

Hi, May or 月明关。
 We have to news for you. One is good and the other one is so so.
 As you may understood I've got your passport. we have to assure, that you passport [redacted], is safe and untouched.
 To prove you that we really hold your passport, we provide you some information from it. You are a 32 years old female from Guangdong and, as we can see, you are already a permanent Resident of NZ. Our congratulations!!!
 Enough evidence of our seriousness??? So, now you can stop worrying about it!!! We was very pleased to see that you offer reward for the return of your document. But we need to say, that we've been offered a price of \$1100

Student black emailed \$500 for lost passport

by Jonathan Dow

When AUT student May Guan lost her passport, she was worried — but it wasn't until someone threatened to sell it on the blackmarket that she was really scared.

A month later Guan, 32-year-old public relations student, received an email demanding \$500 or her passport would be sold.

"I was scared because he said, 'There is a high demand — if you don't pay I am going to sell it,'" says Guan.

Twelve days later she received a phone call from a man reminding her he had her passport.



MAY GUAN

PHOTO: JONATHAN DOW

She told the man, "I know — I got your email," and he hung up.

"You are already a permanent resident of New Zealand. Our congratulations!" said the email.

Guan had put up notices "everywhere" around AUT, offering a \$100 reward to anyone who found her passport.

The email said they had been offered \$1100 for the passport on the black market and said Guan's \$100 reward was "ridiculous and miserable."

They wanted \$500.

By the time she received the email she had cancelled the passport and, as required by the Chinese embassy, advertised this twice.

Jessica Phuang, the Asian liaison officer at Auckland Central Police Station, says what happened to Guan is uncommon.

This is the first case of attempted extortion she has come across in the year she has been in the liaison job.

"It could be some silly boys who have heard of extortion and tried it out," she says.

Many students lose their passports, she says.

Students are often quite vague about what happened, says Phuang.

They say things such as, "it was in my bag" or "I went to visit my friends".

Hikoï here again

by Edward Gay

Marchers will be in Auckland tomorrow for the second hikoï and organisers are hoping to have massive support — with a larger crowd than in Wellington.

The hikoï has wide support among tribes who see the Government's proposed law as a breach of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and human rights.

The legislation will hand ownership of the foreshore and seabed to the Government.

"It's about keeping the pressure on. We're hoping for a larger crowd in Auckland than the 36,000 that marched in Wellington," says Bernie Hornfeck, chief organiser in Auckland.

"There's a larger population in Auckland and the weather should be better," he says.

"The Pakeha support is gradually mounting. We have support from the Peace Movement Aotearoa, the Treaty Partners and Global Peace and Justice Auckland."

He believes the issue of the seabed and foreshore is two-fold.

"The loss of human rights affects everyone — the Crown has manipulated the courts. The Crown will be able to pass an act

to sell the foreshore as a state asset."

Hornfeck and other hikoï leaders are calling on the Minister of Maori Affairs, Parekura Horomia, to cross the floor.

He says the Government would not be able to pass the legislation without Horomia's support.

Horomia has respect for those taking part in the hikoï, but he still supports the legislation.

"I have to make a decision that will cater for all our people," says Horomia.

He says he has had a "mixed" reaction from his Ikaroa-Rawhiti (East Coast) electorate.

"There are certainly tensions, just like around the country."

Horomia says the traditional relationship between Labour and Maori will be maintained.

"There are a range of political issues. We've seen 70,000 new jobs for Maori and the birth of Maori TV."

But the legislation remains at the forefront of issues facing Maori, with the Human Rights Commission, the Waitangi Tribunal, the Law Society, and the Business Roundtable opposing the proposed legislation.

National Maori affairs

spokesperson Gerry Brownlee was not aware of the hikoï taking place when *Te Waha Nui* contacted him.

He also opposes the legislation, but for different reasons.

"The legislation is racist. It only allows for Maori because you have to establish customary right prior to 1840," says Brownlee.

He says when Maori signed the treaty they ceded sovereignty to the Crown and that now Maori and Europeans are represented by the same entity — the Crown.

Dr Paul Moon, a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and senior lecturer in Maori studies at AUT, says Brownlee is "not right as usual".

"It's clear he's doing political point-scoring rather than objectively looking at the issue," he says.

"The chiefs like Hone Heke would never have ceded rights to anyone. In fact five years after the treaty signing he went to war to prove it."

A Select Committee will deliver its report on the legislation November 5.

The hikoï leaves behind the Aotea Centre on Mayoral Drive at 9am tomorrow.



HIKOÏ: The first hikoï of May 2004 makes its way to Wellington.

PHOTO: GRACE EDWARDS

Author praises Kiwi over river dolphins work

by Sudesh Kissun

A 29-year-old Mount Maunganui scientist has been praised for her work in trying to save river dolphins in Cambodia from extinction.

Renowned author Amitov Ghosh praised Isabella Beasely while he was in New Zealand this month to launch his new book, *The Hungry Tide*.

Beasely helped Ghosh's research on river dolphins while he was writing the book.

The river dolphins are a unique feature in the Sundarbans — an archipelago in Bengal, India, where *The Hungry Tide* is set.

Ghosh paid tribute to Beasely's assistance in Cambodia.

He said she was a "brave girl" working tirelessly to save the

river dolphins from extinction.

Her proud parents, Noel and Della Beasely, made the trip from Mount Maunganui to attend the book launch in Auckland.

Noel Beasely says he is proud of her daughter, who is on a Townsville University scholarship in Cambodia.

"She is bit of a pioneer worker among the dolphins in Cambodia," he says.

Beasely says his wife visited their daughter in Cambodia recently for a holiday.

"She is now raising money to buy two water pumps for the villagers who Isabella is working with," he says.

In the book, an Indian girl, born and raised in America, comes to the Sundarbans to trace the rare river dolphins.

She meets a sophisticated

Delhi businessman who is also in the Sundarbans on family business.

The story of the two visitors is set against the backdrop of Sundarbans' beauty and incredible poverty of people living in the area.

Ghosh says the inspiration to write *The Hungry Tide* came during a boat trip with two fishermen in the Sundarbans four years ago.

"While travelling in a boat I had this image of an Indian girl coming to the Sundarbans, meeting the fishermen and having an accident," he says.

"I was trying to imagine why she would come here when we stumbled upon a carcass of a dolphin lying on the bank."

"I decided that the study of the dolphins would bring the girl there," he adds.

Ghosh contacted dolphin experts around the world and was directed to Isabella.

The author spent several weeks with her travelling on River Mekong and studying the river dolphins.

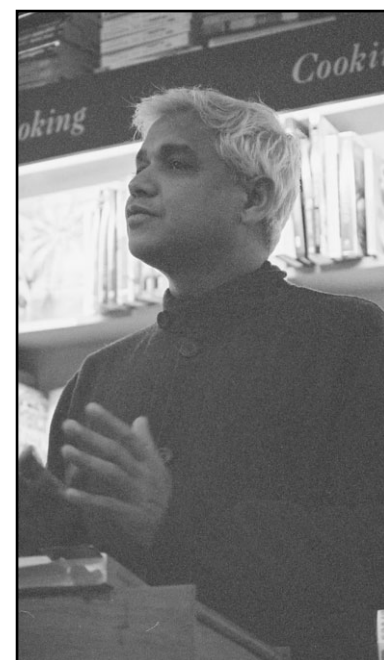
Apart from *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh's work includes *The Glass Palace*, *The Imam* and *The Indian*.

Ghosh says his books begin from images and the ideas develop as he writes.

He does not know when his next offering will hit the bookshelves.

Ghosh arrived in New Zealand after a book promotion tour of Australia and left last week for India and Germany.

The Hungry Tide is published by Harper Collins, retails for \$34.99 and is available in bookstores now.



AMITAV GHOSH

PHOTO: EDWARD GAY