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ANALYSIS by RAJENDRA DAHAL
Nearly one year after he wrested power away from an elected prime minister, King Gyanendra is now poised to discuss a truce with the political parties.

The king returned to Nepal this week after nearly 17 days to find his country again on the brink of war, and his subjects fearful and apprehensive about the future. The Nepali public is afraid that the Maoists are about to demonstrate their military clout by unleashing a new round of slaughter. Recent bombings and assassinations in the capital are seen as a sign of things to come.

Editorial p2
Live and let live
The king is expected to use the next week to get back up to speed, while the parties take a rest from their vigorous defiance of a government ban on assembly. By late next week, the king is expected to meet political leaders in 'tea party' diplomacy to find common ground. The main purpose of such rapprochement will be to send the Maoists the message that constitutional forces are now united.

If the Maoists are truly serious about a

political solution, this new unity will help in reaching a concrete agreement in any future talks to end the insurgency. If they are not, it will prove that the Maoists really want a military settlement, and the government can respond accordingly. It is likely that the Maoists will try to drive a wedge between the parties and the king in the coming weeks.

As in the past, however, it will not be easy for the parties to reach an agreement on the formation of a new government, and the king may also find their proposal unsatisfactory. Girija Prasad Koirala's demand that parliament be reinstated will not be easily acceptable to the king, since it will make Koirala and his Congress too powerful for the palace's liking.

The king may therefore listen more to the UML, RPP and the Deuba Congress. The UML may have gone along with the Congress to fight 'regression', but it would prefer to have an all-party government under its own leadership. Koirala agreed to endorse Madhab Kumar Nepal as prime minister in return for political favours, but that

All together now

Ceasefire and peace talks, this time between the king and parties.



A school boy walks home Wednesday as political street protests wind down. The Maoists have announced an indefinite education strike and a three-day bandh next week.

MINI BAIRACHARYA

promise may now have lapsed.

Being so close to power, it is also likely that the parties will start bickering again and the palace could try to take advantage of this. However, the situation has changed from the last time the king tried to find a suitable premier: there is

unprecedented international pressure on the parties and palace to patch up. Both have realised that they can't deal with the Maoists alone.

In addition, there has been a shift in the American position from unquestioned support for the king's hawkish actions to a position that is closer

to the Indian stance on accommodation between the parties and the king. This new convergence has yielded a 'roadmap' that is still a bit murky. But after next week's meetings it may clear up sufficiently for us to see the way ahead. ♦

Rajendra Dahal is the editor of *Himal Khabarpatrika*.

Times nepaltimes.com
Weekly Internet Poll # 102

Q. Was the resumption of conflict avoidable?

Total votes: 1,135

Weekly Internet Poll # 103. To vote go to: www.nepaltimes.com

Q. Now that the ceasefire is off, do you think the political parties and the king should unite?

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Involve Maoists in development?

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

To address the underlying causes of the insurgency, the government needs to deliver development to remote villages. But many of them are under control of the Maoists, whom the government has once more declared terrorists.

Now, the government is under pressure from some of Nepal's donors, who support 75 percent of the development budget, to involve Maoists in grassroots projects. Government ministers have said privately that they find the idea absurd.

At meetings with donors on Wednesday and Thursday, the government had a tough time convincing them the situation was under control and it was capable of taking development to the people. Most foreign-funded aid projects have been disrupted, and Nepal's 30 year achievements in child health, literacy, water supply and forestry are seriously threatened.

Local bodies have been without elected leaders for more than a year, and most VDC secretaries have fled to the safety of district headquarters after the ceasefire collapsed 27 August. Much bilateral aid has been frozen pending the reinstatement of VDCs and DDCs.

The government has proposed forming all-party village committees, and donors suggest Maoists could be included in them. "Let an all-party or cross-party committee be the solution," says Danish Charge d'Affaires Gert Minecke. "In their stronghold areas, the rebels could be included, and elsewhere it might not be necessary."

Rudiger Wenk of the European Commission delegation agrees: "If the idea stops violence, why not bring in the Maoists as well?" Ironically, the Maoists have said they don't think much of the idea, stressing their priority is the revolution. Yet, some donors believe if Maoist-supporters in villages are brought on board—even by camouflaging them as community user groups—it could pave the way to resume local development work.

Multilateral donor agencies echo the same message. "Everyone should be involved to make the development projects move ahead," says the new ADB's Country Director Sultan Hafeez Rahman, citing the example of Sri Lanka where the Tamil Tigers were involved in project implementation. "The idea is to broaden participation so the people benefit," Sultan said. Wednesday's consultation meeting focussed on the World Bank's \$70 million Poverty Reduction

Strategy Credit, and the IMF's \$70 million Poverty Reduction Growth Facility for three years.

There has been an escalation of violence while the missions from Washington are in town, and government officials are jittery. But Shankar Sharma of the National Planning Commission feels team members are satisfied. "If they are positive, the other donors will be too," Sharma said. The government has tried to convince donors its project budget will not be diverted to security. But budgetary support is different, and some donors are worried their poverty-reduction support could become "fungible". ♦

Donors say yes, government not so keen.

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STATE OF THE STATE

by CK LAL



Shooting messengers

Those who live in mortal fear of the truth see journalists as enemies.

LIVE AND LET LIVE

It will soon be a year since an elected prime minister was sacked and King Gyanendra took over the reins of power. There were questions about the constitutionality of that move, but the majority of people gave their king the benefit of the doubt last October because he vowed to restore peace. His handpicked government kept that promise, and by January a truce and peace talks were declared, justifying the royal move in the public eye.

Cast adrift, the political parties took nearly twelve months to muster enough unity and energy to counter the king's move, and even then it has been a relatively restrained agitation. The party leaders were unable to completely convince Nepalis that their anti-regression campaign was about restoring democracy and not about returning to Singha Darbar. And except for one Congress senior, the party that was in power for the longest period since 1990 showed scant remorse for squandering our hard-earned freedoms.

If the January ceasefire legitimised the king's October Fourth move, the breakdown of the truce three weeks ago and the dread of full-scale violence is now forcing a royal rethink. The same message is coming across loud and clear from the international community: there is no other recourse than for the palace and the parties to live and let live.

But we didn't really need foreign ambassadors to tell us what has been painfully obvious: forces guided by the constitution must be on the same side, otherwise it will bolster the side that doesn't believe in it. A parliamentary democracy within a constitutional monarchy governed by a reformed constitution should be a compromise acceptable to all. The trouble is that all three sides so far want a winner-takes-all formula, and have locked themselves into rigid positions.

This layered fight needs a sequenced solution, and the first order of business is to find an accommodation between the palace and the parties. All indications are that the king has returned with some new ideas, and with Mars now safely receding, signs are good that an accord can be reached. There are all kinds of options before the king: he can go back to pre-22 May 2002 and reinstate parliament, to pre-4 October 2002 and give Sher Bahadur Deuba back his job, to pre-30 May 2003 and accept Madhab Kumar Nepal who was the candidate endorsed by the five party alliance to succeed Lokendra Bahadur Chand or go back to 11 October 2002 and restart the game of musical chairs.

None of these options is going to resolve the Maoist problem overnight. But the king must chose the one that will hand power back to the peoples' representatives. It is in his self-interest to re-erect the buffer that the monarchy needs to protect itself from the forces that want to overthrow it.

Despite their bravado and capacity to sow mayhem, the leaders of the Maoist movement know that this is not a war that will be easily won, if ever. They agreed to the truce in January to try to see if they could get what they wanted through negotiations. Negotiators derive clout from the threat of military prowess in the field, and the talks broke down on 27 August because the Maoists realised that the government side hadn't been softened enough. They are now taking the violence up a notch by threatening Fortress Kathmandu.

Sooner or later, as a new military balance of power is re-established, the peace process must resume. The only alternative is to fight on until there is no Nepal left.

Daniel Pearl, Mazen Dana, Gyanendra Khadka. All journalists killed in the line of duty. In an age when business, celebrity and international event reporting have become the three most coveted beats, these journalists stuck to what a hard-nosed hack is supposed to do: inform the public honestly and fairly. Those who live in mortal fear of truth eliminated them.

Perhaps it has something to do with the risks involved in being an independent professional that the number of journalists willing to be embedded with power is on the rise. The propagation of superficial, sterile event reporting in the name of "We report, you decide" is more rewarding than trying to do the hard work of investigating the truth. A fence-sitting media feels that observing events and jotting down facts is enough, and someone else should explain and interpret. Explaining and

interpreting is getting to be dangerous business. And the disincentives for free, fair and fearless reporting are increasingly frightening.

The market, the mafia and the military aren't the only things the media has to be wary of these days. Militants of every hue, driven by a stubborn doctrine of the righteousness of their cause, are even more dangerous enemies of the free press.

Daniel Pearl was a Jewish American reporter with the *Asian Wall Street Journal* who had a deep understanding of the grievances that drove downtrodden Muslims. He was kidnapped and killed by Islamic extremists. Mazen Dana was a Palestinian Arab from Hebron who was covering the war in Iraq for Reuters when he was killed by an American tank. Gyanendra Khadka

when blatant attempts are being made to tarnish his reputation.

As usual, the Maoists accused Khadka of being an informant. Just like they did after killing scores of others who were teachers, health post workers, or other citizens working to improve the



lives of their communities. Even if there was some truth in the allegation, there was no reason to kill him so mercilessly. Fellow journalists, who were so forthcoming in censuring the security forces for the death of Krishna Sen last year, haven't been as vocal in denouncing this murder. Evidence of

Khadka's complicity in helping the army are circumstantial—even the Maoists haven't suggested that he fought with them. But Sen was a card-carrying communist, a member of the Maoist politburo, an apologist of violent politics and the chief-of-publicity of the armed insurgents. Despite all that, Sen didn't deserve to die. And the cold-blooded murder of Khadka is no less unjust.

When it comes to persecuting journalists, however, the state cannot claim the moral high ground. A year ago, a journalist supposed to have been sympathetic to the insurgents was made to disappear from Jalbire in Sindhupalchok. The Maoists have killed one journalist each in Kalikot and Morang. Nobody knows why Ishwar Budhathoki (Kanchan Priyadarshi), Navaraj Sharma or Ambika Timilsina were killed.

A journalist's ID doesn't confer immunity on the person who holds it on behalf of the public. For the powers that be, the sword has always been mightier than the pen. Journalists are killed, and the rest of us just shed silent tears and remember Bhupi Sherchan's words:

O, the dead departed,
 try living—
 the ordeal of it.



(pic, inset) was a reporter in Sindhupalchok who was taken away from a school meeting this weekend, tied to a volleyball pole and shot.

Many in Kathmandu said: Gyanendra, who? Names play tricks with our memory, and commoners bearing royal names have to learn to live with sly smiles. Gyanendra Khadka was a commoner with an uncommon touch. He was a teacher in a local school and a reporter for the state-run RSS news agency in Melamchi. His colleagues considered him a fearless reporter, and it says something about the state of fear that has gripped the journalism profession that none of them are now willing to stand by their memory

LETTERS

WAY OUT

Artha Beed's "Democracy =Pluralism" (#161) reminded me of the malaise facing our intelligentsia—we analyse our country's problems but nothing happens. Your internet polls prove what a part of the public wants: a government that delivers stability through peace negotiations or they will back another form of government that will. Here are some ideas: 1. Term limits: Term limits for all prime ministers, ministers and MPs will hold politicians in check against corruption or

special interests.

2. Legalised donations to Political Parties: There is no way a politician or a political party can exist without bribes, kickbacks or cuts.
3. Efficient postal system: A postal system that has postal codes, standardised home/business addresses and good customer service will enable the government, business and the public to conduct both business and personal matters efficiently.
4. Taxation: All employers should have an Employer

Identification Number. All employees then pay taxes through their payroll. Taxation then becomes the foundation of a nation's economy, not foreign aid.

5. Incentives to tax collectors: If a tax collector nabs an evader, he should get a reward. This proactive method will reduce corruption in the Finance Ministry.
6. Ditto for CIAA Officials.
7. Zonal or Regional Commissioners: Let's not call them 'Anchaladhis' but a Zonal Commissioner's Office would improve organisational hierarchy and have utilitarian value.
8. Labour Laws: We are in a pre-industrial stage, how can we apply post-modern international labour standards? Beed's arguments about union militancy makes sense. Yes, people have the right to unionise, but not to terrorise through political affiliation.
9. Land reform and deeds: If the government grants titles to the landless, then they can use that

property to generate capital.

10. Affirmative action: Let's face it, our society still resembles a medieval social system with the upper castes dominating. We need a level playing field.
11. Population control: Nepal is reproducing the population of the Kathmandu Valley every year. No matter how much progress or development we may achieve, we will be back to square one if we don't tackle this monster.
12. Poverty reduction: Grassroots development that is both environmentally and technologically appropriate to Nepal's needs.
13. Ethics: If democracy provides stability to a political system, then, it is ethics that provide stability to democracy.

SN Singh, email

SLAUGHTER

'Return to slaughter' (#161) by Naresh Newar was really touching. Innocent people are dying in this tug-o-war and more

will die if nothing is done right away. People from different walks of life should come forward with cool heads, forgetting and forgiving all past sins so that the peace process can resume.

Dr Eli Pradhan, Chhauni

WHY NOT DEUBA

Why are you in the media trying so hard to promote Sher Bahadur Deuba? Here are five reasons why you shouldn't:

1. He introduced the 'Pajero culture'.
2. He pushed the Maoists away from parliament and into the jungle.
3. He sent honourable members of parliament to Bangkok for R&R.
4. He hasn't kept a single promise, but he keeps making them.
5. He is an American lackey.

Deuba was declared incompetent by the king because he did not succeed in solving the

issue of Maoist terrorism through talks with his benefactor, Comrade Prachanda. He failed to crush the Maoists even with help from his brother-in-law and he disobeyed his party leaders Massive military purchases of Belgian guns and Russian helicopters took place during his tenure, and these are scandals much bigger than Lauda and China Southwest put together. Then he dissolved parliament, but couldn't announce new polls. Deuba tried to gain political mileage from a staged assassination attempt, and while lounging comfortably in a nearby barracks he kept complaining that the government wasn't "rescuing" him by helicopter. Reinstating this man will tarnish the reputation of king and country. Why not just make him ambassador to Washington?

Ram Narayan Thakur, Nepal Law Campus



COMMENT

by PUSKAR GAUTAM



Offensive strategy

This war will leave the country in such ruin, it won't matter who won.



MOHAN MAINALI

The ceasefire is off, the country is back at war. We seem to have come full circle to 25 November 2001 when the first truce was unilaterally broken by the Maoists after three rounds of fruitless negotiations. At that time the Maoists took the war onto a new level by attacking the army base at Ghorahi, inflicting huge losses. This time, they have already given us a hint of what lies in store: a campaign of assassinations and bomb attacks right here in the capital, designed to spread panic and fear. Unlike previously, most of the ambushes and raids on police stations in the past two weeks have taken place in daylight, indicating a greater confidence among the Maoists about their ability to make their getaway and melt back into the population. The blasts and assassinations of the past weeks could be a warm-up exercise for the big ones expected as precursors to the three day national strike on 18-20 September.

Meanwhile, in the midwest fierce frontal battles continue, with the army even using helicopters for airborne attacks on Maoist positions. Although the army's intelligence about Maoist hideouts and movements seems to have improved, the assassination of its senior psywar counter-insurgency expert in Kathmandu shows that it is still deficient.

Curiously, the Maoists appear to be holding back from launching a full-scale offensive on military targets in the Kathmandu Valley. This could be because they are waiting for the political parties' agitation to be over, or it could be

that they feel their present strategy of high level assassinations, national strikes and terror tactics will suffice in softening the hardline stance of state on the issue of a constituent assembly to craft a new constitution.

When they agreed to a truce in January, the Maoists declared that they had achieved a "strategic equilibrium" with the army. For the sake of showing that the revolution is progressing on track, they now have to prove that they are on a "strategic offensive". In Maoist parlance, the strategic offensive stage precedes military victory. Paradoxically, however, the Maoist leadership has concluded that for internal and external reasons, this is a militarily unwinnable war. It therefore considers attaining the

constituent assembly objective through talks as its primary goal at present.

The Maoist leadership's rationale for going back to war was to put additional pressure on the army-palace axis; it must therefore have deduced that pressure was not high enough during the talks. But the Maoists now need to reconcile the contradiction between strategic offensive in the military arena and victory through negotiations for a constituent assembly in the political arena.

As usual, as with all the goings-on in Kathmandu, international geopolitics casts a long shadow. The Maoist leaders did let it slip out when they briefly surfaced that they had been "let down" by India, even though New Delhi doesn't

figure on the list of five points that Baburam Bhatarai gave this week for the reason his group called the ceasefire off. This could have something to do with the fact that CP Gajurel, the senior Maoist who was caught trying to fly to London on a false British passport last month, is still in Indian custody.

They have also been sharply critical of "imperialist" America, and suspect the US could play a role similar to Peru in 1992, when they helped security forces to apprehend Abimael Guzman in 1992 just as his Shining Path movement was about to launch an urban guerrilla war on Lima.

The Maoists are still playing the palace against the parties according to Mao's dictum of "divide the enemy and take the war

forward", and by doing so is also trying to play India against the West. In their analysis, India supports the parties whereas the US and UK are sympathetic to the king.

The reported convergence of Indian, British and American interest to get the palace and the parties together means that there is now considerable international pressure to ensure that the situation in Nepal doesn't spiral out of control. The fact that Nepal was pretty high on the agenda of US Undersecretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca, during her visit to New Delhi must mean that the Americans and Indians are making efforts to coordinate Nepal policy.

Senior British officials who met King Gyanendra during his recent visit to London have reportedly advised that a rapprochement with the parties is not only desirable but essential in order to bolster the strength of constitutional forces against the Maoists. Interestingly, Western support for the king, the Maoists' insistence that they want to negotiate directly with the king, and the parties targeting the king in their street protests all have the same net result: it puts the king firmly into the political mainstream. Everyone within Nepal and outside seems to be waiting for King Gyanendra's next move.

The three-pronged battle for state power is deadlocked because each needs the help of the other to isolate the third, but none can agree on the terms because everyone wants to gain overall control over the others. There are

few signs of a tripartite or even a two-way agreement between any of the factions. The anti-monarchist Maoists and the king appear to have irreconcilable differences, but the king and the political party leadership could strike an accord if only the king gave the green light and agreed to bring the parties back within a constitutional framework.

The Maoists want a safe landing, but they can't agree to anything less than a constituent assembly since otherwise they will find it hard to explain to their own cadre what all the fighting was for. Both sides realise that there may be a military victory in this conflict, but it will leave the country in such ruin that it won't matter who won. ♦

Puskar Gautam is a political analyst. This comment was translated from his Nepali original.

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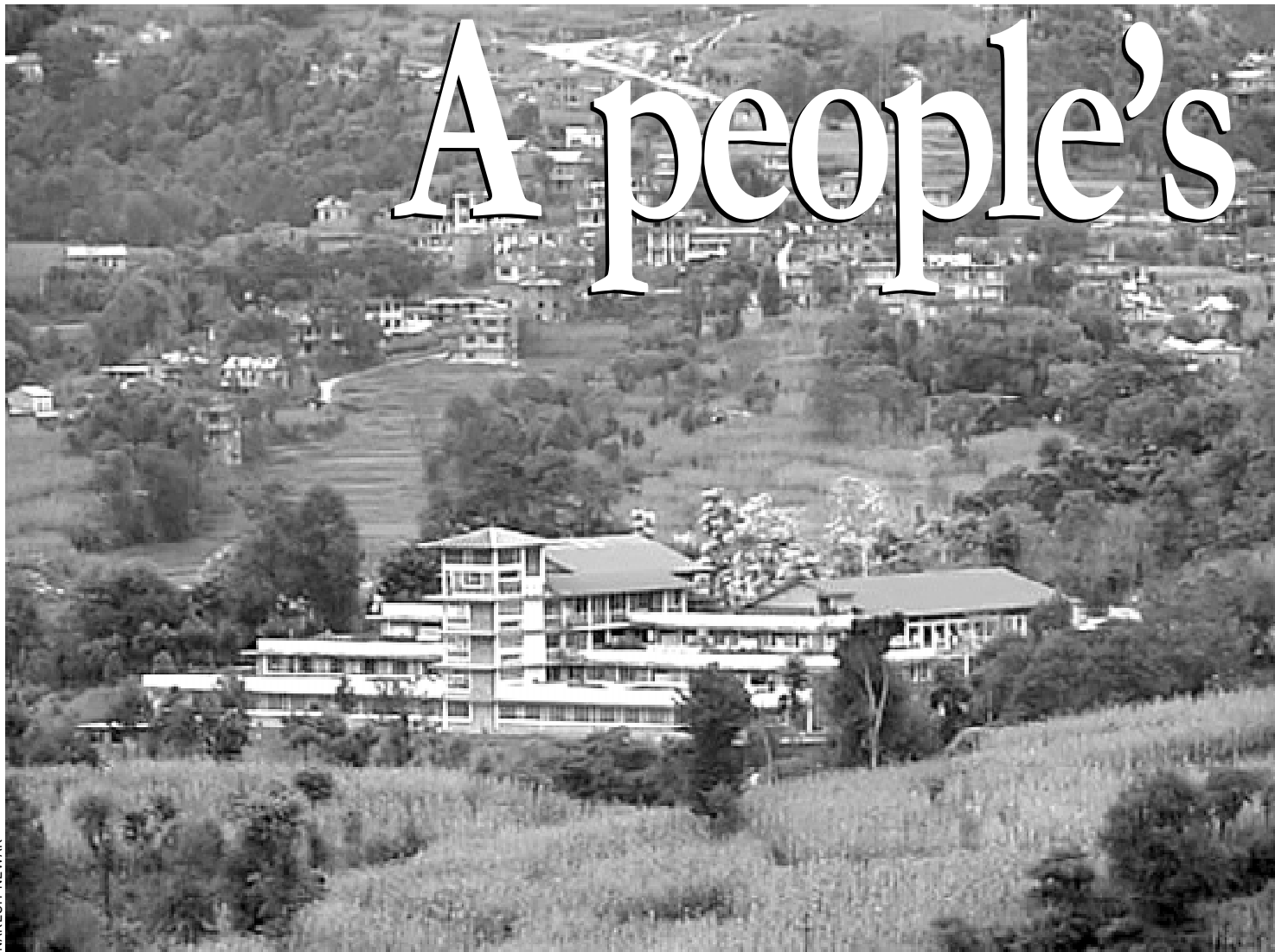
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A people's hospital

It took the determination of one man to build Nepal's best-run community hospital.



NARESH NEWAR

NARESH NEWAR
in DHULIKHEL

Land and wealth for Shiva Phatyang, a 50-year-old farmer from Dhulikhel. Yet he happily donated one ropani of his farm to Dhulikhel Hospital, saying that he was just returning it to his motherland. Seven years ago, when Phatyang met Dr Ram Shrestha (see pic, top right), he instantly trusted that the doctor would do far more for the people than any health minister ever had. "The moment I met him, I believed that he would fulfill his promise to build a great hospital for us," recalls Phatyang.

The farmer was among 23 Dhulikhel residents who donated 28 ropanies of land to build one of Nepal's first community hospitals. What began in 1996 with just two rooms, is now a sprawling facility run by a dedicated team of some

130 medical personnel. The modern hospital today treats more than 59,000 patients every year from several surrounding districts. And as a community hospital, it provides patients with high quality treatment at a subsidised price.

Children under five and pregnant women receive free treatment. The hospital also has five outreach primary health care centres. Local communities and health workers are involved in planning and operating the centres. The Bolde station, 45km from Dhulikhel, serves about 30,000 villagers who come here from as far as Ramechhap and Sindhuli.

For the modest doctor who started it all, this is obviously a labour of love. Ram Shrestha firmly believes Nepalis are just as capable as anyone else of running things efficiently. "We don't have

a culture of giving the disadvantaged an equal opportunity to get ahead in life. We have to change that," he told us.

Shrestha himself got that opportunity and has made full use of it to help his community. He is from a farming family in Dhulikhel, and after graduating from Amrit Science Campus in Kathmandu, he applied to 40 universities around the world for a scholarship in medicine. The only positive response came from the University of Vienna, but that came with a condition: he would only receive a study grant if he learned to speak and write German fluently within 21 months.

Shrestha took private lessons in German and practiced in Vienna's parks, pubs and university premises: within three months he was speaking German

fluently. He applied himself to his degree with the same determination, but his professor told him that it was impossible to complete the seven-year MD course in just five. Shrestha took the matter to court with help of the student union and won. The university granted him his medical degree in five years, and it took another 12 years to for him to earn the Facharzt.

"Now I even dream in German," jokes the 43-year-old doctor as he operates on a patient with a severe gastric obstruction (see pic, p5). The Austrian connection has been helpful in getting Dhulikhel Hospital started with a grant from the Vorarlberg-based Nepal Med Austria and support from Dhulikhel municipality and Dhulikhel Health Services



Association.

At the end of the five-hour operation, 50-year old Man Bahadur Nepali is out of danger. "Surgery is my hobby, it helps to relieve the pressure," Ram Shrestha says with a smile in his eyes above the mask. Everyone at the hospital wants to be operated on by 'Dr Ram', and he has a full roster of patients to treat, as well as lecturing medical students and attending administrative meetings.

At present he is occupied not only with saving lives, but also with how to raise the Rs 130 million needed to run the hospital from 2005. Finances are a recurring worry. While the hospital generates some income through patient fees, a major chunk is dependent on international donors. Medical equipment and infrastructure don't come cheap.

Once a year, Shrestha spends two weeks in Austria to raise funds through lectures and programs. He is a popular draw on the European medical speaking circuit and his life has even been the subject of documentary films in Austria, Germany, France, Switzerland, Holland and Luxembourg. A few young German students were so inspired by his story that they raised about 15,000 euros last year by cycling from Germany to Beijing and Kathmandu.

For those of us who are used to dirty, smelly and dark hospitals, Dhulikhel Hospital is literally a breath of fresh air. It is bright, airy, and spotlessly clean. Patients who cannot read are asked to follow coloured strips of black, yellow and red paths for their various treatments. At

HERE AND THERE

by DANIEL LAK

In a state of permanent war



It's not Nepal's uniqueness that should ever worry us, however infuriating it may be that the local elite and opinion formers seem unable to learn from the mistakes of others. No, it's the way that the downward spiral in the kingdom bears far too much resemblance to the pace of life elsewhere, with few of the other mitigating and compensating elements.

Consider for example what some fear is potentially the country's lapse into the state of 'permanent war' which has been the situation in the United States and other Western societies since the Al Qaeda attacks of 11 September, 2001. President Bush's war on terror, lately extended by now-discredited reasoning to Iraq, has been used to put the United States on a permanent war footing—a situation emulated by many of her allies, however reluctantly.

Scholars who devised the notion of 'permanent war' come largely from the political left. But they echo the uneasy warnings of the Republican president and war hero, General Eisenhower, who said in the 1950s that the 'military-industrial complex' was the biggest threat to American freedom and democracy. Bigger by far, the president privately believed, than the doomed ideology of Soviet communism. Eisenhower's chilling words went largely unheeded at the time and the architects of permanent war prevailed in ostensibly left of centre administrations, headed by John F Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, to undertake military adventures in South East Asia. It was the 'war on terror' as seen then, a massive deployment of men and technology against an ephemeral foe—communism—that could not be beaten by such means. Nonetheless, many, many members of Eisenhower's military industrial complex were enriched and empowered. Never mind the 50,000 American dead or the millions of Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians who were killed. Never mind the social destruction. That war was good for business.

Permanent war receded, although military adventurism continued in



tiny, sometimes ludicrous hotspots like Grenada, the Falkland Islands and Panama. When the big powers weren't so engaged, there were myriad smaller and local conflicts to keep up the corporate cash flow. Angola, Mozambique, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Sudan, Georgia, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Sierra Leone, Liberia and countless other post colonial places were kept awash in arms and materiel so that fighting could continue. Arms merchants, military consultants and troubleshooters, not to mention humanitarian types and journalists, had a happy time of it. Or at least, were kept gainfully employed.

Then 11 September: a shocking and outrageous event that clearly demanded stern, comprehensive responses. But instead of constructive engagement, improved and infinitely more subtle intelligence gathering and a charm offensive to the terrorists' core constituency, we got—yes—

We shouldn't let the military-industrial complex get a permanent place in our lives.

permanent war. Just check the increase in share prices for the likes of Raytheon, Colt, British Aerospace and others to see why. Look at the soaring value of the security industry and the continuing privatisation of the US and British military's support functions, a new grab bag of opportunity worth an estimated half a trillion dollars a year.

So does the breakdown of the peace process here and the 'securitising' of Nepali society mean that we're embarking on our own version of permanent war, with all that implies? Ever stricter security measures, the military playing a prominent role in everyday life, larger and larger sums of money on arms and training, funds denied to development or attacks on the root causes of insurgency, the marginalisation of dissent and democracy and—perhaps most ominously—a growing role for a shadowy, unaccountable band of foreign advisors who make aid workers seem positively transparent by comparison... is this what's happening in Nepal?

Not quite. Not yet. Not if a brave media, human rights community and civil society can come together to articulate their desire for peace, sustainable development and real social change through democratic and consultative means. That's self-evidently what almost everyone wants, whether insurgent, soldier, shopkeeper, activist or politician. So it's time to get on with it, before the military industrial complex—in whatever form—comes looking for a permanent place in our lives. ♦



NARESH NEWAR

lunchtime Shrestha eats the same free meal which is served to patients, paid for by various corporations and business people in Kathmandu who have been impressed by his dedication.

Ram Shrestha has made sure the hospital doesn't just look clean, but uses a system of treating hospital wastes and effluents. When the Ministry of Health Supervision Team visited the hospital in January 1998, it was so impressed that it described the hospital as "exceeding the national standards" and granted it permanent status as a Centre of Excellence to provide

comprehensive preventive and curative services. Dhulikhel is also the only medical centre in Nepal with a Kevlar airflow system which streams germ-free air into all operation theatres.

Under Shrestha's leadership, his medical and administrative team have brought the hospital up to international standards, even persuading the University of Vienna in Austria to grant recognition for the clinical experiences of their medical students interning at Dhulikhel Hospital. Several students from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France and the USA have

completed their medical electives here, and the hospital is such a showcase that the government brings around foreign dignitaries for visits. Austria's Minister of State, the World Bank's head of the health sector, the Health Minister of Sri Lanka and Kathmandu-based ambassadors have all come through.

Some in Kathmandu's cynical circles have accused Ram Shrestha of establishing a 'personality cult', and say he is too closely identified with his institution. Shrestha doesn't let those comments worry him, or the praise distract him from his work. He says: "This hospital now has a life of its own." ♦

DOMESTIC BRIEFS

Condemnation

Amnesty International has condemned Monday's series of explosions in Kathmandu Valley that left one schoolboy dead and injured more than a dozen others. In its press statement, the London-based human rights organisation said that the timing and places chosen for the blasts could have resulted into more civilian casualties. "Given the bombs went off between 9 and 10.30 in the morning—just as offices were opening—we are concerned that these bombings were indiscriminate and likely to kill or injure civilians. We question whether sufficient measures had been taken to prevent such casualties," it said. The explosions happened at six government offices in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. Amnesty also condemned the killing of a journalist and teacher, Gyanendra Khadka, in Sindhapalchok.

Irrigation

Under intense donor pressure, the government has finally implemented the new irrigation policy that has three main components:

- To declare irrigation areas in the country. The Department of Irrigation says of the around 1.8 million hectares irrigable land, only one million has been irrigated, with 40 percent of the land receiving year round irrigation. The National Water Plan's draft shows that only 700,000 hectares of land was irrigated in 2001.
- The second, which has drawn much controversy, is the issue of subsidies. The new policy has done away with subsidies but farmers believe the move will adversely affect Nepal's agro-production. Tarai consumers are complaining that competitors from India's Uttar Pradesh and Bihar will flood the market with cheaper produce since the Indian government subsidises irrigation facilities for its farmers.
- The third point of the policy is the priorities of water use. This means upstream

users of water are guaranteed that they will get their fair share before water is channelled downstream.

Exit Karcher, enter Kahane

Matthew Kahane is the new UN resident coordinator, replacing Henning Karcher who has retired. Kahane presented his credentials to Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa this week. From March 2000 until recently, Kahane served as UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator in Tajikistan and has served with UNDP in Sri Lanka.

Ring for peace

A newly-formed coalition of activists 'Children as Zone of Peace' has announced a 'Ring for Peace' program (*Shanti ko Ghanti*) on International Peace Day, 21 September. For two minutes, the whole country will echo with the sound of bells. As Radio Nepal broadcasts the noon peals of Ghanta Ghar, everyone will start to ring temple bells, doorbells, whistles, car and motorcycle horns and even bang their pans. "It's a symbolic wake-up call to urge the warring sides to refrain from involving children in conflict," says the coalition. The call came on a week that at least four children were killed in bomb blasts or in crossfire. The UN has declared 2001-2010 as the international decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for children.

Top boss award

A 12-member board of advisors for 'The Boss Top 10 Awards' met last week and decided on the format for the financial and qualitative analysis of participants in the top 10 awards for Nepali businesses and entrepreneurship. *The Boss* magazine, which is sponsoring the awards, has sent the application form to Nepali companies, and says there has been a good response so far. Qualitative analysis and interviews will start this week.

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Survivor

NARESH NEWAR

Durga Rajbansi lives in constant fear of men. Ever since two years ago, when she left her home in Diglibazar village, Jhapa to come to Kathmandu in search of a job, she has been victimised by them. She doesn't trust them anymore.

Durga breaks down and cries many times when we talk to her, and hugs her infant son protectively as she speaks in a low voice about the cruelty she has seen in her short life.

Her sister and brother-in-law found Durga a job in a Koteswor carpet factory. The owner promised free meals, a place to stay and Rs 20 for every kilo of wool she spun. Some days, Durga worked 21 hours from 4-1AM, determined to quickly earn enough money so that she could go back home with her savings. But the job was a trap.

Six months later, Durga had earned Rs 15,000 but the carpet factory owner refused to pay her. At Dasai year before last, she asked the owner for a few hundred rupees to buy new clothes. But he said it was Durga who owed him Rs 1,200 for food and lodging.

She had no money, and was then locked up in a dirty room and told she would not be released until she paid up. "It was worse than a prison. I could hardly breathe, and I was starving," recalls Durga. After five days, 20-year-old Hari Tamang who also worked in the same factory, offered to buy Rajbansi from the owner for Rs 1,200, saying that he wanted to marry her.

"I had no choice but to go with

A two-year nightmare of slavery ends for Durga Rajbansi, and for the first time in her life she dares to hope.

Crusader

Renu Sharma and a group of woman lawyers at the Women's Foundation are preparing their case to find justice for Durga Rajbansi. Fifteen years ago, when they were still schoolgirls, Renu and her friends started sheltering survivors of violence and providing legal assistance to them. Women survivors were given education and training skills to help them get a new start on life.

"The major challenge is that our legal system lacks strong laws against violence on girls and women," says Renu. The perpetrators are released, and they just go back to their old ways of beating up women. She knows that many of those she puts behind bars are likely to come after her for revenge. A sex trafficking gang once surrounded her and a friend in Indra Chowk and demanded that she withdraw her case against them. She left one of her companions with them, and ran to Hanuman Dhoka police station. Renu turned the tables on the men and had them arrested.

Renu and her family know they put themselves at risk, but they have taken precautions. "We have all been trained in martial arts and have to be alert all the time," she says. Her shelter had to be moved to five different places after the activists were attacked by men accused of beating and exploiting their wives, daughters, or employees. The Women's Foundation now has branches in 12 districts.

(Contact: 4423257 Email: tara@tara.wlink.com)

him. I was so afraid that the owner would call the police and put me in prison," Durga recalled. "I didn't know I would have been better off locked up in that room." Hari never intended to marry her. He just wanted to use her as collateral, farming her off to other carpet factories and living off her earnings as he had been doing with other women for a decade.

Hari found her a new job at another carpet factory in Bhaktapur where he borrowed Rs 9,000 from the owner and told him he could work Durga like a slave until she

repaid his debt. "I forgave him all the time, just hoping that he would marry me soon," says Durga about Hari. After working long hours, Durga often returned to their room to find Hari with other women. It took two long hard months for Durga to earn enough to pay back the owner Hari's loan.

A month later, they married at Dakshinkali. "I thought my life would be better after all," she told us. But things were about to get much worse. Hari borrowed another Rs 5,000 from a Gokarna carpet factory and disappeared. She

was left at the mercy of the owner. One night, while she was sleeping, he knocked on her door saying he had to discuss something important. As soon as she opened the door, a group of six or seven men came in and raped her.

The villagers heard her screams and came to investigate, but were told by the owner she was a prostitute who lured men to her room when her husband was away. A month later, Hari turned up and started treating her well. He even took the rape case up with the police, but they said that his wife was a prostitute. The couple moved to Jorpati where Durga found work in a carpet

factory and Hari got a job as a house painter. She gave birth to her son and for the first time hoped that this was when her life would get better.

Within a week of her delivery, Durga found out Hari was seeing another woman. When she confronted him, he beat her up, kicking her face and stomach until she fainted and had to be hospitalised. When she came back to her room, Hari had left, and told all the neighbours he abandoned her because she had AIDS.

The landlord locked her out, forcing Durga to live on the streets begging for food and

clothes for 10 days. Last week, an elderly man approached her and asked what was she doing in the rain without any clothes for her child. After listening to her story, he gave Durga the address of the Women's Foundation, which helps survivors of social violence. It took her two days to find the office. Social workers took her in and are working on tracing the carpet factories and the men who owned them. "I'm now at peace, I just hope nobody else suffers what I did," says Durga breaking down at the end of her story. But for the first time in long while, they are not tears of sorrow. ♦



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INTERVIEW

The spirit of the thing

In the year that Manvendra Singh has been the sales manager in Nepal for Seagram Manufacturing Ltd, he has seen the company's profits double. The teetotaler talked to *Nepali Times* about branding, anticipation of Dasai sales and the effect of politics on consumption patterns.

Nepali Times: Are Nepalis drinking more?

Manvendra Singh: Yes, I think so. It is traditional, and it is accepted. In general, Nepalis don't lose control. The most important thing is that they know how much they can drink and how to carry themselves. 'Drink responsibly' is what we say.

Seagram's has mastered the market for brown spirits. How did you do it?

Since we come from a multinational background, our style of working is a bit different from domestic companies. We are very selective. We never compromise on quality and we have a lot of patience. The company is comparatively very new, just five to six years old in India as well, but we have swept the market because of our organisation, ethics and the environment in which the company operates. We don't spend a lot on advertising, but in whatever we do we try to maintain and sustain the quality of Seagram's Royal Stag. For example, cricket was not a very popular game in Nepal, so we tried to bring the fervour to the country and it really clicked. People appreciated it and now there is more involvement with cricket in Nepal, especially with the recent under-19 international victory.

Wouldn't football have been a better choice than cricket?

We have three themes with Royal Stag. We're associated with Jai Nepal, the best cinema in the country, where we have special Royal Stag Mega Movies premieres. Another theme is Royal Stag Mega Music: we sponsored Jazzmandu 2003. Mega Cricket was a relatively new concept for our brand because we were trying to cash in on the Cricket World Cup fever, which is now over.

How much has the ban on TV advertising affected your sales?

We are immune to these things because in most countries, even in India, advertising alcohol on TV is not allowed. To some extent, this is reasonable. We encourage responsible drinking. We don't want to push our brand by saying that consumers should have more and more. Besides, we have liberty in the print media and are satisfied with that. Basically, it is not advertising that sells the brand. It should be the quality of the product. Advertising is done according to need.

Does the arrival of Dasai mean a spike in sales?

A culture that condones, even encourages, alcohol consumption during festivities is an advantage. But the macro-environment is also important. Until the country is in a stable position no one will really be in the mood. Normally, Dasai is really good for sales. But this year it hinges on the political situation. The festival also arrives with colder weather, when people enjoy their drink more.

How do you intend to stay on top?

Teamwork. Once the quality of the product is up to standard and we are satisfied, we can deliver it to our consumers. Then our brand people think about what message should be conveyed by the product. The sales force implement directives from the senior management. And then step in one of our most important trade partners—the distributors, wholesalers and retailers. It's all teamwork.

Has the global trend towards wine arrived in Nepal too?

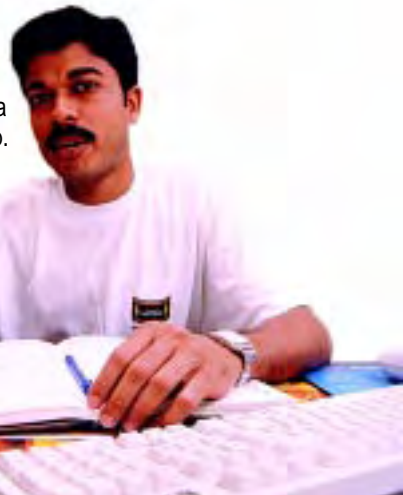
We import approximately 40 containers of wine, which is about 40,000 cases a year—quite a large consumption given the geographical area of Nepal. Per capita consumption is quite high compared to other third world countries. To follow this trend, we will soon be launching Jacob's Creek wine. It makes sense to have an alternative to hard drinks. Our main target consumer is the upper middle class, aged from 25 to 40. Since Jacob's Creek is a young brand, it is an ambitious and aspirational one.

You say you want to increase sales, but also want customers to drink responsibly. How do you reconcile the two?

We want to get the consumer the best product available in the market. We emphasise the quality of the grain part of the whisky. Grain-based whisky mixed with malts is not that hard. Of course it's a whisky, but above all it is a quality product.

So how come you don't drink yourself?

Although I don't drink our products I have been trained to detect the qualities of a good whisky: colour and aroma. Being a non-drinker is not a real handicap.



MIN. BAIRACHARYA

STRICTLY BUSINESS

 by **ASHUTOSH TIWARI**


So you are a BDS provider...

Explicating NGO and donor jargon.

What do you make of Nepalis who introduce themselves as "BDS providers"? I, for one, would be quite confused. Are these really entrepreneurs and businesspeople—the ones who sell specific, professional services to private sector firms, and, as such, have no choice but to face the rough-and-tumble of the marketplace? Or, are they simply smooth-talking, donor-savvy, Shyam-of-all-trades with mile-wide smiles who have simply mastered the fine art of uttering the magic sentence "I am a BDS provider" so that they can seduce a lazily gullible donor agency to throw money at them?

Such questions must take an urgent tone now as more donor agencies jump in to partner—rather indiscriminately, it appears—with NGOs and private firms in using what they call Business Development Services (BDS) to raise both income and employment rates across Nepal.

My fear is that unless donor agencies working to strengthen the service sector in a commercially viable manner, start collaborating more by following the fundamentals of how to help develop markets for services, in a



few years they may be staring at distortions and inefficiencies in the markets. The so-called "BDS providers" will be unable to function without additional subsidies.

The very term BDS, referring to a bundle of services such as consulting, auditing, marketing, designing and other such must-have business intangibles, may mean different things to different people, thereby eventually creating a big conceptual confusion. To avoid such a scenario, I suggest the following to all those involved in—as the jargon goes—BDS market development in both urban and rural

settings across Nepal.

Donor coordination: Internationally, donor agencies have joined forces to put out a booklet that serves as a guideline on how to develop commercially vibrant service markets for businesses in developing countries. Nationally, however, donor coordination meetings are notorious for more style than substance. Conceptually challenging questions are avoided and everyone is eager to get along with everyone else.

In some cases, participants even cancel meetings at the last minute, showing that no matter how they harp about the importance of sharing information and knowledge, they have neither the time nor the interest to actually learn from one another. Still, with the recent advent of an informal BDS Practitioners' Forum, there is hope that at the very least, there will be an agreement on what different terms mean so that conversations and dialogues among donors will be conceptually consistent.

Principles matter:

Some donors, especially those whose strengths are in the area of relief provision, seem to think that most

BDS principles do not apply when they work with rural and urban businesses in Nepal. True, in practice, Nepal's case may present certain kinks to the standard principles. That's to be expected. But this is no excuse to throw the principles out the window and go down one's own idiosyncratic path, just to return later to lump one's activities under the BDS umbrella.

The principles, derived from basic micro- and macroeconomic reasoning and based on incentives, can be applied when working with, as the International Committee of Donor Agencies (1998) puts it, "any type of enterprise, anywhere in the world". That is why, starting from the principles, the variations in practice due to Nepal's geographical or institutional uniqueness should be taken up by publications which put out ideas that pose conceptual challenges to the existing theories.

These are two ways donor agencies can learn to be less impressed by those who identify themselves—not by their singular professional competence but—by that commercially meaningless sentence: "I am a BDS provider". ♦

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With Dasai just around the corner, let's check out the wardrobe options for the Nepali Man.

VIRGO BLACK

Whether he be tricked out in *daura-surwal* and Nepali *topi* in the middle hills, in down-jacket and leggings leading a trekking group in the higher climes or urbanely attired for the city, the average Nepali male is a snazzy dresser. Fashions catch on fast in the cities and towns where access to cinema and in more recent times, TV, is easily available. Aficionados of the Indian *filmi-duniya*, whether in the local cinema or off the idiot-box, garner ideas straight off the screen. Hence, a plethora of black-n-white shirts currently to be seen on male backs, at least in the cities and towns.

So what makes a dapper dresser now that the age of grunge is out?

Let's define what is meant by the terms 'casual', 'smart-casual', 'informal' and 'formal'.

'Casual' generally means comfortably dressed for lounging about. This could mean a pair of shorts, pair of jeans or old trousers, a sarong or pajamas worn with a loose t-shirt, any old shirt be it bush or otherwise worn hanging loosely over the pants and a pair of sandals. It's the kind of gear one might wear on a picnic, on a hike or just hanging about the house.

'Smart-casual' means you attend someone's bash attired a little more smartly, yet casually. Shorts, therefore, of any length are out. So are chappals and track

shoes for, goodness knows, like the blue denims, these are here to stay. Bush and even t-shirts are acceptable though short or full-sleeved shirts tucked into regular trousers would be more expected. And a pair of neatly socked and shod feet if not in shoes, at least in smart sandals.

'Informal' does not mean come-as-you-are. No, no, no, no. It means 'wear-a-suit-and-tie' and is the expected formula for things like weddings, engagements, business meetings in the upper echelons of management or if you're employed in one of the classier hotels or restaurants.

And then there's 'formal' wear. That really means a tuxedo or at the very least, a black suit with frilly shirt and a black or white tie or a cravat. These occasions are rare in Kathmandu but appear to be gaining some popularity in the wealthier or aspiring echelons of society. If you don't have these gew-gaws you can always get away wearing your national dress.

For casual and smart-casual wear there is nothing worthier than blue jeans. Denims have been around for a long, long time and it looks like they're here to stay. Everyone has to have a pair or two...or three, and just about anything goes with them. T-shirts, body-fit for those with the youth and pecs to go with them, the concealing 'bush' variety for those

of us over-the-hill, so to speak.

The casual cut of the blue jeans has extended not only to copies in all shades of denim but to other fabrics with satin and velvet finish and rather popularly, to the 'camouflage' in a variety of combinations that go way beyond the greens and browns of the forest! One can even buy t-shirts in similar camouflage to go with the pants. The jean-jacket is still around though the style surfaces more in brushed velvet or coloured cottons than in the traditional blue denim. I know a friend who tried to get around the no-no of 'informal' norms by constructing a coat of denim and managed to get away with it!

The most eye-catching item of wear appears to be the shirt. Lighter complexioned men have a wider range of colour choice than those of a darker hue. The latter should avoid wearing certain shades of red because it tends to turn one's complexion to a rather unhealthy shade of purple. Pastel shades best become the majority of us who subscribe to the olive or wheatish skin tones. Black and white or combinations of both are clean, always in fashion and tend to make the larger specimens among us look somewhat slimmer.

Having selected your shirt, you don't need a wide range of trousers. Black will go with just about any colour under the sun including brown. Brown,

depending on the particular shade, has its limitations to pastel shades and derivatives of brown, yellows, creams, greens and the like. Gray trousers go well with shades of blue and match well with shirts in various hues of pink. Blue goes well with lighter shades of the same, some pinks and daringly with yellow. Avoid the dowdy mismatching of browns with grays or reds. It's good to refer to a colour chart even if you're not the arty sort.

Socks, unless they're white sports types and worn with jeans or casual trousers and track shoes, should match the colour of the trousers and though there is a range of coloured shoes now available to us men, most of us still hang on to the standard of black and brown, the former being the far more versatile inasmuch as going with just about any choice of clothing you choose to wear, except for brown. If you're wearing brown trousers or anything in the variety that tends towards that shade, use a pair of brown shoes. I have a pair of fancy blue shoes I picked up on recent travels but unless I'm wearing a pair of blue or gray pants, they sit on a shelf collecting dust. And yes, one last thing: match your belt to your shoes. ♦

Virgo Black is the pseudonym of a longtime denizen of Kathmandu with a lot of international and domestic travel underneath his voluminous belt.



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Tailored for Nepalis

Most Nepali men can be *sukul gundas*, which means that they are smart dressers.

SRADDHA BASNYAT

Dasai is a time for Nepalis to get a new set of clothes. Thanks to rapid globalisation Nepali men are breaking through the fashion glass ceiling that has long dictated women have couture and men have clothes.

No offence, but the circa 1970s safari suit, the too-tight *daura suruwal* and that corporate uniform of pleated trousers and polyester shirts accessorised with a garish tie, gilt tie pin, fake Rolex and white tennis socks peeping out from above leather shoes just have to go.

It just takes a well-heeled courageous step to go from mundane to marvellous. Yes, even here in Kathmandu where *Men in Blacks* suits seem to be *de rigueur* for weddings and 'casual' translates to khakis or jeans teamed with a white t-shirt printed with a billboard size logo featuring fake crocodiles. Whilst most wallets cannot afford the real thing it's important to be able to tell a bad fake from a good one. Just like it is to find a good men's tailor who knows his inseam from his interlock.

The valley's Savile Row is definitely Putalisadak. Both sides of the street are lined with readymade and tailoring centres that cater exclusively for men. Most stock Indian and foreign fabric along with Indian 'masters' who cut the pattern and attend to fittings. Big plate glass windows reveal clean, polished interiors—not a frill or furbelow in sight—in fact everything seems to spell out this is a man's world. These are safe havens where they can mull over an Italian silk double-breasted affair like Al Pacino in *Godfather*, or the Achhkan suit that Shah Rukh Khan sported in his



last blockbuster.

With 25 years of menswear experience behind them, Dormeuil set up shop here six years ago. Kathmandu customers have become a lot more knowledgeable says manager Anil Bajracharya, "In the old days, customers bought whatever we ordered. Today, they demand brands like Yves Saint Laurent, Versace, Hugo Boss, Christian Dior, Pierre Cardin... You name it, and we have the guaranteed originals." He is confident that his salesmen can help customers pick exactly what they want. Measuring tape draped for ready access around the neck, they help colour blind customers settle on a complimentary shade of fabric. After the design is finalised, the in-house tailors can have a suit ready in 24 hours. A good suit costs Rs 5,000 and up, but the Dasai discount helps matters. Splurge on a stylish tie with the difference.

Just across the street, The Raymond Shop stocks the hugely popular Indian range. This is exclusive Raymond territory and no other brand is let in the door, unless worn by a customer. Park Avenue, a readymade line in suits and trousers is available in the standard colours. For a more relaxed fit, they have Parx, trendy casual wear including t-shirts, jeans and cargo pants. But if made-to-order is what you want, manager Rameshwor Shrestha guarantees the best work in town using only Raymond's material—right down to the thread. For Dasai, gift vouchers ranging from Rs 100-1000 should prod more stubborn men into a new look.

continued → p15

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Cancún arm-twisting

Pressure groups urge the West to be transparent and fair at the WTO meeting this week.

SANJAY SURI in LONDON
A group of leading development organisations have asked for an end to “arm-twisting” tactics at the meeting of trade ministers in Cancún. The Britain-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have asked Patricia Hewitt, the British Trade Secretary to ensure transparency and fairness at the talks this week. In doing so, they have joined 11 African nations which came up with a similar demand three weeks ago. However, their proposals have not been backed by the European Union or the United States.

The demand was given a new immediacy after it won backing from former WTO ambassador for the Dominican Republic, Federico Cuello. He said that he was speaking from first-hand experience of such tactics. The developing countries in the WTO “are not free to speak nor to associate,” Cuello said at a meeting organised by the NGOs to present their demands. The NGO group, which includes ActionAid, Christian Aid, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, World Development

Movement, and WWF-UK, has presented a set of practical suggestions to ensure greater transparency in negotiations at Cancún. These suggestions include:
 • All negotiating meetings should be announced at least six hours in advance to the entire membership through a daily calendar.
 • No country is excluded from meetings.
 • The chairs of negotiations should be neutral and elected by all the member countries, not handpicked by rich nations. At present there is an increasing reliance on chairpersons, which

gives unprecedented power to handpicked individuals.
 • Ministerial meetings cannot be extended without warning or agreement. There must be a cut-off time because small delegations have no capacity to stagger their human resources.
 • Negotiators should be allowed time to eat and sleep. At Doha some meetings continued 38 hours at a stretch.
 • Negotiating documents should accurately reflect the views of all WTO members, and not just the EU and the US. The WTO secretariat must be neutral when members are in disagreement.
 “We have witnessed first hand at Doha how the WTO process is manipulated by strong countries,” Tom Crompton from WWF-UK said. “We have had too many of these mini-ministerial meetings of hand-picked ministers,” he continued. “This has been done in a way that excluded the vast majority of WTO members.”
 EU officials have said that the demands made by the group of NGOs cannot be met. “The

rejoinder is that it is difficult to manage the decision-making process for 146 countries,” Crompton acknowledged. “But our proposals are very specific, procedural things.”
 At Doha, he explained, ministerial meetings were extended, and many ministers from smaller countries had to leave because they could not prolong their stay. “This may sound a trivial procedural matter, but meetings must finish when scheduled,” he said.
 “Developing countries are hopelessly out-gunned from the start,” says Peter Hardstaff from the World Development Movement.
 “At negotiations in Doha, the EU had over 500 delegates, Mauritius two and Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere had none. The whole system should be geared to helping these countries have a voice, yet it consistently acts to silence them. The bullying behaviour and lack of real rules at the WTO would disgrace a village bowls club.”
 The NGO arguments have been bolstered by the publication

of a book *Behind the Scenes* by WTO watchers Fatoumata Jawara and Aileen Kwa. “Arm-twisting through a combination of threats and inducements to countries and ambassadors was a key feature of the process leading to the ‘agreement’ in Doha,” the authors say.
 “Only the rich have real leverage, while most developing countries are so desperate for trade opportunities, aid, debt reduction etc that they have little choice but to succumb.”
 The NGO report claims that the US maintains a list of ‘unhelpful’ developing country trade negotiators. It says that the supposedly neutral WTO secretariat has often misinformed developing countries about the position of others.
 The report says that at the previous round, Tanzania, like some other countries, “caved in under pressure and succumbed to the offer of a few crumbs”. But only a week later the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suddenly announced that Tanzania would receive external debt relief of three billion dollars over time”. ♦ (IPS)

OPINION by JOSEPH S NYE, JR

9.11.2001+2

The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington of September 11 2001 profoundly changed the US, spawning a new focus on foreign policy. The Bush administration’s new national security strategy, issued in September 2002, identifies the combination of terrorism, rogue states, and weapons of mass destruction as the primary threat confronting America. Most people agree with the new focus of American foreign policy, but debate the means by which it is carried out. Is the threat so great that America must act alone, or should the US act only with the support of international institutions, even if that holds the country back? Events in Iraq illustrate this debate, but it has deeper roots. In his 2000 election campaign, George W. Bush said about America, “If we are an arrogant nation, they’ll view us that way, but if we’re a humble nation, they’ll respect us.” He was right, but unfortunately many of America’s friends saw the first eight months of his administration as arrogantly concerned with narrow American interests, focused on military power, and dismissive of treaties, norms, and multilateralism. The administration’s peremptory announcement that the Kyoto Protocol on global climate change was “dead” contributed to a reaction from other countries that cost the US its seat on the UN Human Rights Commission. September 11th supposedly changed all that. Congress finally paid America’s UN dues, and the president turned his efforts to building a coalition against terrorism. But the rapid success of the war in Afghanistan led some in the administration and some commentators to conclude that unilateralism works. The columnist Charles Krauthammer, for example, urges a “new unilateralism” where America refuses to play the role of “docile international citizen” and



unashamedly pursues its own ends. The new unilateralists make a mistake in focusing too heavily on military power alone. True, America’s military power—backed up by a budget equivalent to the next eight countries combined—is essential to global stability, and an essential part of the response to terrorism. But the metaphor of war should not blind us to the fact that suppressing terrorism will take years of patient, unspectacular civilian cooperation with other countries in areas such as intelligence sharing, police work, tracing financial flows, and cooperation among customs officials. Military success in Afghanistan addressed the easiest part of the problem. Al Qaeda retains cells in some fifty countries. Rather than proving the unilateralists’ point, the partial nature of the success in Afghanistan illustrates the continuing need for cooperation. Similarly, it was much easier to win the war in Iraq than to win the peace. The problem for Americans in the 21st century is that more issues and forces than ever before are outside the control of even the most powerful state. What the attacks of September 11th demonstrated is that the information revolution and globalization, have changed world politics in a way that means Americans cannot achieve all their international goals acting alone. The US lacks both the international and domestic prerequisites to resolve conflicts internal to other societies, and to monitor and control transnational transactions that threaten Americans at home. On many of today’s key issues, such as international financial stability, drug smuggling, the spread of diseases, or global climate change, military power is ineffective. Indeed, its use can be counterproductive. America must instead mobilize international coalitions to address these shared threats and challenges. The willingness of others to cooperate depends in part on their own self-interest, but also on the attractiveness of American positions. That power to attract is what I call “soft power.” It means that others want what you want, and there is less need to use carrots and sticks to make others do what you want. Hard power grows out of a country’s military and economic might. Soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country’s

culture, ideals, and policies. Hard power will always remain vital, but soft power will become increasingly important in dealing with transnational issues whose resolution requires multilateral cooperation. To be sure, no large country can afford to be purely multilateralist, and sometimes the US must take the lead, as it did in Afghanistan. But in Iraq, President Bush should have followed his father’s example and built a broad international coalition. Now, as his administration returns to the UN to seek a new resolution that will enable other countries to contribute troops and resources for peacekeeping and reconstruction in Iraq, he is paying the price for the way he went to war. Granted, multilateralism can be used by smaller states to restrict American freedom of action, but this does not mean that it is not generally in American interests. By embedding US policies in multilateral frameworks, America can make its disproportionate power more legitimate and acceptable. Even well intentioned Americans are not immune to Lord Acton’s famous warning that power tends to corrupt. Learning to listen to others and to define US interests broadly to include global interests will be crucial to American soft power and whether others see the American preponderance as benign or not. The paradox of American power is that the largest power since Rome cannot achieve many of its objectives unilaterally in a global information age. America needs to pay more attention to soft power and to multilateral cooperation. That is the real lesson of September 11th. ♦ (Project Syndicate)

Joseph S Nye is dean of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and author of *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone*.



'Aid for trade'



JAMES DWOLFENSOHN
(World Bank)



HORST KOHLER
(IMF)



DONALD J. JOHNSTON
(OECD)



Ahead of the WTO meeting in Cancún this weekend, the chiefs of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development say the international community now has an opportunity to help the world's poor.

This week, trade ministers are gathered at Cancún to advance the Doha Development Agenda. They carry with them the aspirations of millions around the world whose hopes for economic advancement rest on opportunities in the global economy. Trade is a driving force for economic expansion in developed and developing countries alike. Promoting the growth of trade is essential for global economic prosperity. And the Doha negotiations are a central pillar of the global strategy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals: a strategy to reduce poverty by giving poor people the opportunity to help themselves.

Ambitions for Cancún must be commensurate with these objectives. We need a decisive break with trade policies that hurt economic development. Donors cannot provide aid to create development opportunities with one hand and then use trade restrictions to take these opportunities away with the other—and expect that their development dollars will be effective. Developing countries have an important responsibility in using the multilateral system to promote better integration among themselves and with the global economy. Their tariffs and nontariff barriers stand as major obstacles to their mutual trade.

All countries have an interest in a successful outcome—and all have a duty to promote a broad and balanced agenda. But appropriate action by the developed countries is crucial. In this regard, we applaud

the progress that has been made in negotiating public health exceptions under the TRIPS Agreement and encourage the parties at Cancún to build on the recent momentum in the talks on agriculture.

Agriculture is of particular importance to the economic prospects of many developing countries, and reforming the current practices in global farm trade holds perhaps the most immediate scope for bettering the livelihoods of the world's poor. Yet, developed countries impose tariffs on agriculture that are eight to 10 times higher than on industrial goods. Many continue to use various forms of export subsidies that drive down world prices and take markets away from farmers in poorer countries. In every sector except agriculture, these same countries long ago agreed to prohibit export subsidies. Agricultural support costs the average household in the EU, Japan, and United States more than a \$1,000 a year. Much of this support depresses rural incomes in developing countries while benefiting primarily the wealthiest farmers in rich countries, and does little to accomplish the environmental and rural community goals that developed countries strive to pursue.

Trade can be a powerful tool for development. To be fully effective, trade policy should be placed firmly within national strategies for development and poverty reduction, and be built

on a foundation of good governance. Realising the benefits of greater trade will require complementary efforts. On the supply side, this means investments in infrastructure necessary to ensure that the products of the poor can reach global markets and, in the longer run, investments in education. And it means policies to safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable in society. Both often require external technical and financial assistance. We are ready to help. All our organizations have stepped up efforts to provide "aid for trade" in support of a positive outcome of the Doha talks. Together, we have the mandates, the resources and the expertise to assist countries in managing the adjustment pressures that can be associated with more open trade.

But the key challenges now lie with governments. All have to do their part. Rich countries have to take the lead in areas now blocking the talks, particularly agriculture. Middle income countries have to contribute as well, reducing tariffs that affect not only their own citizens but other developing countries. And low-income countries, even as they receive more aid for trade and win more time to implement some WTO rules, have to assume new responsibilities of participation in the international system.

Working together the international community has an opportunity to help the world's poor. We should not let it slip away. ♦

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"The constitution is dead."

Excerpts from a comment by Baburam Bhattarai in *Nepal Samacharpatra*, 7 September

नेपाल समाचारपत्र

Many blame technical issues for the failure of the peace talks, but we believe that the entire range of national and international tension and class and political power-relations must be taken into consideration. Trifling matters do not decide the fate of talks that involve a people's rebellion which seeks to change a two-century-old monarchy.

The political agenda presented by the government and the national and international powers has a vested interest in retaining the king's power. The old regime under the leadership

of the king dilly-dallied and then came up with a hastily cobbled-together plan that spoke about progress and change in the government but just wanted all of the old power structures to remain intact.

Our agendas are poles apart and do not have an immediate meeting point. This was the main political difference that led to the failure of talks. The old regime is creating the illusion that there isn't much difference between the two political agendas. They even assure the people that a few additional rounds of talks will overcome differences.

Due to the struggle for people's rule, the majority understand that the monarchy and the army are the main barriers to institutional development. This is why we stressed the direct participation of the king or his representative in the talks. Instead, the king instead chose to stay behind the scenes to call the shots. When we were at a critical juncture he left the country on the excuse of a health check-up. His latest move proves that he is either playing into the hands of foreign powers or is involved in a conspiracy to misuse the talks as a means for selfish strategic gains. Whatever the circumstances, the king's role in the talks has been negative.

Even parliamentary forces did little other than offer lip service. It was ironic to see them wishing for the failure of the talks just so that they could once again have state-power. If only they had risen to the level of a constituent assembly, the king would have been under tremendous pressure and the incomplete agenda of 1950 would have been fulfilled today.

The monarchy is standing at its most critical juncture today. There is a strong possibility that the monarchy, which has already lost the peoples' support, will militarise with the help of a foreign power and launch a final fight for its existence. It will either declare military rule or use parliamentary forces as eyewash. If the king, ordered by foreign masters, appoints Sher Bahadur Deuba, Madhab Kumar Nepal or any parliamentary leader as the prime minister, their status will be no different from that of Lokendra Bahadur Chand and Surya Bahadur Thapa. The 1991 Constitution is dead and it will be impossible to revive it.

During delivery, the labour pain is severe, but soon a healthy and original people's rule is going to be born. It can't and won't be stopped.

MIN BAJRACHARYA



"Learn from past mistakes."

Excerpts of interview with Ram Chandra Poudel of Nepali Congress in *Deshantar*, 7 September

देशान्तर साप्ताहिक

Foreign pressure to patch up with the palace

It is reasonable on the foreigners' part to be concerned if our situation hampers their interest, but they have not influenced us.

Political goals

We do not intend to use the Maoists to defeat the king. The main goal is to realise democracy. The rebels can never be helpful in shaping democracy, they aim to destroy it. If the movement is successful, the constitution will become active and that will create parliament.

Past mistakes

We had no experience of state power before the 1990 Movement. In the last 12 years, we have accumulated some experience. When we look back, we realise the mistakes we made. Now, we would like to use that experience in nation building.

UML

Our party has not criticised Madhab Kumar Nepal, but I have differences with him. He has made three moves without consulting the other four parties. First, he ordered the activists not to come to Kathmandu when we all decided otherwise. Second, he has been talking about amending the 18-point agenda on his own. Third, without discussing it, he proposed a meeting with the king one-on-one to resolve the current crisis. His moves have sowed seeds of doubt.

Choosing an alternative to monarchy

The people have the right to choose but, given the political situation, we believe that the monarchy is a political necessity in this country. The day we think otherwise, we will start looking for alternatives. If anyone can convince us in this regard they are welcome, but even Prachanda and Baburam failed to do so. We believe we need the king because of the geopolitical situation of our country. He is also needed as a traditional unifying power that will keep the army and the people intact. We are talking about monarchy that is completely constitutional. We are still in the process national unification.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

Back to the killing fields

Prakash, 8 September

प्रकाश

Within two weeks of the end of the ceasefire, Nepal is once again a war torn nation. Helicopters are in action in Parbat, Baglung and several western hill districts. The villagers in Khotang, Pachthar, Taplejung and other districts in the east live in terror of indiscriminate arrests and killings. Reports are filtering in that innocent people have died in army action in Surkhet, Salyan and Lahan. The calls for independent investigation into the actions of the army have yet to be heeded. There is a palpable atmosphere of terror across the country.

In Taplejung Hangpang VDC, 18-year-old Mohan Gopal Gurung, a grade eight student at Saraswati Secondary School, was killed by an army patrol, according to a local human rights activist. Sources say his hands were tied and he was dragged to Chuwakhola bridge where he was found dead. Human rights activists have asked for an immediate investigation into the matter.

Politicians believe the brutality of this war will exceed previous levels. Since the end of the ceasefire, the government has imposed curfews in 35 districts. The people are keeping vigil, waiting for the next wave of attacks. The tragedy is that many think they will die at the hands of the army patrols who will write them off as rebels.

There are also reports that several party workers have been arrested after they were falsely accused of being Maoists. It is believed that Kamal Raj Bista, a member of Nepal Trade Union Federation, was arrested four days ago at Satdobato and locked up at Jawlakhel police station. Such indiscriminate arrests will only backfire against the government.

The Maoists have also intensified their attacks in the villages. People who do not support the party are beaten and not allowed to enter or leave their villages. The Maoists have prohibited members of other parties from running programs and activities. While the state rules with an iron fist in Kathmandu, the Maoists are doing the same in rural areas.

Revolution devours children

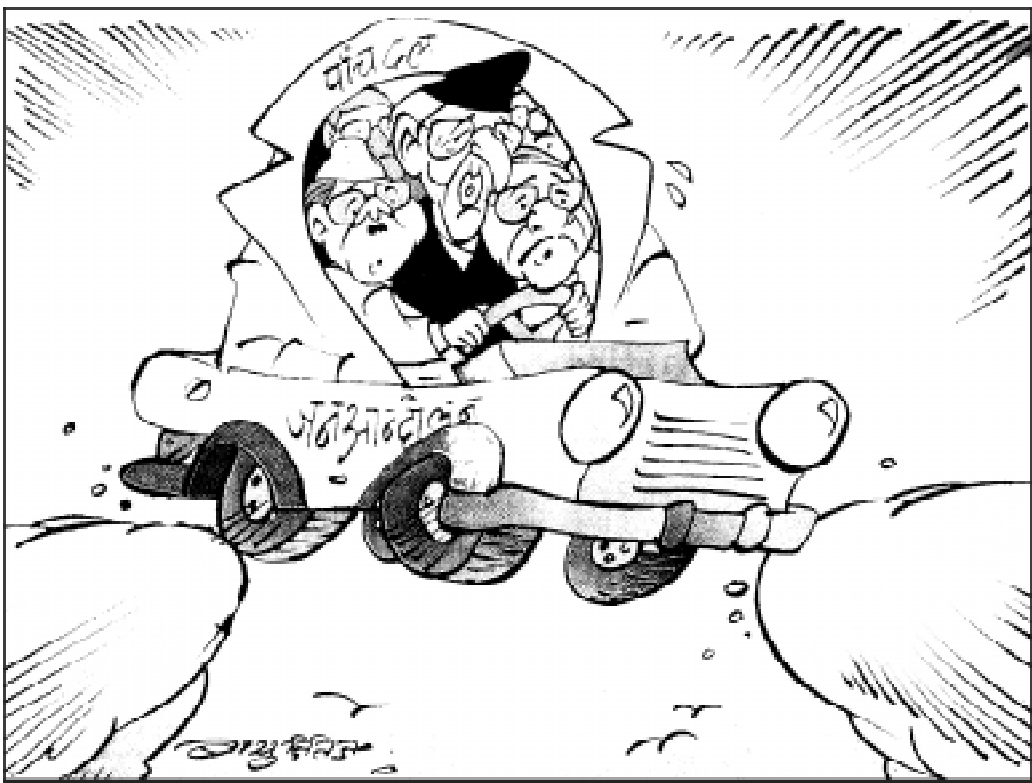
Kantipur, 10 September

कान्तिपुर

What kind of political game are the Maoists playing by targeting the innocent? We are not sure whether the Maoists will ever apologise for killing 12-year old schoolboy Dipak Gurung, or whether they will consider this just another minor incident of their 'people's war'. For now, the Maoists think they have gained political might and military strength by exploding bombs in public places. But the future will prove they were wrong.

The Maoists have put all the blame on the government for the failure of the peace talks. Even those sympathetic towards their ideals and politics are condemning their brutal and inhuman methods. What kind of image does this revolution portray by killing a young boy from an underprivileged family?

If the Maoists fail to apologise unconditionally to the parents and society, it will prove they don't care about their irresponsible behaviour. The Maoist organisation and its workers should realise that such irresponsibility will cost them public support.



Coat: Five parties
Car: People's Movement

स्पेसटाइम दैनिक Spacetime, 7 September

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"The country would not have been in this state if King Mahendra had lived just 10-15 more years."

- Mohan Gopal Khetan in *Ghatana Ra Bichaar*, 10 September

Mistakes

Shyam Shrestha in *Mulyankan*

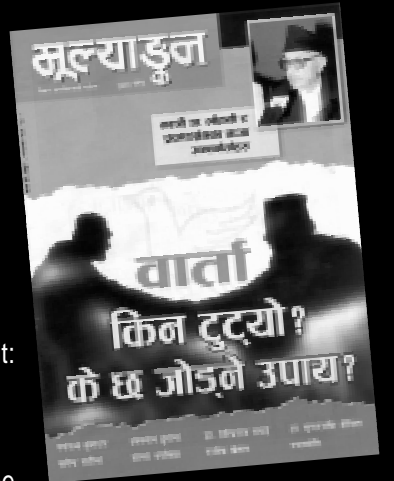
मूल्याङ्कन

Maoist mistakes:

By hurriedly calling off the truce and the peace talks, the Maoists made a mistake once again. Nationwide public opinion in favour of a constituent assembly was being garnered, even among those who were adamantly against it: industrialists, intellectuals and certain sections of civil society. It was becoming an issue of public debate. If asked to choose between civil war and a constituent assembly, almost every peace-loving Nepali would opt for the latter. The five party alliance was preparing for a decisive agitation against regression. This was an agitation against an assertive monarchy and it would have been in the Maoists interest for the agitation to be successful. Had the government used violence to put down the agitation, it would have pushed the parties nearer the rebels. The Maoists showed that they did not understand the shift in public opinion when things were going their way. They were looking at a one-dimensional military strategy, proving that they are dominated by a militaristic mindset that ignores overwhelming public opinion and alliances that would benefit them. The result is what we have now—a war that is more brutal and costly than before, opening the door to possible interference from the outside.

Government mistakes:

Just like the peace talks two years ago, things this time around stalled over the same issue: a constituent assembly, all because the government is reluctant to revert real sovereignty to the Nepali people. Their concept paper underlines a commitment to this end, yet it was against this powerful expression of sovereignty. The government was ready to debate only a constituent assembly without any intention of honouring it. In the end, the concept paper failed to address the main demands of both the Maoists and the parties. Their demand that the Maoists disarm before any agreement was reached was also unacceptable to the rebels. Lastly, the fact that the concept paper was immediately welcomed by the US, UK and India gave the impression that it was instigated by foreign powers.



NEPALI LITERATURE

by MANJUSHREE THAPA

Chandrakala Newar Voice of conscience



MIN BAJRACHARYA

In the years that I have translated Nepali literature for this column, I have been moved by the eloquence of our poets and writers, I have been provoked by their messages and I have been humbled that they keep writing despite the few rewards for doing so. Nepali literature is young, and growing, and it deserves our attention, respect and nurturing—not because this is a 'cultured' thing to do, but because our society, and our lives, are enriched when we read and appreciate our literature.

What I have been most grateful to be able to do, over these years, is to highlight the tradition of writers raising voices of conscience. Since the time of popular ferment against Rana rule, Nepal's writers have powerfully criticised the economic inequality and social injustices that hollow Nepali citizenship of meaning. They continued to speak out at great risk through Panchayat times. During the endless muddling of the 1990s, and now, as the country struggles to salvage democracy from authoritarian rule and militancy, our poets and writers keep reminding us of the ethical imperatives of the day.

Chandrakala Newar, one of a small number of established Nepali women poets of today, upholds this admirable tradition. Her first poem, below, criticises the farcical nature of our public life:

Spectacle

Truth is becoming derelict
Untruth is flashing a smile
The puppet is dancing to tune
The stage is lit in self-satisfaction
and the dance hall glitters
with hordes of onlookers
swarming about
Depraved smiles writhe
and stick like leeches on bodies
even though they are slathered in salt
The switch of time
lashes the naked back:
So what?
The back has itself become
as hard as a tortoise shell
Ah, look—
Look at the spectacle being staged before us!

Newar's second poem tackles the most urgent ethical challenges before Nepal—hunger and poverty—and explores the sacrifices made to ally them. Though this poem was not written in the context of the current war, it brings to mind the policemen and soldiers who have lost their lives as they try to provide for their families' needs.

His son is hungry

He used to be hungry
and yet he could smile
placing others before him
to take in the warmth of the sun—
He offered his chest to searing bullets
The face of his hungry son
danced before his vision
His quivering lips said—
This year for Dasain
I'll bring you new clothes
We'll sit together and eat
meat and rice, bananas and curd
I'll connect my love to my beloved
and pour out the worries in my heart
This year for Dashain
I'll bring you new clothes
As with the tremors of an earthquake
his grave now trembles and creaks
His promises have turned into falsehoods—
Who will convey this message?
His love will weep
His son is hungry

Newar's last poem is a poem for our times—expressing the pent-up rage, the righteous wrath turned murderous—that fuels today's war.

War

I am unafraid
I am untroubled
I will come to life
in the defenceless Dalit souls
of the pridefulness that you have birthed
I will transform each soul into a battleground
I will swallow your sun
I will swallow your moon
I will show you dreams
to light up your sky—
Purity in blood
Contentment in tears
Life in killing
Avarice in peace
I will add dream upon dream
I will release white doves
whose feathers have been hacked off
You won't be able to tell—
By then I'll have gone mad!
Newar's poems can be read in her collection *Chakrabyuha*.

Nepal literature has been a fortnightly feature in *Nepali Times* ever since the paper started three years ago. Manjushree Thapa will continue to translate Nepali literature on an occasional basis for *Nepali Times*, but this is the last regular fortnightly column. - Ed

One day, one street



Thirty photographs of buildings, interiors and bric-a-brac of life on the Lazimpat street line the gallery walls. This unusual composition transforms ordinary objects into items that demand our attention: implements outside a hardware store, clothes hanging on a line, the sun catching the straw baskets of a street cleaner—none of it is mundane viewed through Damien Murphy's lens.

Some of the strongest pictures are that of shops and their interiors. They are imbued with all the magic of Aladdin's caves. Cast in rich shades of vermilion, the shops echo the sacred colour of the city.

Murphy recently took this series of photographs in Kathmandu in just one particular location—the main street of Lazimpat—and in a very short space of 24 hours. The result is an exhibition of fresh and inspirational photographs that are both magical and quintessentially Nepali. He has the keen eye for the unusual, interesting and appealing that is so necessary to a good photographer. Murphy's perspective challenges us to examine what we take for granted. ♦ (Alan Rudderham)

"A day in Lazimpat" by Damien Murphy is showing at the Lazimpat Gallery Café.

- Silks
- Raw Silks
- Linens
- Saris
- Cashmere Knit Wear
- Chiffon
- Pure Cotton
- Silk crepe
- Pashmina

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ABOUT TOWN

FESTIVALS AND EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **A day in Lazimpat** Photographs by Damien Murphy at the Lazimpat Gallery Café, Lazimpat.
- ❖ **Monsoon Moods** Paintings by Uttam Nepali, Shashi Shah, Batsa Gopal Vaidya, Shashikala Tiwari, Kiran Manandhar, Ragini Upadhyay-Grela at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited. 4411122
- ❖ **Sizzle and Shine Summer Show** Paintings, prints and photographs by well known local and international artists from noon to 7PM, Tuesday through Sunday at Gallery 9, Lazimpat. 4436944
- ❖ **21st century is the century for art and peace** by Govinda Prasad Shah 'Azad' at the British Council, Lainchour till 16 September.

EVENTS

- ❖ **Latin Night** on 12 September with DJ Yves. African Night on 13 September with DJ Aye at Via Via Café, Paknajol. 4435184
- ❖ **Lazimpat Film Show** *The King of Masks* (directed by Wu Tian Ming) 16 September, *Red Firecracker*, *Green Firecracker* 18 September. 7PM at Lazimpat Gallery Café. 4428549
- ❖ **Skool Disco Costume Party** 8PM on 20 September at Club Kilroy, Thamel. 4412821
- ❖ **Changa Chait 2060** Kite flying competition at Club Himalaya, Nagarkot. 6, 13, 27 September. 4410432

MUSIC

- ❖ **1974 AD Live** Saturday 4PM onwards at Moksh, Jhamsikhel. Entry Rs 200. 5528703
- ❖ **Catch 22** back at the Rum Doodle.
- ❖ **Cadenza live** 7.30PM Wednesday, Saturday at Upstairs Jazz Bar, Lazimpat.
- ❖ **Thunderbolt** at Rox Bar on Fridays Happy Hours 6-PM, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu.
- ❖ **Fusion** at Dwarika's now featuring Abhya & The Steam Injuns every Friday, 7.30 PM onwards. 4479488

DRINKS

- ❖ **Happy Hour** Buy one get one free at Splash Bar & Grill from 5.30-7PM. Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu. 4411818
- ❖ **Cosmic Cocktails** and chic home furnishings at Mitra Lounge Bar and Mausam homestyle boutique. Above Cafe Mitra, Thamel. 4259015
- ❖ **Monsoon Wine Festival** at Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Jyatha. 4250440

FOOD

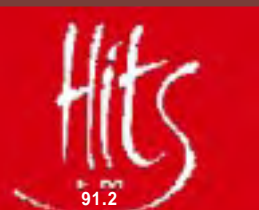
- ❖ **Café U** Japanese home-cooking, cakes and coffee. Opp British School, Sanepa. 552326
- ❖ **Roadhouse Cafe** for wood fired piazzas and more. Opp St Mary's School, Pulchowk. 5521755
- ❖ **Momos & More** the finest momos in town now at Dhobighat. 5520692
- ❖ **Chimney Refreshed** Fine continental cuisine at The Chimney Restaurant, Hotel Yak & Yeti. 4248999
- ❖ **Breakaway Buffet Lunch** Rs 325-375 (weekdays) at Radisson Hotel, Kathmandu. 4411818
- ❖ **Traditional Nepali Thali lunch** at Patan Museum Café inside Patan Museum. 11AM-2.30 PM. Cocktails and snacks 2-7.30 PM. 5526271
- ❖ **Saturday BBQ Lunch** at Club Himalaya Nagarkot. Rs 500 per person. 468008
- ❖ **Malay, Singapore food** at Singma, Jawlakhel, Lalitpur. 552004
- ❖ **Traditional Newari Thali** at Kathmandu Guest House, Thamel. 4431632
- ❖ **Godavari Village Resort** special weekday buffet for Singhastha Mela. 5560675
- ❖ **Vegetarian specialities** at Stupa View Vegetarian Restaurant & Terrace, Boudha Stupa. 4480262

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Shivapuri Heights Cottage** 30 minutes from Kathmandu, at the edge of the Shivapuri Reserve. Email: info@escape2nepal.com Website: www.escape2nepal.com
- ❖ **Great Godavari Getaway** Special weekend packages. 5560675
- ❖ **Weekend Special** for Rs 3000 per couple, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha. 4375280
- ❖ **TGIF overnight package** Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488
- ❖ **Bardia tiger madness** Jungle Base Camp 061-32112 Email: junglebasecamp@yahoo.com



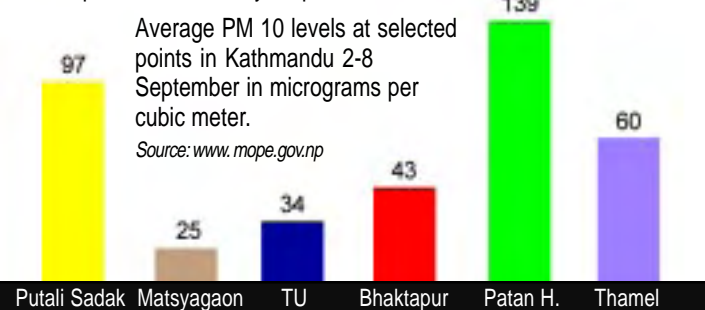
KATHMANDU AIR QUALITY



What you burn is what you breathe.

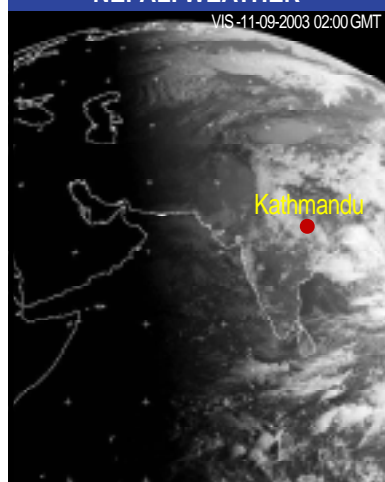
Good	< 60
Ok	61 to 120
Unhealthy	121 to 350
Harmful	351 to 425
Hazardous	>425

Last week's average PM10 levels in all monitoring stations in the Valley (except Patan Hospital) was below national health thresholds. The rains ensured that the air remained clean, but these are the last few weeks of breathable air. Once the rains stop, the level of fine particles, which are very harmful to human health, will start rising and this means more respiratory illness among Kathmandu residents. A study released last week showed that if we were to reduce the concentration of fine particles in Kathmandu air by just half, we would reduce mortality by 10 percent and hospital admissions by 30 percent.



NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED



This satellite image of the subcontinent taken on Thursday morning shows the Bay recharging with moisture-laden clouds, while another circulation from the Arabian Sea heads up to northwestern India. The official date of monsoon retreat from Nepal is 22 September, so we can expect another round of showers after this lull. The high pressure area over central Nepal can be clearly discerned in this image. Nevertheless, expect short sharp bursts of rain along the midhills. By early next week, we should feel a definite drop in early morning and daytime temperatures.

KATHMANDU VALLEY



BOOKWORM



Translating Development: The Case of Nepal Manfred Domroes (ed)
Social Science Press, New Delhi, 2003
Rs 840

According to this book, sustainable development that must attend to every economy, environment and society of a country is achievable. The contributors to this volume provide information on how this can be done drawing on their experiences at the grassroots level. All 18 papers in this book conclude that people themselves are a crucial factor.

The Glory of Nepal: A Biography of Bangdel Narendra Raj Prasai
Ekta Prakashan, 2003
Rs 350

Biographies are tricky, it's so easy to miss the mark. One of the best validations is undoubtedly the subject praising the literary effort of the author. And so it is with Prasai's work. The legendary Lain Singh Bangdel lauds this biography as, "sweetly phrased, this book makes good reading". That's recommendation enough.



Courtesy: Mandala Book Point, Kantipath, 4227711, mandala@csl.com.np

Rules: Pyaar Ka Super Hit Formula doesn't follow the rules. This contemporary love story explores and exposes the trap of romantic illusions. Radha (Meera Vasudevan) is a young assistant to renowned fashion photographer Uday Singh and has a crush on supermodel Vikram Verma (Milind Soman). Vikram is ready to move beyond the arc lights but his girlfriend Maggi (Namrata Barua) is keen on a career for both of them in films. Along comes an advertising campaign with Uday Singh and Radha and Vikram meet. Desperate to have the man of her dreams, Radha resorts to the Rules, courtesy her grandmother (the inimitable Tanuja). The plot evolves against the glamorous world of fashion and uses vox-pop narrative to form a definitive and humorous discourse on love. *Rules: Pyaar Ka Super Hit Formula* re-mythologises the notions of romance that have been built through films, novel, songs and clever marketing over the years.



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NEPALI SOCIETY

Nepali in global anti-torture council



At a time when human rights are under the spotlight in Nepal, a Nepali activist has been elected president of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), a network of over 200 centres around the world that offers treatment to victims of torture, and also engages in prevention and advocacy.

The executive board of the IRCT elected Bhogendra Sharma to the post this week for a three-year term. The 45-year-old has been active in Nepal's human rights movement over the past two decades, and is president of the Kathmandu-based Centre for Victims of Torture (CVICT).

"The board endorsed my idea to launch a worldwide movement against torture from the grassroots up," Sharma said in a phone interview from Copenhagen. "Besides treatment, prevention and awareness, we will have to work more closely with civil society and governments."

Torture as a means of exacting information or confessions has long been rampant in Nepal, but incidences have soared since the insurgency hotted up. Most victims of torture tend to be suspects who are usually innocent, and who face harassment and physical and psychological abuse in the hands of their captors.

Sharma now has to find time to chair the international body to work in his area of choice and commitment while providing treatment and rehabilitation to victims in Nepal, and lobbying with the political parties here to avoid this brutal and inhumane behaviour. As president of IRCT Sharma will need to persuade the United States and the Europeans to eliminate torture as well. Fortunately, unlike other international advocacy organisations, the IRCT has just been awarded the prestigious Conrad N Hilton Humanitarian Prize for 2003 that comes with a \$1 million cheque. The award will be presented to IRCT in New York next week in the presence of the Dalai Lama.

While Sharma is excited about his global responsibilities, he is worried by the deteriorating human rights situation back home in Nepal. He told us: "There is no military solution to the Maoist insurgency. We must work towards addressing the underlying causes of conflict and create an overwhelming constituency in favour of peace." ♦ (Bhagirath Yogi in London)

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A man's measure



from ➡ p9

Also in Putalisadak is Reid & Taylor, the new clothiers on the block. Just a year into operations, it already has a steady middle-aged clientele who want a quietly moneyed look at bargain prices. The Indian label caters to the image conscious working man.

Just off the main road and into Bagh Bazar is Shrestha Tailors. Located directly opposite the all-girls Padma Kanya Campus, it seems a strange place to open a men-only establishment but Hari Shankar says business has not been hampered. Over a period of six years he's seen more and more Nepali men ask for English and Italian material. "But that's just for the coats," he says. "For trousers they want Indian material." It keeps the cost down. When he began, Hari Shankar remembers, all clothes were tailored. Then came the readymade rush, but now its back to the old ways. "Except it's a lot more expensive than readymade today," he says with a faint chuckle.

Far and away from the bustle, up on the second floor of Bishal Bazar in New Road is Glamour Tailors & Clothiers—a bastion of male tailormade clothes for the last 17 years. Shahid Alam is an institution; he has fitted suits for the Valley's most prestigious names. Alam has the good taste to refrain from name dropping, although there are rumours of royal patronage. His son Safraj Alam modestly says there haven't been any complaints. Glamour also stocks a variety of readymade Indian and European shirts. This is the year of the long straight-point collar and tapered trousers that break clean at the shoes. And pleats are as passé as safari suits. ♦

Faux pas

- White socks with formal shoes? Not unless you're going as Michael Jackson to a costume party.
- Wear a printed tie with a printed shirt only if the look is bohemian chic.
- There's only so much a three-piece suit can disguise.
- Explore your feminine side. Real men do wear pink.
- Invest in nice shoes. Women always notice.
- Jewellery: less is more.
- Perfume is to be used sparingly.
- Never, but never, pair suspenders with a belt.

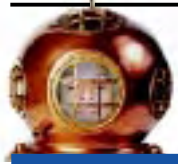
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Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

My 18-point demand

The greatest thing about living in a democracy is that we all have the right to be demanding. Anyone, including you and me, can come up with a list of demands, and launch an incrementally escalating protest for the government to fulfil at its earliest convenience.

So, on behalf of 24 million Nepalis and in the interest of upholding our free demographic way of life, I humbly submit below my own 18-point list of demands which the powers that be will ignore at their own peril. If these demands are not met with immediate effect, I will begin a phase-wise program of civil disobedience which will culminate in a violent pen-down strike over the Dasai-Tihar holidays:

1. The government should, right this minute, regain territory ceded to the East India Company in the Sugauli Treaty, restore the country's pre-1814 boundaries and make Nepal greater again.
2. Ok, ok, let's at least get them to agree to give us back Kalapani.
3. Never mind, just make sure for now that Border Pillar no 138 on the Mechi River is moved 20m to the east and restored to its original upright position.
4. The government should immediately scrap all unequal treaties with the international community, beginning with the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.
5. Having said that, and come to think of it, why not keep that one, and opt out of the Kyoto Protocol instead. Yeah, all together now: Kyoto Protocol Murdabad! Chief of Protocol Jindabad!
6. Our sixth demand is that all our previous demands including the 137-point ultimatum delivered to the Ministry of Re-education, Self-criticism and Aquaculture be fulfilled without further ado.
7. Otherwise we may be forced to list all those 137 demands right here point-by-point and that may take till midnight, or until the cows come home, whichever happens later.
8. Oh yes, can I have a coffee, please? Black without sugar.
9. Make available Journalist Discounts on all international and domestic flights with immediate effect, otherwise we will create nuisances on board that may endanger the safety of fellow passengers and ourselves, for which the air crew will have to bear full responsibility for the consequences.
10. We're only up to 10? When are we ever going to get to 18?
11. So, moving right along to the next point in the agenda: we demand that these demands be taken seriously with a pinch of salt. If not we will go on a hungry strike and skip afternoon snacks until the country is restored to its pre-October 4 glory.
12. All political leaders will have to sign a prior consent form before they get their fraternal and maternal organisations to launch decisive protests, so that the authorities are apprised of the exact modus operandi while taking them into custody. Tick applicable box: When arrested, I want to be under:

- i) Court Arrest
- ii) House Arrest
- iii) Cardiac Arrest

13. Everything in Nepal should be free of cost, and all noodle packs must have diamond necklaces.

14. This agitation will be temporarily suspended on weekends, during Dasai and by the UML for

'technical reasons' without prior notice. Management is not responsible for the consequences.

15. The next three demands (no 16, 17, 18) are non-negotiable. They can never be met, but they will not be disclosed at the present time because we reserve the right to bring them to public notice at a later date. Look at it from our point of view: if you meet all of our demands, how on earth can we keep on declaring indefinite countrywide strikes in future?



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