. For its part, the government is spending Rs 6 billion to raise a paramilitary police force and deploy new weapons. It wants to wield a bigger stick before agreeing to sit down. Off stage, factions within the Nepali Congress are busy with some serious backstabbing in the run-up to their party convention in January. A Deuba coming up with some peace breakthroughs could upset their plans. Neither Deuba nor his party chief, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, are good communicators at the best of times. These days, they only talk to each other through their media mouthpieces.

All this confusion has worked well for the Maoists who have spent the past few weeks making their presence felt in the capital with some pipe bombs. Though the bangs were magnified many times over by the media, the rebels did succeed in sending a loud message: that they were capable of hitting even the Valley if they so wanted.

Most of Deuba's early spadework has now been wasted. He had got Prachanda to agree to talk in return for minimum conditions: make public the whereabouts of Maoists arrested by police, release those jailed for insurgency and call off the police offensive. Recalls Deuba: "Prachanda was not only willing to talk, but also to call off all action during the talks. I believed him, although I can't tell what was behind his willingness."

The government claims it has done its bit: the talks have the sanction of both the executive body of the ruling party and government, and says it has already released over 100 rebels from jail, including Dev Gurung, a central committee member of the CPN (Maoist). But the Maoists have not responded to Deuba's latest call for talks, made through a statement in late August. "I don't think they are satisfied," says the Kathmandu-based editor of a weekly close to the Maoists. "They want the specific whereabouts of at least three senior leaders, Dinesh Sharma, Danda Pani Neupane and Matrika Yadav."

The government's response has been muddled. Ministers have even questioned Deuba's mandate, and threatened to disband the peace commission. Koirala himself needles Deuba

at every opportunity for failing to resolve the crisis despite all necessary authorisation provided. Deuba says he still has access to Prachanda if needed, but it is evident that he'll have to start from square one even if the party gives him a real go-ahead.

If the Maoists were showing off their pipe bombs in Kathmandu, the government has been trying to show its presence in Rolpa and Rukum. Deputy Prime Minister Ram Chandra Poudel has just returned from a two-week tour. He told us: "The government is clear on talks, as a democratic party, for us dialogue is a conviction, not a strategy." Poudel has been trying to sell the government's development package for the insurgency-hit districts, and faults the Maoists with not being serious about talks. "They have not stopped terrorising the masses, they blame the government for everything. They are using the talk of talks as a strategy, not a way to resolve the crisis."

One political analyst who has been following the Maoist strategy closely is Shyam Shrestha of the leftist Mulyankan magazine. He does not doubt that the Maoists were at first serious about talks. "It was the first time that they had shown any flexibility in the five years of their war," says Shrestha. "The proposed development package and armed police force may have led them to suspect the government's seriousness about talks," adds Shrestha. "I don't think they ever believed they would attain the goal of the revolution through talks, but they needed the time."

All the Maoists had to do to score public relations points was appear serious about talks. Lately, they have taken the media on a tour of the regions under their command and got wide coverage of an open public meeting in Korchabang, Rolpa, on 26 August. Meanwhile in the ruling party there are increasing signs of disarray. "The enemy is at the gates, but we don't seem to trust each other on how to deal with it," a source close to Deuba said. "By fighting each other, we have shown them our soft underbelly, and given them more confidence."

That is also the message the Congress party is giving to other opposition parties. Among them the UML has taken a vacillating love-you-hate-you position vis-à-vis the Maoists. The object apparently is to keep damages—which have not been very high with UML compared to other parties—at present levels. But the party is well aware of how the insurgency is being handled.

Bastola reiser til Norden

Nepal søker økt samarbeid med Norge

Kathmandu , 14. september 2000

The Kathmandu Post

Fritt oversatt og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

I midten av september reiser Nepals utenriskminister, Chakra Prasad Bastola til Norge og Sverige. Besøkene er offisielle, etter invitasjon fra norske og svenske myndigheter.

Bastola vil blant annet utforske mulighetene for å øke Nepals handel med disse landene. Han skal også ha samtaler i Geneve og delta på FN's generalforsamling senere denne måneden.

"Norge er en stor investor i Nepal og landet er engasjert blant annet i Melamchi drikkevannsprosjekt og ulike vannkraftprosjekter", sier Bastola. Bastola ønsker å overtale Norge og Sverige, som begge gir bistand både til Nepal og Bhutan, til å hjelpe i arbeidet med å finne en løsning på det bhutanesiske flyktningproblemet. Han er ivrig etter en framgang på dette området, spesielt i lys av at Sadako Ogata, UNHCR, går av senere i år.

På generalforsamling i FN vil statsminister Girija Prasad Koirala undertegne flere av FN's konvensjoner relatert til kvinner og barns velferd og rettigheter.

(Norge-Nepal stiftet bekjentskap med Bastola da han var i Norge for to år siden, den gangen som landbruksminister. Foreningen var også i kontakt med Bastola under hans korte Oslo-visit nå i september. Han hilser til foreningens medlemmer og uttrykker glede over interessen for Nepal i Norge.)



Wake-up Call

India may have resumed its flights to Kathmandu, but the intelligence report on the ISI activities has put a question mark on the thaw

■ by Farzand AHMED in Kathmandu

RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA and Nepal resemble conditions usually found atop the snowy peaks of the Himalayas—lots of ice and chilly winds. Especially after the hijacking of Indian Airlines flight IC 814 last December from Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport by terrorists suspected to be abetted by Pakistan. Angered by the porous security set-up and possible complicity of some of its officials, India suspended all flights to Nepal till its neighbour took steps to beef up surveillance and screening apparatus. After much pleading from Nepal, the flights were restored, albeit reluctantly, from June 1.

Much of India's concern stemmed from a secret report prepared by various intelligence agencies—extracted in INDIA TODAY ("The Kathmandu Nexus", June 12)—that revealed the extent to which Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) was using the Himalayan kingdom as a staging post for exporting terror to India. So last week, part of the mandate of Brajesh Mishra, principal secretary to the prime minister and national security adviser, who headed a high level task force to Nepal, was to discuss such security concerns and get Nepal to clean up its act.

However, even before Mishra could land in Kathmandu, the INDIA TODAY expose had created a major political storm, particularly over the names of influential people in Nepal having links with the ISI that the secret report listed. Nepalese Prime Minister G.P. Koirala sent out a strongly worded denial saying, "The report is a despic-

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able attempt at casting aspersions on the friendly relationship between Nepal and India." Added Gyan Chand Acharya, the foreign ministry spokesperson, "The publication of the report before the visit of the Indian delegation seems to be intended to vitiate the atmosphere." And the *Kathmandu Post*, an English-language daily which was mentioned in the report as having links to Pakistan, in a front-page editorial dismissed it as "a piece of bogus fabrication".

When Mishra landed he tried to distance himself from the controversy by saying, "I don't know which report you are talking about. The report was not prepared by the Indian Government." As denials from other quarters in Nepal came in swift and fast, INDIA TODAY issued a press release standing by its article: "The report in question has been prepared by various government agencies and was submitted to the authorities concerned in early February this year. The report has been seen by senior civil servants and political leaders."

Part of the Indian Government's reaction to the report stems from the divide in the home and external affairs ministries over how to get Nepal to act on curbing the ISI. Some circles feel that with so much evidence, India should not resume flights to Kathmandu till Nepal took concrete steps to restore confidence. It didn't help matters when the commission of inquiry instituted by the Nepal Government to probe the lapses in airport security after the hijacking of IC 814 was headed by former inspector-general of police

Hem Bahadur Singh. Singh has always been suspect in India's eyes especially after it was known that he had rented out his house to Mirza Dilshad Beg, a prominent Nepalese politician and Dawood aide who was gunned down by rival underworld kingpin Chhota Rajan's gang.

NOR can Nepal play the innocent because India has been expressing concern for several years over the growing ISI network in and around Kathmandu, about it pumping into India fake currency notes, drugs and arms. M.K. Narayanan, former director of the Intelligence Bureau, says, "It has been happening for a decade. Way back in 1990, Indian intelligence agencies found out that Kathmandu was an important outpost of the ISI. Nepal and Bangladesh are the two important ISI hubs from where they target India. In 1992 itself the issue was represented to the then prime ministers of these countries." The Jain Commission of Inquiry report, for instance, had quoted a RAW letter citing "unverified information" that the Nepalese queen, Aishwarya Rajalaxmi Shah, had asked a major-general to "arrange for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi". This report had created much turmoil.

Nepal itself has acknowledged the ISI's growing presence through the expulsion of Pakistani diplomats from its soil. It has also, in its parleys with India, accepted the ISI's penetration and even sought help for dealing with the menace. For most part Nepal has pleaded its helplessness in checking the ISI's activities. Even last week, Mehboob Shah, former zonal commissioner of Nepalgunj and now the head of Nepal United Muslims Association, admitted that the ISI was extremely active, stating: "Please don't talk about them. They are deadly, very dangerous and are everywhere. In Nepal, their arms are longer than the law."

If India decided to resume flights

to Kathmandu it was partly because Nepal's Foreign Minister Chakra Prasad Bastola made a special trip to Delhi last month to plead for their restoration—31 per cent of its tourist traffic arrives from India—with an assurance that security loopholes would be plugged. The MEA has veered around to the view that it is better to have a policy of active engagement. It would help India turn the heat on Nepal to check Pakistan's subversive activities from its soil and also lessen the anti-India feeling over other issues of concern such as water-sharing and trade where India is viewed as a big brother. It's a tricky balancing game. Getting relations back on an even keel in the coming months is going to be as difficult as scaling some of the high Himalayan peaks that dominate Nepal's skyline. ■

Foreign Ministry Objects to BBC Question

Kathmandu, Sept.27: The Foreign Ministry objected to a BBC poll asking its listeners whether Nepal will be better off under Indian umbrella. "His Majesty's Government urges the BBC to understand the sensitivity of the Nepali people while framing questions for discussion.

"Many countries around the world have similar culture, language and religion. Nations are not necessarily made or unmade along these lines," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Gyan Chandra Acharya said.

"His Majesty's Government has serious reservations of putting such a question for debate which is out of norms as Nepal has always remained independent and sovereign throughout its history.

"It (poll) has hurt the sentiment of the Nepali people. Nepalis are proud of and have shed their lives for preserving their identity and sovereignty. For them sovereignty and independence are sacrosanct."

nepalnews.com

Musiker kjørt ned av prins

Opprør mot Prins Paras Shah

Kathmandu, 8.-23. august 2000

The Kathmandu Post

Fritt oversatt og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

Musikeren Praveen Gurung døde som følge av at Prins Paras Shah kjørte ham ned i nærheten av det kongelige palassets østre inngang i Kathmandu. Ulykken skjedde da prinsens Pajero traff motorsykkelen til Praveen Gurung.



Pajeroen er registrert på King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation. Bilen hadde stor fart da den forsvant fra stedet etter å ha truffet Gurung. Gurung ble fraktet til sykehuset, der legene erklærte ham død etter kort tid. Praveen Gurung har komponert musikk til over 500 sanger. Han var ansatt som musiker på Rastriya Nach Ghar og Yak and Yeti Hotel. Gurung etterlater seg kone og to barn.

Flere politibiler tok opp jakten på Pajeroen, men politibilen fra Durbar marg politistasjon snudde da tjenestemennene så at prinsen satt i førersetet i Pajeroen. Senere kom prins Paras Shah til Durbar marg politistasjon i en annen bil. Prinsen viftet en pistol mot vakthavende politimann og truet ham til



The body of late Praveen Gurung being prepared for last rites at Pashupatinath precincts on Monday.

å holde tett om ulykken.

Under politiets jakt hadde en politimann rapportert inn Pajeroens registreringsnummer flere ganger. I rapportene fra de ulike politistasjonene sto det likevel å lese at "Gurung ble truffet av en uidentifisert bil". Når konfrontert med dette i ettertid, svarte vakthavende ved stasjonene at de var ute på patrulje i det aktuelle tidsrommet.

Tidligere på kvelden forlot Prins Paras Shah et diskotek etter at det brøt ut bråk og politiet ankom stedet. Prinsen har vært involvert i noen trafikkuhell før. Politiet etterforsket ham sist gang etter at han drepte en drosjesjåfør ved Putalisadak. For ikke lenge siden ble han stoppet av en politimann en tidlig morgen; prinsen angrep tjenestemannen som ble innlagt på sykehus med alvorlige skader.

Politiet fastholder at mye rundt drapet er uklart. "Vi mistet en god sjanse da vi ikke fikk anholdt og avhørt sjåføren på åstedet", sier en politimann som jobber med saken. "Etterforskningen har startet", er standardsvaret. Tilsynelatende skal en annen person ha påtatt seg skylden for ulykken og dermed blitt gjort til syndebukk. Samtidig verserer det rykter om at drapet slett ikke var noen ulykke, men et planlagt mord. Ryktene vil ha det til at prinsen hadde kranglet med Gurung på en lokal restaurant. Straks etter at Gurung forlot restauranten, skal prinsen ha jaget etter ham, kjørt ham ned og stukket fra stedet.

Flere organisasjoner på venstresiden har protestert kraftig mot drapet ved å arrangere massemøter, opptog, underskriftskampanjer og blokkering av veier. De krever at prinsen blir fratatt sin kongelige immunitet og at han tiltales og straffes. Mange hevder at prinsen vil straffes hardt av folket hvis ikke palasset eller myndighetene gjør det. Selv det ellers kongevennlige Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) har fordømt handlingen i en pressemelding: "If the attitude of the Prince to kill people so frequently is promoted by not taking any action, the state will soon turn into a reign of jungle."

Jurister uttaler at det juridisk sett er uklart om prinsen beholder sin immunitet. Han beholdt immuniteten da han ble etterforsket for drap sist gang og det er sannsynlig at det samme kan skje igjen.



Oppdatert 11.08.00

Nepalsk FN-soldat drept i Øst-Timor

En nepalsk FN-soldat døde torsdag av skadene han fikk etter et sammenstøt med millitssoldater i Øst-Timor.

Tre andre nepalske soldater og en østtimoreser ble såret i sammenstøtet med pro-indonesiske militssoldater som var kommet over grensen fra Vest-Timor.

Nepaleseren er den fjerde FN-soldaten som er blitt drept siden FN-styrkene ble utplassert. Tidligere er en soldat fra New Zealand og en fra Bangladesh drept i skuddveksling eller av miner, mens en soldat fra Australia ble drept i et vådeskudd.

Det har i den siste måneden vært en rekke sammenstøt med milits som kommer over fra den indonesiske provinsen Vest-Timor.



Sydney Olympics

Unceremonious Tour

Nepal sends its Olympic squad comprising of five athletes and sixteen officials sparking controversy

By A CORRESPONDENT

Forkortet og bearbejdet av Kirsten I. Greiner

The Nepalese Olympic contingent left for Sydney leaving behind a trail of controversies. Although nobody expects any medal from the Nepalese squad, it has been in the news for the last few weeks for all the wrong reasons. First, it was the decision to take such a large

entourage of officials. To accompany five athletes, sixteen officials have left for Sydney. What is more intriguing is the "officials" do not comprise of coaches and trainers, rather it includes kith and kin of sports officials.



Rana and Palikhe : Clash of interest

Apart from one athletics coach, the band of officials include the President of Nepal Olympic Committee (NOC) Rukma SJB Rana, General Secretary Dhruva Bahadur Pradhan, Minister of State for Sports and Education Dilendra Prasad Badu and some other officials of the NOC. The list of sixteen "officials" also includes wives of Rana, Pradhan and Badu. Not in the list, however, are the coaches for swimming and shooting. "I feel quite disappointed to be going alone without my coach," said Chitra Bahadur Gurung in Kantipur daily.

Gurung is taking part in the 50m freestyle event of swimming. Rana justifies the large entourage of officials saying it would provide "exposure". But members of the Nepalese sports fraternity are less than amused. "If indeed he wanted to give exposure, he should have taken coaches and athletes instead of officials," said a sports analyst.

The Nepalese contingent earned another black mark after the participating athletes threatened to refuse to accept the daily allowances. The athletes charged that while the officials were pocketing a daily allowance of 100 dollars each, they were being given a petty allowance of 8 US dollars. Later on the NOC increased the allowance to 17.5 US dollars. The Olympic squad will be spending about Rs 4 million to travel to Sydney. "The staffs of NSC have not received salaries for the last three months but the hefty budget has been given to the unnecessarily large Olympic entourage," said Ganesh Thapa, President of All Nepal Football Association (ANFA), questioning the ethics of sports officials including the minister.

Whereas the five athletes and Chef de Mission Palikhe were formally seen off by officials of NSC at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), most other members of the squad hurried past the lounge for fear of having to bear the criticism from the journalists standing nearby. The present controversies and the manner in which the Nepal Olympic Committee handled it does not augur well for the development of sports in the country.

*Gode ønsker til
Dashain og Tihar*

RNAC Twin Otter styrtet

Fritt oversatt og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

En Twin Otter fra Royal Nepal Airlines styrtet i Dadeldhura-distriktet på formiddagen 27. juli. Flyet var på vei fra Bajhang til Dhangadi. Alle de 25 personene ombord omkom.

Kontrolltårnet i Dhangadi hadde kontakt med flyet to minutter før flyverne rapporterte at alt var klart til landing. "Crossing Last Ridge...descending, 12,500 feet," hadde piloten kommunisert til tårnet som svarte "Runway 09...". Det siste kontrolltårnet hørte var altså en sikker pilot som forberedte landing. Snart hørtes sirenen som varsler om innkomne fly. Isteden kræsjet flyet i tretoppene på en åskam i nærheten. Etter noen timers leting med helikoptre og fly, lokaliserte man Twin Otteren. Teknikere sier at flyet ville klart den siste åskammen hvis det hadde fløyet noen få meter høyere.

De fleste av de omkomne var mannlige studenter og offentlig ansatte fra Bajhang og Luyota. Alle ble funnet i nærheten av vraket. Flyet hadde hatt fem turer i Vest-Nepal tidligere denne dagen. Ulykken kan skyldes dårlig vær i området. Myndighetene har etablert en granskningskomité. Twin Ottere regnes for å være den beste flytypen for Nepal's terreng og topografi. Maskinene kan blant annet ta av og lande på svært korte rullebaner.

Monsunens herjinger

Kathmandu, 2. august – 10. september 2000

The Kathmandu Post

Fritt oversatt og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

Tap av menneskeliv og store materielle ødeleggelser er noen av resultatene fra sommerens monsunregn som startet i juni. 128 personer er rapportert omkommet innen utgangen av august. Fremdeles er mange savnet. Nesten 10.000 familier er rammet på en eller annen måte. Hovedveiene fikk hard medfart i det vedvarende regnet som utløste jordskred og steinras mange steder. Prithvi-motorveien var i lange perioder stengt før bulldosere fikk ryddet veien.

Etter tre dagers arbeid med å transportere bort løsmasser fra Prithvi-motorveien, klarte man endelig å få åpnet forbindelsen fra hovedstaden til Pokhara, Chitwan og den østlige motorveien. Da hadde bilene som ble overrasket av rasene ventet i over 100 timer. Ingen menneskeliv gikk tapt i rasene, men to busser ble revet med og forsvant i Trishuli-elven som går parallelt med veien. En uke senere gikk et nytt ras som stengte veien i fire dager.

Mange fly er satt midlertidig på bakken i påvente av bedre vær. Næringen er nærmest lammet i Pokhara flyplass som vanligvis har mellom 35 og 100 flygninger per dag. I det verste monsunregnet har kun fem fly landet og tatt av fra flyplassen.

De verst rammede områdene er Tanahu, Bajura, Ilam, Jajarkot, Kaski, Lamjung, Pyuthan, Sankhuwasabha, Dolakha, Darchula og Makwanpur. Mønsteret er det samme de fleste stedene; folk drukner når elven går over sine bredder, oversvømmer marker og river med seg hus og infrastruktur. I tillegg fører monsunen til at jord- og steinmasser raser.

Flommen i Karnali og Mohana har tatt hus og satt hundrevis av mål dyrket mark under vann. Førtitre hus sto under vann i en landsby i Kailali, 23 hus i en annen landsby. Lokale veier er borte mange steder. Likeledes er vannrør revet bort og vannforsyningen til tusenvis av mennesker brutt. Det er nå stor bekymring for vannkvaliteten.

500 mennesker ble hjemløse da Narayani-elven gikk over sine bredder. De samlet seg på et høyere område mens vannet steg på alle kanter rundt dem, men ble senere reddet av helikoptre fra Royal Nepal Army. Det ble også gjennomført redningsoperasjoner i det sentrale Terai, der 1000 mennesker ble fraktet ut av området etter at Bagmati-elven rev med seg elvebanken og oversvømmet store landområder.

Flom i Rapti-elven har gjort 161 familier husløse i Holia-distriktet. Innbyggerne skylder på India som har bygget en dam i nærheten. Det er ingen umiddelbar mulighet for at den brister – i så fall ville 5000 mennesker i 33 landsbyer være i faresonen -, men lokalbefolkningen mener at landsbyene i området sank etter at dammen ble bygget..

Myndighetene har allerede brukt Rs 8.25 million i nødhjelpspakker til de rammede familiene. Telt, mat og annet utstyr er delt ut. Staten sørger også for en kompensasjon på Rs 10.000 til hver familie som har mistet ett av sine medlemmer, Rs 3000 til de som er blitt hjemløse og fri legehjelp samt Rs 1,000 til de skadde.

Flom og jordskred setter dype spor etter seg i fjellene og på slettelandet hvert år. I gjennomsnitt omkommer årlig 350 mennesker i monsun-relaterte ulykker. Minst 209 personer omkom i løpet av fjorårets monsun.

Flere døde av hjernehinnebetennelse

Kathmandu, 1.-18. september 2000

The Kathmandu Post

Fritt oversatt og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

Innen utgangen av august måned hadde over 70 personer dødd som følge av hjernehinnebetennelse siden monsunen startet i midten av juni.

Myndighetene har i år ikke klart å fremskaffe nok vaksine i forkant av utbruddene. Hardest rammet er de vestligste delene av Terai der 48 har dødd. Hyppigheten av hjernehinnebetennelse har vært spesielt høy i månedsskiftet juli/august, da det enkelte steder nesten lignet en epidemi. Ifølge helseministeriet er de verste distriktene Kailali, Kanchanpur, Banke, Bardiya og Dang. Man regner med totalt 200 døde av hjernehinnebetennelse i år, en nedgang fra fjorårets 434.

Lukla flyplass åpnet

(Nepalnews.com, 20.september, fritt oversatt av Anuradha Gurung)

Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal fortalte at Lukla flyplass, innfallsporten til Sagarmatha område, ble gjenåpnet på onsdag etter å ha vært stengt for reparasjons og vedlikeholdsarbeid for mer enn tre måneder.

Vellykkede prøveflyginger på tirsdag førte til gjenåpning av flyplassen, som skal holdes åpent frem til nyttårsaften i år.

RNAC flyr til Bangalore fra 29.oktober

(Nepalnews.com, 20.september, fritt oversatt av Anuradha Gurung)

Fra 29.oktober vil Royal Nepal Airlines (RNAC) fly to ganger i uken, søndager og onsdager, til byen Bangalore i India. Fra før av har RNAC flyging til byene New Delhi, Calcutta og Mumbai i India. RNAC uttalte også at de vil starte med den tredje flyging i uken til Osaka fra 2.november i år.

Necon Air flyr til flere destinasjoner

(The Independent, July 19 – Aug 25, 2000, fritt oversatt av Anuradha Gurung)

Necon Air, den mest suksessfulle av private flyselskaper i Nepal, har fått tillatelse til å fly til byene New Delhi og Calcutta i India. Fra før av flyr Necon Air til Patna og Benares. Flyselskapet er den eneste nepalesisk privat flyselskap som flyr til India.

Transavia dobler flyavgang til Kathmandu

(The Independent, July 26 – Aug 01, 2000, fritt oversatt av Anuradha Gurung)

Transavia dobler antall flyavgang mellom Amsterdam Schipol og Kathmandu. Fra 21.september 2000 vil flyselskapet ha 2 flyavganger i uken, mandager og torsdager, mot 1 flyavgang tidligere. Flyet vil mellomlande i Sharjah, De Forente Arabiske Emiraterne. Tur/retur pris starter fra 888 amerikanske dollar. Transavia eies 80% av KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.

Stupa og tempel side ved side i Hannover

(The Weekly Telegraph, 20.september, fritt oversatt av Anuradha Gurung)

Nepal har utstilt seg i EXPO 2000, Hannover, med en autentisk tempel kompleks. Den nepalesiske paviljongen har samlet tradisjonell asiatiske arkitektonisk stil ved å kombinere stupa og hindu tempel. Alle komponenter på den nepalesiske paviljongen er laget i Nepal. Nesten 900 familier, i alt 2.000 personer har arbeidet for å gi komplekset en ren nepalesisk stil med blant annet treskjæring, metallgraving og murerhåndverk.

Paviljongen ble fraktet til Tyskland allerede i 1999. Bygningen er forsøksvis 22 meter høy. Pagodaen og stupaen er reflektert på en krystallklart basseng.

Temaer relatert til Nepal, eks. yoga, meditasjon, keramikerverksted har vært presentert hver uke til besøkende.

Environmentalists say:

Phewa Lake fast dying a slow death

Kathmandu September 11, 2000

The Kathmandu Post

Forkortet og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

KATHMANDU, Sept 10 - Environmentalists and local stakeholders once again sounded death knell for Pokhara's main tourist attraction, the Phewa lake, saying it might die a slow death if something is not done immediately to preserve it.

Once pride of the country, the Phewa lake is in a sorry state of affairs due to extreme negligence of both the government agencies and public, said the participants at the weekly talk forum organised by National Concerns Society today. "Phewa lake is going to die and this is irreversible," said Krishna Prasad Oli, an environment expert. "We can only slow down its death and gain as much of economic advantage as possible by using the lake and its surroundings in such a manner as to halt its deterioration," added Oli.

Some of the major problems faced at Phewa are lack of definition of the lake's area, legal inconsistencies as to which body it actually belongs, unregulated urban growth in and around the lake, problem of solid waste management and the biggest threat of all-- water pollution. Washing clothes on the banks of the lake at different places, besides direct discharge of sewerage from houses, hotels and restaurants, have led to the pollution of the lake.

Besides, Oli added, absence of lake side landscaping and beautification programme and tourism development strategy, poor attention to bio-diversity, siltation (accumulation of sand and mud on the lake's bed) and the government as well as the local authority's apathy towards the gravity of the situation confronting Phewa lake. "We have lost wetland and the Siberian water fowls have stopped coming as the result. This is not only a loss of migratory route, but also a loss for tourism." The total area of the lake has almost been reduced to half - from 8.5 square km to the present 4.5 sq km.

As a beginning it is suggested that general public could force the government into doing something. Earlier, Oli suggested orchid farming, setting up of zoological and botanical gardens and conservation of crop genetic diversity (promoting, for example, breed of local rice of superior quality). "Only joint effort of people, local authorities, government and hotels and restaurant owners can make the conservation measures viable", said Oli.

Tusen takk til Kirsten I. Greiner og Kristine Alsvik for å ha arbeidet iherdig med artikler til dette nummeret av Hamro Patrika.

Hilsen redaktør

Cry wolf in Kathmandu

If it was possible for an Indian magazine to drop a bombshell on a neighbouring country, then on 12 June *India Today* did so in the form of a leaked intelligence draft of a 'report' that claimed a whole battalion of well-known and not-so-well-known leaders of Nepali politics, media, business and society to be 'agents' (or alternatively 'contacts') of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). Even more a matter of concern, the report's authors seemed to want to paint the entire Nepali Muslim community Pakistani-green, as if to be Muslim was to be pro-Pakistan and ipso facto an agent of the notorious ISI.

The fact that the report was leaked days before a visit to Nepal by India's National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra was seen as significant by a large portion of Kathmandu's intelligentsia and press, seeing this as an effort to pressure Nepal on a whole cluster of contentious issues that—from trade to territorial to monsoonal waterlogging—have brought Indo-Nepal relations to their lowest-ever point in the last decade of Nepali democracy.

The report understandably created an uproar in Nepal, not because people believed it—the finger pointed so indiscriminately—but because it topped all other previous leaks in the Indian press regarding alleged ISI infiltration of Nepal. Meanwhile, *India Today's* reporter had not done original research, but merely acted as a conduit for allegations. Apparently titled "Pakistan's anti-India activities in Nepal", the report was made available in full on the magazine's Website. To a kind eye, it looked like a draft prepared by some intelligence operatives out to please the political masters of the day, an internal document serving up a concoction of facts and unverified allegations.

Whether it was prepared within the Intelligence Bureau or the Research and Analysis Wing, or some other official Indian agency, the report did indicate the Nepal-wide nature of their operations. But this was not unexpected. What *was* unexpected was the poor level of analysis and the excessive reliance on coincidence and conjecture in reaching lackadaisical conclusions on individuals and institutions of another country. If this were in fact an authoritative report that was seen fit to be leaked, then one would have to worry about the quality of the intelligence-gathering apparatus of South Asia's greatest and nuclearised power.

The report names some of the known smugglers of gold (and other contraband) of Nepal and also lists a series of already-reported cases thought to be linked to the ISI, such as the use of a hotel safehouse, discovery of counterfeit Indian notes and RDX caches, and so on. However, these were cases already brought to the open by the Nepal Police, which by all accounts had acted with alacrity given India's sensitivities. What needs investigation now is whether these cases were the tip of

the iceberg in relation to the activities of Pakistani intelligence in Nepal, or was that about it. The leaked report does not help in clarifying the point, but those who prepared it seem not to have considered the fact that the Nepali bureaucracy, journalists, politicians, and the intelligentsia as a whole, are protective enough of their polity not to allow the ISI a walk-through in Nepal.

Of course, every instance of the ISI using another South Asian country as a base to target India would be one too many, and the Nepali government must of course act when there is evidence. If necessary, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala must pick up the phone and call Chief Executive Parvez Musharraf and request him to call off the spooks. However, available information and discussions with knowledgeable members of Nepal's bureaucracy and police do not indicate the dire situation implied in the document, or as reported as a matter of course in the Indian press.

While the breathless naming of well-known Nepali-journalists, politicians and business people without supporting evidence must be considered extremely irresponsible, given the impact on individual hard-earned careers, it is the singling out of the Muslim community living largely in poverty in Nepal's Tarai region that has potentially larger ramifications. Without too much effort, the authors of the report give away their bias when they make the presumption that members of a community can be by their very nature a) anti-India, therefore b) Pakistan sympathisers and hence, c) 'agents/contacts' of the ISI. This is a dangerous line of thinking, particularly because the Tarai Muslims of Nepal are demographically identical to the Muslims across the open border, in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

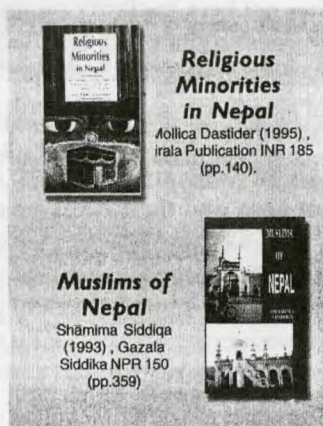
The fact that the discourse of the Nepali intelligentsia is mostly conducted in Nepali and hence does not reach the corridors of power of New Delhi with any sense of urgency, should not blind India's powers-that-be to the fact that there is 'public opinion' even in small countries like Nepal. Granted, this public opinion is often led by individuals who tend to be paranoically suspicious of every move of Big India, but leaks of reports like the one just released have the power of jostling a society off its moorings. And Nepal's stability should be a matter of enough concern to New Delhi that pressing issues are tackled directly and at the highest levels where necessary, rather than through under-the-table transfers of files to media persons who are unwilling to do their homework. Nepal's stability, of course, should be of concern because Nepal, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are locked in a demographic, economic and geographic embrace which will remain in place whether or not the open border between the two countries is closed or regulated.

It will be important, if the matter is considered serious enough, for those who claim that the report did not reflect the official Indian point-of-view—as Brajesh Mishra did in Kathmandu—to investigate how and why such an amateurish report was prepared, and who it was that chose to leak it.

The Un-Understood Muslims of Nepal

An eminent Indian journalist was quoted recently in the Kathmandu press as saying that whereas Nepal used to be understood in India in terms of the Himalaya, the Pashupati temple, casinos and honeymoons, with the hijacking of IC 814 and *India Today's* leak of the so-called "Nepal Gameplan" intelligence report, the 'Hindu kingdom' has since come to be associated more with ISI and RDX. While this is indeed true, what is even more significant and more damning is the alacrity with which large sections of the Indian television and print media have jumped to portray the entire Nepali Muslim community living in the Tarai as being anti-Indian and (hence) pro-Pakistan.

Given the sudden barrage of attention on the Muslim community of Nepal, that too in a geopolitically significant context, it is important to look for and review the scholarly works which study Nepali Muslims. Two books published during the past few years attempt to do this—Shamima Siddiq's *Muslims of Nepal*



reviewed by **Sudhindra Sharma**

(1993) and Mollica Dastider's *Religious Minorities in Nepal* (1995). Unfortunately, neither author does justice to the topic and in the end their works will, if anything, fan the flames of antagonism in India against the Muslims of Nepal.

These two books have several

Tribhuvan University's Department of Sociology and Anthropology in Kathmandu, and Dastider's for the Jawaharlal Nehru University's School for International Studies in New Delhi. The books under review provide an insight not only into the individual authorships but also on the academic institutions that have produced and endorsed such inadequate works.

Shamima Siddiq's 15-chapter book is heavy on description, including the historical link between Islam and Nepal, lists of the Muslim organisations in the country, Muslim livelihood, women and legal issues. The book also provides some district-wise information on Muslims, and then presents case studies. Unfortunately, because the scholar provides scant analysis, her work ends up as little more than documentation. A major weakness in *Muslims of Nepal*, is that there is little here that could be called sociological or anthropological. At best, the book is descriptive ethnography, and at worst, it is a treatise on what the author considers to be

2000 August 13/8 HIMAL

Nepal's own *gaadi*

LITTLE NEPAL, too, has a *gaadi* of its own. No prizes for guessing its name, "Sherpa", the symbol of mountain sturdiness. And it does live up to it. When Sherpa did its first run, it was carrying a mean load of 1.8 metric tonnes, and it pulled it off, all the way up from Biratnagar across the length of Nepal and upto the hill district of Baitadi.

Those at the assembling firm, Hulas Motors Pvt. Ltd., couldn't have been more thrilled. "We take pride in our Sherpa," says Surendra Golchha, executive director of the company. He adds for good measure that the Sherpa does all justice to environmental norms. The mileage, too, is good, at 12 km to a litre of diesel.

But it was not an easy ride to assemble a car in Nepal, and it took three failed models before the present Sherpa 46(D) came along, with its 5+1 gear

system, claimed top speed of 100 kmph, all for NR 710,000. While the design is Nepali, as are the chassis, the body and the tyre, the engine is Chinese, and the differential Indian.

For the moment, the Hulas company estimates a modest production run of 10 cars a month at its plant in Biratnagar. Service centres have opened up in Kathmandu, Butwal and Biratnagar, while another is coming up in Nepalgunj.

Sherpa owners are all praise for their vehicle, some of it of course tinged with patriotic pride about the Nepali jeep that could. All of which does really seem to indicate that Nepal has arrived quietly on the auto-assembly scene.

-Toya Gautam

2000 July 13/7 HIMAL

Kamaiyas: ikke lenger bundet arbeidere

(*The Independent*, July 19 - July 25, July 26 - August 1, 2000, fritt oversatt og bearbejdet av Kristine Alsvik)

Den nepalesiske regjeringen har i en deklarasjon fastslått at tradisjonen med å holde bundet arbeidere/leilendinger ikke lenger er tillatt. Det finnes i dag rundt 200 000 mennesker i Nepal som lever under disse forholdene, og som har levd et liv som leilendinger i generasjoner. I følge en statistikk fra regjeringen fra 1993 var det rundt 70 000 leilendinger fordelt på 14 000 familier, mens det reelle tallet antageligvis er så høyt som 40 000 familier og 200 000 individer.

Deklarasjonen har også gjort det ulovlig å holde noen i arbeid mot deres egen vilje, og eventuelle brudd på den nye loven kan straffes med fra tre til ti års fengsel. Alle utestående lån mellom leilendingene og landeierne forsvinner også med den nye lovgivningen.

Kamaiya'enes (leilendingenes) situasjon må ses i sammenheng både med Nepals føydal kultur og mangel på bevissthet rundt menneskerettigheter. Hvilke konsekvenser regjeringens deklarasjon vil få gjenstår derimot å se. Kamaiya systemet er et eksempel på en klasses utnyttelse av en annen, og en enkel deklarasjon vil ikke uten videre føre til dette systemets opphør.

Innen kamaiya systemet er det både voksne og barn som jobber for sine landeiere for å gjøre opp gjeld, en gjeld som gjerne stammer fra deres foreldre eller besteforeldre. De blir sjelden eller aldri kvitt gjelden fordi låneutgiveren har satt en veldig høy rente på lånene. I tillegg kan systemet også inneholde trekk av slaveri, da landeieren, i følge den lokale tradisjon, har rettigheter i leilendingen og kan selge eller utveksle kamaiya'en som det måtte passe ham. I ulike deler av landet kan systemet utfolde seg på ulike måter. Visse former for

kontrakt arbeid, hvor jordbruksarbeidere jobber for en landeier utfra en lønn de to partene blir enige om, og hvor kontrakten kan fornyes fra år til år, kan også sees på som ufrivillig arbeid. Lønningen arbeiderne får er ofte så liten at de må ta opp ekstra lån fra landeieren for å kunne sørge for seg og sin familie. Dermed befinner kamaiya'er seg i et avhengighetsforhold til sin arbeidsgiver. Dette føydal systemet har over år utviklet seg til en institusjon som kan vise seg å være vanskelig å oppheve.

Den nye loven må derfor oppfølges av flere andre tiltak hvis leilendingene virkelig skal bli fri. Leilendingene trenger mat, husly og arbeid. Regjeringen må derfor igangsette alternativer for dem, både når det gjelder arbeid og et støttesystem som kan hjelpe dem ut av deres nåværende situasjon.

Deklarasjonen blir sett på som den modigste fra regjeringens side på de siste ti årene. Regjeringen var også under stort press for å oppheve slavesystemet.

Nepalesisk kjøkken på Tysk

(The Independent, July 26 – Aug 01, 2000, fritt oversatt av Anuradha Gurung)

Daal, Bhat, Tarkari, Masu og Achar er ikke lenger fremmede ord for tyske ganer, takket være boken "Der Geheimnes der Nepalesischen Küche" (Nepali cuisine in German) av Danda Raj Pahari. Boken er godt illustrert, med steg for steg guide, til å lage en rekke Nepalesiske matretter.

Boken ble trykket og utgitt i Tyskland. Den har allerede tjent inn 1million rupees og pengene er investert til bygging av en ny skole i Pokhara. Pahari som er en maskiningeniør har også arbeidet som sosialarbeider i 16 år. Han var forferdet over sin tidligere skoles forfatning at han bestemte seg for å gjøre noe med det. Skolen, Talbarahi skole (ward nr. 6 i Baidam) ble grunnlagt av Pahari's bestefar for ca. 40 år tilbake. I dag har skolen 1200 elever hvorav mesteparten er fra en fattigere del av samfunnet. Elevene kan nå håpe på en bedre fremtid.

Selvom skolen drives av staten er det tilsynelatende ingen hjelp å få hos staten. Totalkostnad for dette 2-års prosjektet er estimert til 11 million rupees. For å skaffe midler til prosjektet har Pahari stiftet en komite som skal arbeide med å skaffe penger til skolebyggingen. Pahari håper å skrive flere bøker til inntekt for flere trengende.

Melamchi project set to complete by 2006

By Surendra Phuyal

The Kathmandu Post

Kathmandu September 16, 2000

Forkortet og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

KATHMANDU, Sept 15 - Works are progressing satisfactorily to complete the much delayed Melamchi Drinking Water Supply Project by the end of 2006.

Representatives of almost all the donor agencies funding the US \$ 430-plus million project, are converging next week to finalize the project's crucial task-appraisal of grant and loan assistance. Representatives of Asian Development Bank (ADB), Norwegian development agency (NORAD), Swedish development agency (SIDA) and the World Bank (WB) will all be present. "They will complete the works by the first week of October. The bottomline is: we will get all the loans sanctioned by the end of this year," the executive director of Melamchi Drinking Water Board, Dinesh Chandra Pyakurel said.

ADB has committed to provide US \$ 120 million, NORAD and SIDA US \$ 25 million each, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) US \$ 14 million and the World Bank US \$ 215 for the project. Nepal is receiving the assistance being provided by NORAD as grant, SIDA as mixed credit - meaning half grant half loan - and all the rest as soft loan, according to Pyakurel.

Granted "top priority" by the government, the project will divert 170 million litres of drinking water (mld) daily to Kathmandu Valley whose over 1.5 million population suffer from acute scarcity of drinking water every summer. The project's 26-km tunnel construction works will begin next year when the 18.5-km access road construction works will be completed."

NATIONAL DAILY

THE RISING NEPAL

Melamchi residents raise doubt over benefits from mega-project

BY A STAFF REPORTER

Kathmandu, September 16, 2000.

Forkortet og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner

Kathmandu, Sept. 15: Weeks before the official approval of the much-hyped Melamchi Water Supply Project, the residents of the affected areas have raised doubt over the benefits they are supposed to get from the ambitious project.

Expected to be complete by September 2006, the project that will quench the thirst of the parching capital will supply 2,000 litres of water per second to some half a million thirsty Kathmanduites. The 400-million US dollar project, yet to be officially approved by the donors, includes construction of 26-kilometre tunnel, 34-km motorable road, headwork plant, water treatment plant, storage and rehabilitation of pipes for distribution.

A mission of the major donors that includes NORAD, ADB, Japan and SIDA is soon arriving in the capital for the official approval of the country's largest water supply project. At an interaction organised here today, the Melamchi people demanded that the areas affected by the project be given due attention with the employment opportunities to the locals and infrastructure construction, including road, electricity, water supply, irrigation, education and health services. "Besides, the villagers who are directly affected by the construction works should be reasonably compensated," said the Sindhupalchok residents, most of whom are based in Kathmandu.

However, the concerned authorities consoled the anxious villagers. "The 14 villages, defined as the project-affected area in and around the Melamchi valley, will receive a substantial amount of money for various purposes, including road construction, rural electrification, water supply, irrigation, education and health services," lawmaker Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat said at the interaction organised by Melamchi Area Development Committee to discuss over the project's benefits to the locals.

Everyone should rise above the personal or political level, said Dr. Mahat, the former Finance Minister. "Otherwise this project too would slip out of our hand like the Arun Hydropower Project." Executive Director of the project Dinesh Chandra Pyakurel informed that "We will begin the work within a couple of months and the tunnel construction will take some five years." Pyakurel said that the affected people would be compensated as per the existing land prices without reducing the depreciation of their houses. "We have already set aside some 100 million rupees for the purpose."

NEPAL-CHINA RELATIONS

A Great Leap Forward

In the history of 45 years of diplomatic relations, Nepal and China have never had any serious disputes compared to many ups and downs witnessed in Nepal's relations with her southern neighbor. Over the years, China has become more accessible to Nepal. Such is the situation that Nepal benefits a lot by using the new highway on the Chinese side that runs parallel to Nepal's northern border. The highway can become the cheapest means to supply foodstuffs and other materials to remote northern regions in Nepal. As China is planning to build a super highway to link Tibetan capital Lhasa with the port city of Shanghai, the northern neighbor could one day provide another alternative transit link.

By KESHAB POUDEL

Just two weeks after Nepal and China celebrated the 45th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations, a convoy of Nepalese trucks loaded with rice left Kodari, border point of China, on August 13 on their way to Lomanthang (Mustang) in the western Nepal via the Chinese road in Tibet.



As the road built in southern part of Tibet runs parallel to the bordering northern remote regions of Nepal, it can greatly help Nepal supply essential commodities to its north-western remote regions much quicker.

In his recent visit to China, Nepalese foreign minister Chakra Prasad Bastola requested the Chinese government to allow Nepal to use the road to transport food grains and other essential materials uninterruptedly for a longer period. "Chinese officials have shown positive

A border point at Tatopani : Trade on the rise

response to the request," said Chakra Prasad Bastola, talking to journalists at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), upon his return.

As trade volume between the two countries is rising, Nepal and China have agreed to open two more transit points in Kimathanka of Sankhuwasabha and Liji of Mustang to boost the trade relations. Currently four border points Yari, Timureghadi, Tatopani and Olangchunggola are in operation. According to a study, there are more than 200 points that can be operated in the 1440 km long border between Nepal and China.

During his five day visit, foreign minister Bastola succeeded at convincing the Chinese officials in opening more transit points. This is the first time in four decades when the two countries have realized the importance to open another alternative road from Nepal to Tibet. Kathmandu-Kodari road, built with an aim to link Kathmandu to Lhasa in 1960, has greatly boosted trade between the two countries. China has further allowed Nepalese vehicles to carry food stuffs to northern districts through the highway. "We are planning to send more food stuffs to Humla, Mustang and Dolpa via Kodari and through the Tibetan highway," said Khil Bahadur Shrestha, deputy general manager of Nepal Food Corporation (NFC). "By using the Chinese road, we can save large amount of resources which we would otherwise have to use to airlift the supplies."

When the two countries signed the agreement on August 1, 1955 to establish formal diplomatic relations, nobody had imagined that one day Nepal would use the Chinese road to transport supplies to its remote northern parts. The road which was once considered only of strategic importance has now become a vital commercial link. Kodari highway replaced the old mule track through which Nepal supplied food stuffs to northern Himalayan districts. Besides, the road also links different Chinese cities. Forty-five years ago, Nepal faced similar situation in the south also when it had to use Indian railway service of bordering India to travel from one place in Nepal to another inside the kingdom.

That Kodari highway would one day provide access to reach the foothills of Himalayas was just a dream. Compared to the road and railway lines along the southern border, the northern road, though in difficult terrain, is said to be much dependable to carry goods. According to the NFC, it can save up to Rs 800,000 rupees annually in transport fare to supply 500 quintals of rice to Lomanthang through Kodari highway. NFC has already handed over 138 quintals of rice to concerned transporters. Earlier, NFC used to spend Rs. 3000 as airfare to transport each quintal of rice. Now it can transport the same quantity of rice for just Rs. 1,900 via road. "We are considering to send the rice and other essential commodities to other remote Himalayan districts like Dolpa and Humla through the Tibetan side," said Khil Bahadur Shrestha. "We can save millions of rupees in transportation by using the Tibetan roads." The road to Lhasa is not supplementary to transport goods to Nepal. As China is planning to construct four-lane free way linking Lhasa to the port city of Shanghai, Nepal may have another alternative sea route in the days to come.

Following famous saying of late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping: "To get rich, first build a road" China is now planning to connect the villages to cities and cities to coast to develop the south-western parts of China including Tibetan Autonomous Region. According to the Time magazine's August 21-29 (2000) issue, Chinese government is planning to build 35,000 km of new roads in the west of China over the next decade, at the cost of hundreds of billions of dollars. Already in the Sichuan capital of Chengdu, next to Tibet, four new express-ways have joined older ones that connected the city of Chongqing, including one section of a planned Lhasa-to-Shanghai superhighway. When the highway is completed, Lhasa will be linked to Shanghai.

China is launching a grand scheme to develop its western states including Tibet. From railway to roads, Tibet autonomous region will be linked to eastern parts of China. "China will also build a rail link to Lhasa if economic development permits us," said Chinese ambassador Zeng Xuyong. Although Nepal is so close to Tibet, the Nepalese officials do not think Lhasa-Shanghai link can mitigate Nepal's India-locked situation. "There is a highway, of course, which links the Tibetan plateau with the plains of Ganga through Kathmandu. However, as the route is roundabout, Nepal's terai has not been able to utilize it fully to

supply its surplus agricultural products 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," said Kanak Mani Dixit, editor of Himal South Asia, in its June 1998 issue. "Chinese lack of formal recognition of Sikkim's incorporation into India is said to be stopping the border between Lhasa and Sikkim 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," said Dixit.

China has always shown great concern for Nepal's development. "China will continue to have close relations with Pakistan and will have a benign but positive relations towards Nepal and to a limited extent with Bhutan," said J.N. Dixit, former Indian foreign secretary in Himal South Asia, June 1998. "India's own relationship with China will remain complex and tenuous for some time to come," added J. N. Dixit.

China has made continuous efforts quietly to link Nepal with the silk road. Without the planning of Nepal government, many border points of Nepal have access to roads in China. "One can imagine the benefits within a decade when the silk road will be linked to the sea. No geographical barrier can stop Nepal from taking the advantage of that kind of development. It is beyond anybody to deprive Nepal from that prosperity," said a China specialist. The road which passes through north of Nepalese border is said to have links with Burma on east and Pakistan on the west. "When I went to Mansarovar, I found the road is going to be commercially viable. It is like a highway," said former foreign minister Shailendra Kumar Upadhyaya. Himalaya is no more a barrier for trade. Compared to the southern border where no single economically viable and convenient highways is available across the border, China is building highways that could be beneficial to Nepal. Had Dharan-Arun highway been completed, Nepal could have easier access to the roads in China. The Kimathanka is said to be just 20 km from the proposed Arun III project.

Chinese policy towards Nepal has been to reduce Indian dominance in Nepalese economy. China's cooperation in the past focused at reducing Nepal's over dependence on India. Till now Nepal is largely dependent upon India but the situation is gradually changing. Within the next one decade, China is supposed to become the world economic power and Nepal's diversification of trade through the Lhasa-Shanghai route would have the potentials of reducing her economic dependence on India.

"Earlier Himalayas proved to be the most formidable obstacle for any substantial increase in trade between Nepal and China. Now the situation is changing as China has built strategic road along the northern border," said Upadhyaya. Kathmandu-Kodari-Lhasa road also served strategic and political objectives but it was never explicitly highlighted by China. Although Chinese role in Nepal has never seemed to be presumptions Nepal's strategic importance to China can never be minimised. "The issues related to Tibet are, of course, major factors affecting China's relations with Nepal. Beijing government remains concerned about neighboring lands being used as a base for separatist activities," said J. N. Dixit. Nepal has always remained strategically important to China and will remain so. Traditionally, the Chinese believed in the palm and finger theory. According to the theory, Tibet is the palm and Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Laddkh and Nalhula Pass are the fingers. The old imperial doctrine existed till Mao ruled China. During the Manchu Dynasty, the theory was very popular.

China always been oversensitive about control over Tibet. This reality is well understood by others. Strategically, Nepal occupies very important place for the stability of Tibet. Nepal's political stability and economic prosperity, therefore, is also important. "We want to see

Nepal as a stable and prosperous nation," said Xuyong, Chinese ambassador to Nepal (see box). China always supports the independent and self-sustaining economy of Nepal. Even countries like Japan seem to be serious about Nepalese economy. China also expressed sufficient interest to promote Nepal. India's interest in Nepal is, however, to make it ever more dependent on it.

If Nepal has a self-sustaining economy, it can have independent manoeuvring between India and China. The border between Nepal and China has remained quiet and calm but the have been generating serious concerns activities of Free Tibet activists. After the opening of Kodari highway, India exhibited misgivings about the route. According to Indian strategists, the road could be used for the movement of military equipments used in mountain warfare. China supported Nepal to withstand the economic domination of India after the Sino-India war of 1962. "The type of projects that China undertook in Nepal reveals the implicit motive of China to offset Indian influence. It offered to construct such industries like cotton, textiles, leather and shoe to produce things which Nepal had traditionally been importing from India," has written Dr. T.R. Ghoble in his book China-Nepal Relations and India published in 1986.

Chinese aid programs since 1963 display a steady growth. In 1969 China became the second largest donor to Nepal next to India. Late Chinese premier Zhou Enlai in 1957 pointed out: "National economic development was an essential means of safeguarding full national independence. China would be willing to aid Nepal within its capacities." The statement implied that as long as Nepal was economically dependent on India, it was virtually not enjoying independent status. Kathmandu, therefore, should diversify its policy in order to preserve its independence. "But it was clear that China had entered into competition with India in Nepal and it would in the same assertive manner as it did in the earlier phase," writes Dr. Ghoble.

The history of Nepal-China relations is a history of progressive development with minor intervening irritants. China started its relations with Nepal from virtually a scratch and with odds heavily against it. China-Nepal relations started on a low key as it was established with the consent of India. "China, contrary to its ideological predisposition, has been supporting a monarchy and has been refraining from giving open support to local communist parties," said Dr. Ghoble. "Obviously China did not promote the objective of spreading communism in Nepal." Experts argue China is suspicious that India and other western powers might use Nepal to promote the hostile activities in Tibet. One of the major features of Sino-Nepal relations after 1961 is that there have been no major disputes, only some minor incidents between.

Chronology of Nepal-China Relations

- August 1, 1955 establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- September 20, 1956 agreement on trade relations
- October 7, 1956 agreement on economic aid
- March 21, 1960 border agreement
- March 28, 1960 Treaty of Peace and Friendship
- October 5, 1961 boundary treaty
- October 15, 1961 agreement on construction of Kathmandu-Kodari Road Project
- January 13, 1963 protocol of Construction of the Kathmandu-Lhasa highway

Irrigation and Hydropower Project

- Sunkoshi
- Pokhara Seti Irrigation and Power
- Kamala Irrigation (withdrawn)

Bhaktapur-Kodari
Kathmandu - Bhaktapur
Ringroad
Naubise-Pokhara
Pokhara- Baglung
Pokhara- Surkhet (withdrawn)
Narayangadh-Gurkha Road
Dhalkebar-Itahari (withdrawn)

Harisiddhi Brick and Tile Factory (privatized)
Bhaktapur Brick
Hetauda Textile (closed down)
Bansbari Leatherage and Shoe Factory (privatized)
Bhrikuti Pulp and Paper Mill (privatized)
Lumbini Sugar Mill
Butwal Cotton Mill

Nepal, China agree to open 2 more routes

Kathmandu August 28, 2000

The Kathmandu Post

KATHMANDU, Aug 27 - Foreign Minister Chakra Prasad Bastola today said Nepal and China have agreed in principle to add two more trade routes in the Nepal-Tibet border to facilitate increased trade between the two countries. The two new transit points are Kimathanka and Lizi, besides the existing Tatopani, Yari, Kerong and Olanchugola.

Bastola was speaking to the press at Tribhuvan International Airport upon his arrival after a week-long visit to China which began on 19th of this month. He had been invited to China to mark the 45th year of establishment of diplomatic relations between Nepal and China. China has also suggested Nepal to construct an alternative road and make viable the existing road link between Nepal and Tibet, the Arniko Highway. This Kathmandu-Kodari Highway, known as Khasa Highway in the Tibetan side, goes all the way to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, autonomous region of the People's Republic of China. When asked if alternative road link was to be built joining Rasuwa with Tibet, the Foreign Minister said, "They (the Chinese) are examining the possibility." Nepal has already built a road from Galchhi-Trishuli-Rasuwa sector. Just 10 km beyond it lies Tibet. Once this gap is connected by road, it could be another road link between Nepal and Tibet.

Another major development during Bastola's visit has been China's "positive response" to Nepal's request to help in the development of northern region of Nepal, bordering Tibet. Bastola also raised the issue of trade imbalance between Nepal and China. "I told the Chinese the imbalance has to be given a serious thought and they have assured to look into it," said Bastola. Nepal and China signed an agreement of 50 million Yuan as grant-in-aid to Nepal. The Minister did not elaborate and merely said that the technical and economic grants "are routine matters".

Referring to the reported Chinese encroachment of Nepalese land, Bastola said, "We need proof before we can raise the issue." He denied that proof has been provided. A team of Nepali researchers had found hundreds of historical documents related to "Nepal-China border controversy" and thousands of years of old pre-historic arrow-heads in Upper Arun area in northern Sankhuwasabha district. Foreign Minister Bastola said discussion on sensitive border issues was long overdue. "Nepal, India and China should revive dialogue on Kalapani," he said. Kalapani is a common border point between the three countries. "The tripartite talks were overdue in 1998," said Bastola. However, he said, that there was no discussion between Nepal and China on Kalapani, a Nepalese area occupied by India since the Indo-China war of 1962. "We are going to discuss the issue in the right forum soon," added the foreign minister. He said there was a forum precisely to discuss the contentious issue, declining to name it.

Samarbeid med NTNU

Denne våren har Kathmandu University undertekna ein samarbeidsavtale med NTNU. Frå hausten kan universitetslærarar og studentar koma til Trondheim for å læra meir.

– Utviklingshjelp er nok vårt hovudmotiv. Vert samarbeidet vellukka, vil vi også tena på det, seier fakultetsdirektør Åge Søsveen ved Fakultet for maskinteknikk.

Mastergrad

Fleire norske lærarar med utdanning frå NTNU var med på å starta bachelorprogram i ingeniørfag ved Kathmandu University i 1994, og tidlegare NTH- rektor Inge Johansen er framleis rådgjevar for universitetet. Difor var det naturleg å venda seg til Trondheim for å sikra fagleg grunnlag for å utvida universitetet vidare.

– For to år sidan fekk vi spørsmål om å vera med på å bygga opp eit mastergradsprogram ved Kathmandu University, fortel fakultetsdirektør Åge Søsveen ved Fakultet for maskinteknikk.

– Vi søkte om støtte frå Norad til eit forprosjekt, som vart gjennomført i samarbeid mellom NTNU og eit indisk universitet. No har vi søkt Norad om støtte til sjølv programmet. Vi må få dekkja dei økonomiske utlegga våre, men bortsett frå det går vi inn i dette på eit fagleg idealistisk grunnlag, seier Søsveen. Potensialet for vasskraft vert rekna som stort også i Nepal, og vasskraftmiljøa i Trondheim vil vera sentrale i samarbeidet.

Fjernundervisning

Åge Søsveen fortel at det kan vera aktuelt at ein del av master-programmet vert gitt som fjernundervisning leia frå Trondheim, men det er avhengig av

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Norad-finansiering. Det kan også vera aktuelt at NTNU-lærarar reiser til Nepal for kortare periodar. Den samarbeidsavtalen som er undertekna, opnar allereie for at lærarar og studentar frå Nepal kan koma til Trondheim. For lærarar er det snakk om ordinær gjesteforskar-ordning. Dei fleste ingeniørlærarane ved Kathmandu University er unge og har lita forskingserfaring, og arbeid i større miljø vil difor vera nyttig.

– Dei fleste faga våre vert underviste på norsk, så for studentar er det nok mest aktuelt å gjennomføra ei prosjektoppgåve her. Vi har allereie mange utanlandske studentar her som arbeider slik, seier Søsveen.

Vasskraft

Åge Søsveen håpar at miljøet i Trondheim også vil nytta godt av samarbeidet.

– Det viktigaste området vil nok vera vasskraft, og der har dei i Nepal nokre spesielle utfordringar, mellom anna sterkt innslag av sand og ureining i elvevatnet. For oss kan det vera nyttig å ha kontakt med fagfolk som kjenner desse problema godt, seier Søsveen. Han håpar også å få sjansen til å tilby fjernundervisning til Kathmandu University.

– Etter- og vidareutdanning vert stadig viktigare for NTNU. Erfaring med fjernundervisning i Nepal vil vera nyttig for oss også på den heimlege utdanningsmarknaden, seier Søsveen og legg til at samarbeidet også gjev norske lærarar og studentar erfaring i å arbeida i andre kulturar.

– I tillegg håpar vi at koplinga til India kan vera nyttig for oss. Det aktuelle universitetet, Birla Institute of Technology nær Delhi, held høg kvalitet, og dei skal vera særleg gode på å utvikla samarbeid mellom universitet og næringsliv.

KATHMANDU – Vi veit at forskarar frå mange land arbeider i Nepal, men vi har sjeldan kontakt med dei. Målet vårt er å byggja fagmiljø som er gode nok til at utlendingar vil samarbeida med oss. Då kan ein del av kunnskapen bli att her.

Professor Surendra Raj Kafle er dekanus ved School of Science ved Kathmandu University. Der har han dei siste åra vore med på å byggja opp eit universitetsmiljø frå grunnen av. Med doktorgrad frå eit indisk universitet og tre post.doc.-år i USA veit han godt at hans eige universitet har langt att før det kan måla seg med dei fremste utanlandske. Likevel treng universitet også i Nepal forskingsaktivitet på høgt nivå for å kunna tilby god undervisning.

Kathmandu University vart formelt oppretta i 1991. I -94 starta dei første studentane på fireårige bachelor-program i ingeniørfag og naturfag, og det første kullet vart uteksaminert i 1998. I dag kan universitetet også tilby farmasi-utdanning, medisin og nokre pedagogikk-kurs. I tillegg har det formelt ansvar for skular som tilbyr utdanning i mellom anna musikk og administrative fag.

Risåkrar og internett

Universitetet ligg vakkert til i den vesle byen Dhulikhel, tre mil utanfor Kathmandu, hovudstaden i Nepal. I nord kan ein på klare dagar sjå veldige, snøkledd fjell, fleire av dei over åtte tusen meter høge. Campus ligg rundt ein bakketopp i eit kupert landskap, der åsane stig bratt frå dei fruktbare elveslettene og kastar seg ned i djupe dalar. Det aller meste av dette området i sørhellinga av Himalaya er kulturlandskap, kledd med terrassar som er forma av

bøndene gjennom generasjonar. Sjølv 1500 meter over havet er klimaet slik at bøndene dyrkar korn og grønsaker om vinteren. Om sommaren, når monsunen kjem med kraftig regnver i tre-fire månader, er det tid for å planta ris. Bøndene driv jorda for hand eller brukar bøflar til å dra ein enkel treplog, slik dei har gjort i uminnelege tider. Midt i dette tradisjonelle jordbruks-samfunnet lærer unge studentar kybernetikk, web-teknologi og mikrobiologi.

Arbeidsløyse

Men er det rett å eksportera moderne teknologi til ein slik jordbrukskultur? Eldar Onsøyen, trøndar med doktorgrad i maskinteknikk frå NTH, har tenkt ein del på det i dei to åra han har undervist ved Kathmandu University.

– Sjølv sagt er det langt frå problemfritt. Over 80% av folket arbeider med jordbruk, men folketallet aukar raskt. Det er ikkje lenger arbeid for alle i jordbruket, og då må dei skapa sine eigne arbeidsplassar, til dømes innan industri eller tenesteyting. Det krev utdanning. Utan lokal universitetsutdanning må studentar ut av landet, og då kan det vera vanskeleg å få dei tilbake. Vi meiner Nepal treng utvikling, og høgare teknisk utdanning er ein føresetnad for å få det, seier Eldar Onsøyen.

Norsk støtte

Drivkrafta bak Kathmandu University er Suresh Raj Sharma, nepalsk kjemikar med utdanning frå England. Han var frustrert over det statlege universitetet i heimlandet, som han meinte var meir oppteke av å auka talet på innskrivne studentar enn av å tilby god undervisning. Sharma byrja å arbeida med å oppretta eit alternativ. Hausten 1991 vedtok parlamentet ei lov som gav rom for å oppretta det nye universitet. Dette var den første saka som vart handsama av den første demokratisk valde regjeringa etter revolusjonen i 1990. Kontakten med styresmaktene er sikra ved at

statsministeren formelt leier styret for universitetet, men universitetet er organisert som ei privat stifting.

For å finansiera utbygginga tok Sharma kontakt med ei rekke ulike organisasjonar. Den norske misjonæren og sivilingeniøren Odd Hoftun fekk spørsmål om å bidra med å få i gang ei ingeniørutdanning. Hoftun har arbeidd i Nepal sidan 1960-åra og har mellom anna bygd kraftverk og starta yrkesskule og fleire ingeniør-verksemdar der. Gjennom Hoftun og organisasjonen han arbeider for, Den norske Tibetmisjon, fekk universitetet både litt Norad-støtte og fleire norske lærarar til ingeniørutdanninga.

Sjølvberande

Inge Johansen, pensjonert professor og tidlegare NTH-rector, vart engasjert til å laga ein rammeplan for bachelor-programma i ingeniørfag og naturfag. Johansen har seinare vore rådgjevar for universitetet og besøkt det ei rekke gonger.

– Dette var det første tilbodet i ingeniørfag på dette nivået i Nepal, fortel Johansen. – No har det statlege Tribhuvan University også oppretta tilsvarende tilbod i maskin- og elektrofag, men Kathmandu University er framleis åleine om å tilby datautdanning på dette nivået.

Universitetet har langt att før nivået kan måla seg med til dømes NTNU, men Johansen er likevel nøgd.

– Miljøet der er allereie sjølvberande. Fleire kull er allereie utdanna, og dei fleste av lærarane kjem frå Nepal. Men universitetet er skjært og treng framleis støtte. Det viktigaste vil vera å få i gang eit master-program. Det vil sikra større forskingsaktivitet, og det er nødvendig for å driva undervisning på dette nivået, seier den gamle NTH-rectoren. Han minner om at NTH også var avhengig av utanlandske lærarar i starten.

Biologisk mangfald

Nepal er eit av dei fattigaste landa i verda om ein måler etter gjennomsnittsinntekt, helsestell eller utdanningsnivå. Når ein kjem frå eit norsk universitet, er det ikkje lett å skjønna korleis det er mogleg å klara seg med spartansk utstyrte undervisningslokale og forsvinnande små utstyrsbudsjett. Særleg for ingeniørutdanninga og for tunge laboratoriefag som fysikk og kjemi er dette ein begrensande faktor. Då er det lettare å vera biolog, og det er nok ein av grunnane til at biologi er det naturfaget som er best utvikla ved Kathmandu University. Universitetet har eit eige bachelor-program i biologi og miljøfag. Dei første utvekslingsstudentane frå Canada tok eksamen i biologi denne våren, og fleire er på veg. All undervisning vert allereie gjeven på engelsk, og det er difor lett å ta imot utanlandske studentar.

– Nepal er ideelt for biologiundervisning. På berre nokre dagar kan vi gå gjennom ei rekke vegetasjonssoner, frå subtropisk lågland berre nokre titals meter over havet til dei høgaste fjellområda i verda. Det gjer både flora og dyreliv svært variert og spanande, reklamerer dr. Chettri, leiaren for avdelinga for biologi og miljøfag.

Dyrt

Kathmandu University får lite statleg støtte, og drifta er difor betalt hovudsakleg med skulepengar. Femseks hundre kroner i månaden er dyrt i eit land der gjennomsnittleg årsinntekt berre er rundt 2000 kroner. Det statlege universitetet er billegare og vert dermed eit førsteval for mange søkjarar. Kathmandu University har no omlag 1200 studentar, men ein del av desse tek kurs som i nivå tilsvarende norsk vidaregåande skule.

HANS MAGNE ADLAND

Trur framleis på svakt demokrati

Våren for ti år sidan stod studentar i spissen då titusenvis av demonstrantar i Kathmandu tvinga kongen til å gje frå seg makta og innføra demokrati. Ti år seinare er mange skuffa.

Demonstrantane hadde ikkje berre ein draum om eit demokratisk styresett, men også om økonomisk utvikling, meir rettferdig fordeling og betre utdanning. No har folk flest tilsynelatande mist trua på demokratiet.

– Politikarane er korrupte og tenkjer berre på seg sjølve, svarar mange når ein spør dei om politikk. Andre er meir radikale. Eit venstreorientert politisk parti som kallar seg maoistar, har gripe til våpen for å kjempa mot korrupsjon og statleg vanstyre. Nesten 2000 personar er drepne sidan uroa starta for fire år sidan. Dagleg kan avisene fortelja om drap eller kampar mellom politi og maoistar. Det viktigaste målet for maoistane er politifolk eller offentlege kontor, som dei anklagar for korrupsjon. Ei rekke uskuldige har også vorte offer for maoist-angrep eller motreaksjonar frå politiet, i følge Amnesty International. I mai i år opna statsministeren for å bruka hæren mot opprørarane. Skjer det, har det tradisjonelt så fredelige Nepal fått ein heil liten borgarkrig. Uroa har til no vore avgrensa til nokre område og har ikkje vore retta mot utanlandske turistar.

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Yadav Pandit underviser no ved Kathmandu University. Revolusjonsvåren var han 19 år gamal og aktiv i demonstrasjonane. 69 personar omkom, og fleire forsvann. Nokre av dei var venene hans. Pandit skjønar godt maoistane, men er sjølv aktiv medlem av det regjerande kongresspartiet.

– Eg kjenner fleire maoistar. Men eg trur den valdelege linja dei har valt, er feil. Alle ser at mange politikarar er korrupte, men problemet kan ikkje løysast med vald.

Yadav Pandit har mastergrad i fysikk. Ved sidan av jobben som universitetslærer studerer han vidare og håpar på eit doktorgradsstipend til eit vestleg land.

– Utdanning er det viktigaste for å sikra demokratiet. Skulesystemet kan bli mykje betre. Vi treng lokale helsearbeidarear, jordbrukseksperter og ingeniørar, folk med gode faglege kvalifikasjonar og kjennskap til livet på landsbygda her. Å utvikla eit godt utdanningssystem er dyrt, men det er nødvendig om ein skal få bukt med fattigdommen. Utan kompetanse er det ikkje mogleg å skaffa reint drikkevatt, til dømes. Problemet ~~no~~ er at mange av planleggarane er utdanna i utlandet, og det er vanskeleg for dei å skjønna lokale problem. Eg håpar at min generasjon ser annleis på det, at vi greier å heva levestandarden til folk flest. Berre slik er det mogleg å sikra at folk ikkje blir frustrerte og misser trua på folkestyret.

– Berre ved å heva levestandarden til folk flest kan vi bevare demokratiet, meiner den unge universitetslæraren Yadav Pandit.

Tihar

Article by Avigya Karki

(<http://www.nepalhomepage.com/society/festivals/tihar.html>)

Tihar, the festival of lights is one of the most dazzling of all Hindu festivals. In this festival we worship Goddess Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth. During the festival all the houses in the city and villages are decorated with lit oil lamps. Thus during the night the entire village or city looks like a sparkling diamond. This festival is celebrated in five days starting from the thirteenth day of the waning moon in October. We also refer to tihar as 'Panchak Yama' which literally means 'the five days of the underworld lord'. We also worship 'yamaraj' in different forms in these five days. In other words this festival is meant for life and prosperity.

Goddess Laxmi is the wife of almighty Lord Vishnu. She was formed from the ocean and she has all the wealth of the seas. She sits on a full-grown lotus and her steed is the owl. On the third day of the festival at the stroke of midnight she makes a world tour on her owl looking how she is worshipped.

There is a story, which tells why this revelry is celebrated so widely. Once there was a king who was living his last days of life. His astrologer had told him that a serpent would come and take his life away. The king did not want to die so he has asked the astrologer if there was any way to escape death. The king was advised to sleep with lit oil lamps all around his bed and decorate the palace with oil lamps on laxmi puja day. So goddess laxmi would talk to the serpent not to take his life. It did happen, the serpent was convinced by goddess laxmi. The serpent took the king to Yama Raj and told him that it was not yet the king's time to come to the underworld. So Yama Raj opened his ledger and in it the king's remaining age was written zero, but the serpent cleverly put seven before zero. Thus the king lived for seventy more years. So onwards tihar is widely celebrated worshipping the underworld and goddess laxmi.

The first day of tihar is known as 'Kag tihar', crows day. Crow is an underworld henchman. On this day crows are offered food on a plate made out of leaves in the morning before anyone in the house takes in food. In the kingdom of Nepal crow is not killed cause as a legend says that one crow had happened to drink the water of life. Thus you can see crows everywhere sitting without the fear of human beings. Crow the messenger of death is honoured on the first day of tihar.

The second day is called 'Kukur tihar', dogs day. A dog plays many roles in our society. We have dogs in our houses as guardian of the house. As the legend also says that there is a dog at yama's gate guarding the gate to the underworld. The dog is also the steed of the fearful Bhairab, the god of destruction. So on this day a big red tika is put on a dog's forehead and a beautiful garland around the neck. After worshipping the dog, it is given very delicious meal. This day the saying 'every dog has his day' comes true; for even a stray dog is looked upon with respect. We pray to the dog to guard our house as he guards the gate of the underworld and to divert destruction away from our homes. On this day you can see dogs running around with garlands on their neck.

The third day is the most important day of the festival. It is called 'Laxmi puja'. The day when we worship goddess of wealth. On this day, early in the morning the cow is worshipped. Tika is put on her head and a garland around her neck then she feasts

with delicious food. A cow also symbolises wealth and she is the most holy animal for Hindus. Cow is the national animal of Nepal.

In the evening goddess laxmi is worshipped. Days before the house are cleansed and decorated. For goddess likes clean and tidy places. In the evening a small potion of the house out side the main door is painted red with red mud and an oil lamp is lit on it. A pathway is made from here to the place where the old money box and valuables are kept in the house that is the puja room. All the Nepalese have a box where from generation to generation money is put every year worshipping goddess laxmi. This money is never used unless extreme emergency. The entire house is decorated with lit oil lamps in every doors and windows. Laxmi, goddess of wealth is worshipped performing the traditional rituals and when the rituals are over then gambling in the house starts. This is a festival when gambling is not illegal. On this day throughout the evening groups of girls come to houses singing song of praise of the goddess and they are taken as guests and given gifts. This day the entire place is lively through out the night.

The fourth day is bit different. Today the things you worship depend on your specific cultural background. Normally most of the people perform 'Guru puja', ox worshipping. The ox is worshipped with tika, garland and then a delicious meal is fed to it. On the other hand people who follow lord Krishna perform 'Gobhardan puja'. These people build a small hill made out of cowdung and put some grass on it then do puja on it. This puja symbolises the act of lord Krishna when he lifted the gobhardan hill and saved millions of people and cows from floodwater.

If you belong to the Newar community, you perform 'Mha puja' which literally means worshipping yourself. The newar community people are worshipping life by doing puja on themselves. On this very day the newar New Year also starts. Nepal has many minor community calendars and newar calendar is one of them but the nation follows the Bikram Sambat calendar.

The last day of tihar is 'Bhai tika', putting tika on your brothers by your sisters. The royal astrologer gives the appropriate time to put the tika through the national radio a day before and the entire nation abides by it. Even his majesty receives tika from his sisters. When his majesty receives tika a thirty-one-gun salute is given to honour the function. At this moment the entire nation will be observing bhai tika. The main theme behind bhai tika is the sisters praying for their brother's long life from Yama Raj, god of the underworld.

The most exotic and dazzling festival comes to an end after these five magnificent days of worship and honour to the goddess laxmi and the underworld kingdom.

Husk medlemsmøtet

På selveste FN-dagen, tirsdag 24. oktober 2000, kl. 19:30 er høstens første medlemsmøtet satt. Se forsiden i denne Hamro Patrika!

lastpage

The Upper-Middle Way

by Tarik Ali Khan

HIMAL 13/8 August 2000

In the 1960s, a wacky Scotsman calling himself Tyes day Lobsang Rampa began marketing Tibet. Claiming to be possessed by a disembodied Tibetan lama, Rampa wrote a series of books about life in Lhasa. He described flying monks, a maze of secret passageways under the Potala Palace, and an arcane Tibetan surgical operation which involved making an incision in the forehead and removing the patient's pineal gland. This, he explained, was done in order to open up the 'third eye' which made the Tibetan lamas clairvoyant.

Completely loopy, you say? Of course he was. But his pulp fiction masterpieces like *The Third Eye* sold by the millions. And things have only moved on since. Today, the number of books on the "land of snows" and its national religion have multiplied to the point where entire bookstore sections are devoted to it. And with musicians like Adam Yauch of the Beastie Boys and Hollywood luminaries Richard Gere, Whoopi Goldberg and Uma Thurman (to name a few) serving as spokespersons for Tibetan Buddhism/independence, Tibet has been hot for a while.

While one can hardly doubt the contribution that the Dalai Lama and other lamas have made to spiritualism in the 20th century, the problem is that the Rampasque flakiness continues. Consider the following dialogue witnessed in Boudha at the heart of Kathmandu's Tibetan quarter. The setting is one of the larger monasteries where an incarnate lama or *rinpoche*, precious one, is teaching his Western disciples:

In the midst of his discourse a middle-aged American disciple arrives panting and sweating. He prostrates and offers a white silk scarf or *katag* to the lama.

Disciple: (gasping for breath) Rinpoche . . .

Rinpoche: What's wrong?

Disciple: Last night I was coming up to Kathmandu from India by bus. (Pant, gasp). And somebody stole my laptop computer which contained all my research work. And (gasp) I knew I had to see you first. I hope you can help me.

Rinpoche: Hmmmm. Did you save it on diskette?

Disciple: The diskettes were stolen too.

Rinpoche: Hmmmm. Did you inform police?

Disciple: No, not yet. I thought I should see you first. Is there anything you can do?

Rinpoche: I think you should inform police.

Disciple: Yes, yes. Thank you so much. (Bows and withdraws from the lama's chamber, hands pressed together).



What on earth did this fellow expect from precious rinpoche? That he materialises a laptop, (not to mention his entire doctoral dissertation) out of the ether? Or that he uses his bionic third eye to zero in on some forlorn Nepali thief playing Tetris on his newly acquired laptop?

Kathmandu was once the place where one could meet a *real* rinpoche. It was home to a number of accomplished lamas who had fled the Chinese occupation in 1959. Tulku Urgyen, Dudjom Rinpoche, Lama Yeshe and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche were accomplished Buddhist masters who taught the essence of Tibet's unique Vajrayana tradition with humour and simplicity.

But the value of a rinpoche has crashed since then. The older generation of simple ascetic lamas has passed on, leaving a younger crop of cellphone-carrying 'Pajero Rinpoches' and 'Disco Rinpoches'. Fattened by the wealth of donations from Taiwanese and Western devotees, they are leaving many Tibetans themselves disillusioned. What is worse is that even bad actors like Stephen Seagal now carry the title. Presenting next: Van Damme Rinpoche!

One wonders how His Holiness the Dalai Lama stomachs all this reincarnation and devotion business. This summer, Richard Gere organised a Tibet fundraiser luncheon in Hollywood which raised USD 300,000 for Tibetan autonomy. Surveying the starry-eyed stars before him, H.H. took pains to de-holify himself saying: "Actually, I'm just a human being, and there are no differences between us. You should consider me one of your brothers. Don't think of me as a living Buddha".

Hats off to H.H., but Hollywood just doesn't seem to get it. It would have Tibet restored to a homogeneous magical theocracy even though H.H. has made it clear that Tibetans do not want restoration of the Shangrila, but to join the modern world. Ever the realist, the Dalai Lama, though, realises the Tibetan cause's need for a dharma scene of white, upper middle class post-Christians and post-Jews prostrating at the feet of newfound superheroes.

The moral of the story?

You who have lost faith, find your own inner peace.

You who have lost laptops, go to police.

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