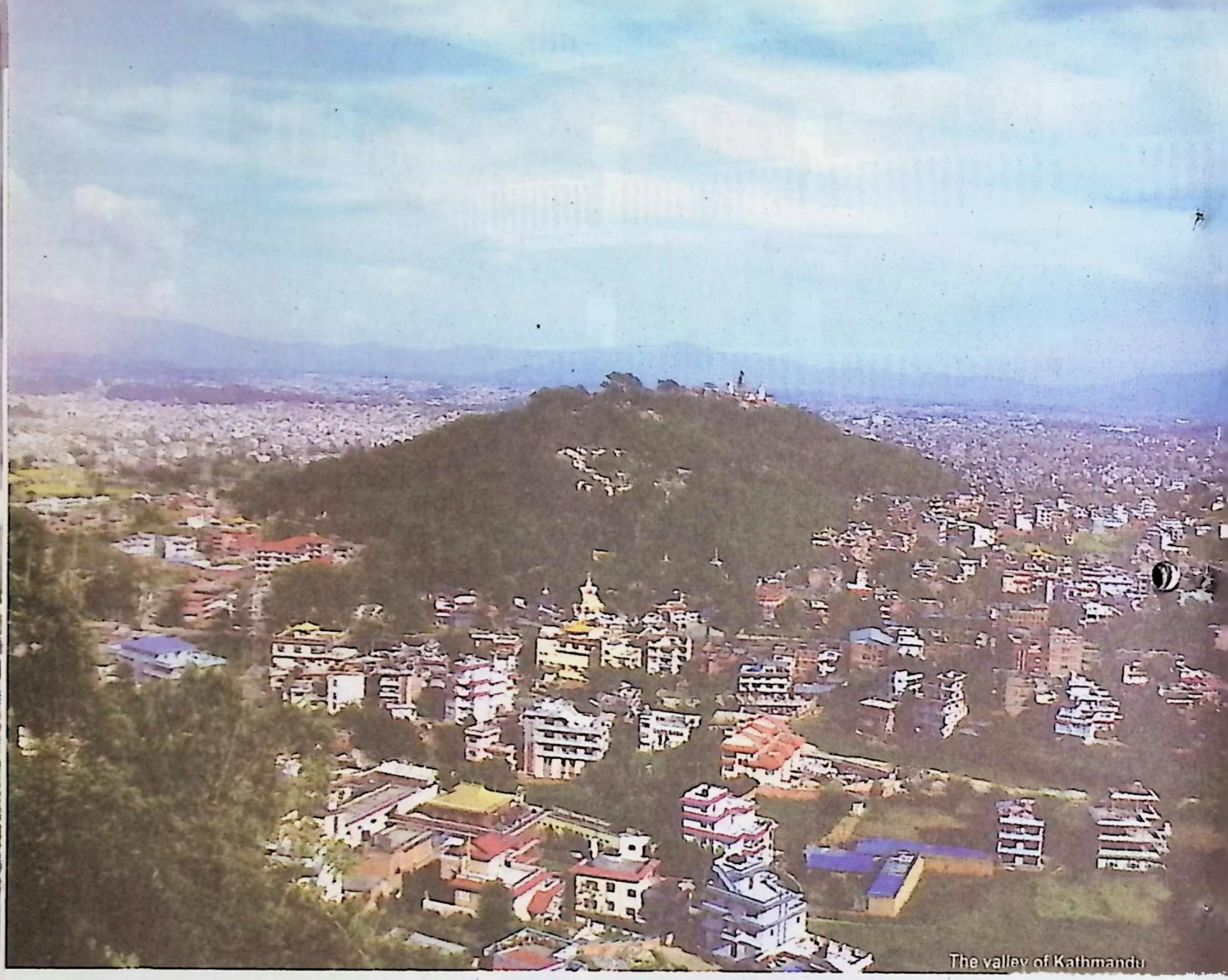


The valley of Kathmandu

problem is paying. It is highly unlikely that one will find Nepalese Rupees available in Bangladesh, therefore one will have to travel with US dollars, and to pay for the picture at least some of those dollars will have to be converted into Nepalese rupees. The airport offers some of the worst conversion rates that you will encounter on the trip, but if you show up without a picture, in more ways than one, that is the price you pay. It is also easy to just stand in any line where other foreigners are queuing up, do not do that. It is a waste of time and effort, look for the counter that says Gratis Visa, that is where one should go. While people from non SAARC countries pay money for their visas on arrival, Bangladeshis' first trip a year to Nepal is free and a gratis visa is issued. If one is to travel to Nepal for a second time in the same calendar, only then do visa charges apply.

Once you are out of the airport the real journey begins. There will almost always be representatives of a few hotels and guest houses waiting outside the airport, even if you don't want to use their services they are usually quite helpful. If you have a pre arranged booking, then simply hop into a cab and head for your destination. From the airport to the tourist district of Thamel, the ride should cost over 300 rupees. Without a prior booking but backed by strong word of mouth I headed for the Kathmandu Guest House (www. ktmgh.com/kgh.com) which wikitravel.org said was, "the axis on the compass of Thamel, all other addresses are given in relation to this hotel." They were not wrong. Without a doubt every single cab driver knows where it is, and within the tourist district of Thamel, it is nothing short of the heartbeat. The staff are friendly and always available while the place itself is beautifully laid back and tranquil. Within the compound just outside the main entrance there is a delightfully shaded cafe, which is good if at times pricey. The banana pancakes and mushroom on toast are affordable and tasty.

At the Kathmandu Guest House there are a myriad of