



Peace dividend

The government is finding it hard to win donor hearts and minds.

BINDU BHATTARAI
The government is looking beyond the peace talks at a massive hearts-and-minds programme to accelerate development in Maoist-affected districts, but is turning into serious donor reluctance to back it.

The Integrated Security and Development Programme (ISDP) is patterned after a post-Vietnam counter-insurgency strategy, but its price tag of \$114 million for three years is way beyond the government's own capacity. Last week, the National Planning Commission (NPC) presented what appears to be a hurriedly-prepared 13-page proposal to a consortium of donors, most of whom were sceptical about the government's ability to implement it.

Among the donors, Japan, Germany, Canada, Finland and Denmark as well as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank appear to have serious doubts about the ISDP, while the United Nations

Development Programme was fence-sitting. However, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the British Department for International Development (DFID) and the Norwegian Development Agency NORAD were for it.

"Few of us disagreed with its goals and the interest service delivery the government wants to make," one donor source told us. "But the political and security aspects made many uncomfortable." Those that said no were reportedly polite, but the message seems to be that donor support is not going to be easy. Added our source: "It will be a waste of time for the NPC if it still thinks it could get broad-based support for the program."

The ISDP was launched earlier this year in seven districts and this year the government allocated Rs 600 million for it, but much of this was budgeted with the expectation that the donors would come through. The ISDP is being implemented in seven districts—Gorkha, Rukum, Rolpa, Kailash, Jajarkot, Salyan and Pyuthan—and the government would like to extend it to six more as soon as possible: Dhaulagiri, Ramechhap, Sankhu, Dailech, Dang and Lamjung. Prithvi Raj Legal and his team at the NPC also told donors that the situation was getting so bad that it may ultimately have to extend the ISDP to another 30 of Nepal's 75 districts.

The idea for the donor fund-raising meeting for ISDP is said to have come up after a group of Western ambassadors met Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba a month ago. The diplomats reportedly wanted Deuba to have to produce results to make a difference, to which the prime minister is said to have hinted that if there was money to back the new defence and development plan, he could do it.

Donors keen to back the ISDP had their reasons. DFID, for instance, felt an efficiently implemented ISDP could be critical in delivering basic services and infrastructure to districts where development has come to a standstill because of the insurgency. USAID, on the other hand, is said to prefer a more cautious "transitional" approach, first testing out the programme in reasonably safe areas. The Norwegians, for their part, appear convinced that conflict resolution has to go hand-in-hand with development.

Among the multilaterals, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, who have their own performance criteria and are generally against doles, had no fresh comments. Other bilateral donors told the government it may be wiser to use the money already in the pipeline better, while some said the government could change priorities rather than seek new commitments.



NPC officials played down the importance of the meeting. Legal told us: "It was not a pledging meeting but one to update donors on the ISDP, its rationale, how it works, which programs we were taking forward and the overall status." He added that last week's meeting was the first round, and that Nepal could go to donors formally if it needed assistance through the finance ministry. The government plans to spend Rs10 million in each Village Development Committee under the ISDP to achieve noble goals, such as 100 percent literacy and school enrolment. It also wants to speed up infrastructure building, and launch income-generation activities. The government says it will chip in half the Rs10

million and wants donors to help with the rest, including purchase of communications and rescue equipment—not guns—for security agencies. Patterned after the US government's Integrated Defence and Development (IDDD), the ultimate goal is to win the people away from the insurgents, ensuring stability so that further development can take place. Security is to be provided by the police, the new paramilitary and the Royal Nepal Army under a co-ordinated chain of command. The prime minister heads the ISDP implementation team, which includes a number of ministers and the Chief of Army Staff. The program has four sub-committees: political, publicity, programs and security. □

Times Weekly National Poll #10

Do you agree with the Maoists demand for a new constitution?

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Nyu daya bhintuna 1122

KEDAR SHARMA
While the rest of the country was celebrating Tihar by worshipping crows, dogs and cows this week, Nepal's Newari population marked its new year by worshipping, yes, the self.

Depending on which astrologer you follow, either 15 or 16 November is the start of the 1122-year of the Newari calendar and Kathmandu Valley's indigenous people celebrate it with mha puja—worshipping the soil for righteousness and good health. The calendar marks the deeds of Shankadar Shankwa, the mythical hero who freed the Newari people from indolence.

Legend has it that the sands on the banks of the Bishnumati were to turn into gold on an auspicious day and only the ruler of Bhaktapur and his chief astrologer knew about it. The king sent his porters to collect the gold and they happened to

stop by Shankwa's house on the way back. Shankwa is said to have wine and dined the porters, and slyly replaced the gold with sand using it to free the people of the Valley from their debts.

"Mha Puja is now a part of Newari folk culture and is one ritual where there is no need for priests to dictate the proceedings, maybe everyone felt so light-hearted after being freed from debt that they decided to

worship themselves" quips Ukesh Bhuj, president of the Nepal Heritage Society. The worship is conducted by the female head of the household and the paraphernalia is full of symbolism: walnuts for strength, the nimra citrus for purity, the marigold blossom for longevity, Salyamohan Joshi, historian and expert on Nepal folk culture, thinks the word mha could be an acknowledgment of the connections between consciousness and the physical being.

"Nepal Sambat" as the Newari calendar is known, is more than 1000 years behind Nepal's official Bikram calendar which is into its 2058th year. Although younger, there is a growing feeling that if Nepal needs a non-Gregorian calendar, the Nepal Sambat is better suited than the present one named after the Indian Emperor Bikramaditya. Says Padma Rama Tuladhar of the Nepal Manakhalia: "The Bikram calendar is not even recognised in India. Nepal Sambat is based on the lunar calendar, which is

already in use in Nepal."

Over the years, Nepal Sambat and its unique blend of folk culture and religion has come to symbolise Newari identity in Nepal's multi-ethnic tapestry.

There would be a certain historical symmetry to making Nepal Sambat the official calendar since the name Nepal itself came from the Newari word for Kathmandu Valley after Gurkha unification of the kingdom in the late 18th century. "The Bikram calendar is a vestige of dictatorial Rana rule, we need to bring back our own calendar," says Kul Lal Dongol of the Jyapu Sama, Patan.

Others oppose the move to replace the Bikram calendar, saying it would open a can of worms. Says Basanta Thapa, columnist at Himal Khabarpatra: "If the official calendar is to be changed in this age of economic globalisation, then Nepal may as well join the rest of the world and adopt the Gregorian calendar." □

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In rural Nepal, health is about



RAMYATA LIMBU INBOLDE PHERICHE

Common cases of gastroenteritis, fractures, inflammation and fever are treated on the spot, while more complicated cases are sent to the referral hospital in Dhulikhel. In a room adjoining the crowded consultation quarters, free operations take place in quick succession with the medical team breaking briefly for lunch.

"Operating here is much more convenient now," says Dr Ram Kantha Makaju, as he removes a tumour bigger than a tennis ball from a patient's back. Next he operates on a hydrocoele, a collection of watery fluid in the scrotum, and a hernia. Next is a vasectomy. The facilities are much better now. Two years ago visiting surgeons operated inside the crumbling premises of the government sub-health post while staff held torches and

towels to catch falling dirt. Today, the post is empty, overshadowed by this spanking new health centre built with help from Friends of Bolde, a team of German well-wishers. Dr Makaju was instrumental in setting up the Dhulikhel Hospital, the closest thing to a community hospital in Nepal, and its four satellite health stations in Kavre and Dhadang. Now self-sustaining, run by efficient medical staff on land donated by the people of Dhulikhel and with infrastructure built with the help of European well-wishers, 16,000 operations have taken place at Dhulikhel and 135,000 patients have been treated in the past five years.

Today, its health outreach centre in Bolde is a compact stone and cement building

complete with a pharmacy, a lab, a consultation room, and an operation room. The centre serves 30,000 people from as far away as the neighbouring districts of Ramechhap and Sindhuli, nearly two-day's walk away.

"The medicines at the health post in my village are not effective, so I come here," says 72-year-old Bhim Lal Pant. A weak and sickly Pant walked two hours uphill to see the doctors. Villagers, mostly women, walked up the same route while the health station was being constructed. They each regularly carried 50 kg bags of cement for six hours while others broke rocks to make the natural stone wall.

"It's good to see people getting health care," says Horst Schmel who with his wife Ursula

and their friends centred about \$100,000 for the centre. The couple are from near Munich, Germany, where there is one doctor for every 200 patients.

On average Nepal has only one doctor for 20,000 people (in remote areas it can be as much as

There's plenty wrong with rural health care in Nepal—lack of political will, a stifling bureaucracy, and poor awareness. Then again, some things are going well.



Villagers (l to r) wait their turn to be examined by a medical team in Bolde Pheriche.

1:100,000) and a poor rural road network, health stations like this one in Bolde play an important role in taking care to the Nepali countryside, and complement the government's own network of rural health facilities.

Nepal's New Health Policy

One such volunteer, Kumari, distributes oral rehydration salts to villagers and explains how to use these in a medical emergency. Women, men, and children come to her usually seeking medicine for a fever, upset stomachs, or first aid for injuries. Kumari also often assists mothers in childbirth. After that, she sits down with them to tell them about healthy food for themselves and their families and the schedule they need to follow for immunisation and Vitamin A drops for their babies.

It isn't always easy, though. Seated on the mud floor of a small hut, Kumari's counterpart Bimala alternately coaxes and threatens Sukumya to take her son for immunisation shots at the government's free vaccination camp in the village. Sukumya, who has already lost two infants, is not sure it will help. She'd rather go to a faith healer.

high maternal mortality rate and safe motherhood. They should actually do something if, as they say, it is a priority after family planning," says Pathak.

Nepal's demographics reveal the poor state of health in the country: the fertility rate is 4.6, the infant mortality rate is 79 per 1,000 live births, and maternal mortality is about 5.4 per thousand live births, one of the worst statistics in the world. Half the children under five suffer from malnutrition, life expectancy at birth is a mere 57 years, and just 29 percent of the population of child-bearing ages uses contraceptives.

Even under relatively optimistic scenarios, says the Bank's report, Nepal's population is likely to grow at about 2 percent annually in the foreseeable future. This would double the population in 35 years, putting enormous pressure on the country's already meagre health services. Infectious diseases, maternal and prenatal ailments, and nutritional deficiencies are the major causes of sickness and death in Nepal, accounting for 50 percent of all deaths and 60 percent of disease, but the country's rugged terrain also limits access to health facilities," adds Uprety.

In the recent budget the government committed itself to adding three more beds for maternity care in each electoral area. But so far, there are no signs of that happening.

"Everyone from the planning commission to the government has been going on about the

more than the body

1991 visualises a wide and efficient rural network that takes health care to the ward level in villages by carrying out *Gaan Ghos*, or community clinics. While district and city hospitals stress curative services, the network of 137 primary health care centres headed by doctors, the 745 health posts and 3,185 sub-health posts, each staffed by an auxiliary health worker and a female maternal and child health worker, provide preventive and essential clinical care, as well as counselling and awareness-raising services.

"The structure is extremely well-developed," says Dr Laxmi Raj Pathak, director of the Family Health Division, the focal point for the reproductive health programmes of government and non-government organisations. "But not all of the components are functional."

Nepal's health care system is constrained by several factors. According to a 2000 World Bank Study (*Nepal: Operational Issues and Prioritisation of Resources for Health Sector*), public sector spending, including donor expenditure, on health care is a mere \$3.10 per person per year—far less than the \$12 (1993 prices) needed to cover the basic package of health care services in a developing country. The result, the report says, are gross inadequacies in terms of infrastructure, human resources, and service delivery.

The situation has worsened because of a one-pill-fit-all approach. "Dolpa and Panchthali, two vastly different areas—one in the mountains, the other in the tarai—get the same supply of drugs," says Dr Aruna Uprety, a health and reproductive rights activist.

In addition, most health facilities lack personnel and are perpetually short of essential drugs and supplies. "Extreme poverty and lack of health education both discourage people from seeking health care, but the country's rugged terrain also limits access to health facilities," adds Uprety.

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The health centre in Bolde.

western Nepal, Uprety came across 1,600 women, close to one-quarter of whom suffered from prolapse of the uterus mostly caused by too many babies, and heavy workloads.

Argues Uprety, "This is not only about hospitals, doctors, and medicines. It is more about recognising women as humans, about gender equality, good nutrition, sanitation, and awareness." On a ten-day visit to far-

that health care, especially for women and children, is not improving fast enough, is a lack of political and bureaucratic will which, in its turn, has more socially-rooted causes.

Most health analysis acknowledge the role of an estimated 48,000 Female Community Health Volunteers at the forefront of the battle to slash the high child and maternal mortality levels in the countryside. D D

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"The princess had asked the pilot to circle Rara for a better view..."

-Dr Rishi Khatri

The Ecureil helicopter of Fishtal Air had just taken off from Gangaadhi army base on the shores of Lake Rara at 11:25AM. It circled to gain altitude, and suddenly plunged down into the icy waters. Within less than a minute, according to eyewitness accounts, it had sunk.

Dr Rishi Khatri, who was sitting at the back of the helicopter with Princess Sharada Singh and Iswor Basnet, was flung out of the craft. Despite an injured leg, he managed to swim to shore. It took the army personnel nearly 45 minutes to row out to the crash site that was 1 km away. There, amidst the debris of floating seats and pieces of the cockpit, they found Sharada Singh.

Incredibly, she was alive despite having severe head injuries and being unconscious. Both Sharada Singh and Dr Rishi Khatri were airlifted to Nepalgunj and are now in hospital in Kathmandu.

According to rescuers, the body of Princess Preksha also floated to the surface a while later and was retrieved. The helicopter went down near the north-eastern corner of Rara where the lake is an estimated 200 m deep. The remote and scenic lake is itself situated at over 2,700 m. Army personnel who resumed rescue operations on Tuesday couldn't even see the wreckage.

"Rabin Kadaría was a very experienced pilot, he has done very difficult missions at high altitude," retired Major Bkash Rana of Fishtal Air told us. "The helicopter was not overloaded. There doesn't seem to have been a malfunction." Rana says special diving equipment is being flown in later this week to retrieve the other three bodies and as much of the wreckage as possible.

Khatri has been quoted by visitors at his hospital as saying that Princess Preksha had asked the pilot to circle over Rara so she could get a better view of the lake when the craft dropped down into the lake while turning.



A Fishtal Air Ecureil helicopter of the type that crashed in Rara on Sunday.

Maoists and marijuana

Living under Maoist rule has brought at least one benefit to the villagers living in the north-western parts of Makwanpur district. Since the Maoist 'people's government' was declared there—meaning there is no police presence—farmers in the dozen or so Village Development Committees have turned their attention to nurturing their preferred cash crop: marijuana. Previously, police carried out frequent raids and burnt marijuana harvests. The Maoists, who had earlier declared the area a 'marijuana free zone' by continuing the police practice, appear to have changed their minds. Apparently, they're happy to turn a blind eye as long as they too, like other local protectors, including mainstream politicians and some men in uniform, get their cut of the profits from the sale of the narcotic across the border in India. By one report, last year police got their hands on 8,000 kg of marijuana, and destroyed the crop in 74.5 hectares.

No salt

There's a sugar shortage in Kathmandu and residents are angry that they may not be able to prepare sweets during Thihar. But in Dolpa, the situation is a little different. Residents there are worried about a more basic commodity, salt. With supplies from the Salt Trading Corporation (STC) nowhere in sight and salt from Tibet not the reason yet, most Dolpa residents don't have the salt they need. The reason for the shortage is the inability of STC contractors to transport salt. The corporation has set aside nearly 700 quintals of salt for the remote district. But, says the District Development Committee, none of that is getting there, depriving people in 10 dozen Village Development Committees of one of the necessities of life.

HERE AND THERE

Two months after

The Americans aren't angels, but they are accountable to the press, Congress, human rights activists, the opposition, sceptics like Noam Chomsky and Edward Said.

It is far too easy, when things are so grim, to invent demons, or to exaggerate wrongdoing and ill-intent. Few of us have the comprehensive reference points needed to make sense of what is going on at the moment.

Ideology, blind faith, cynicism—none of these really help. The only honest approach to the current crisis is to reinvent your feelings about it on a regular basis. We need to read, watch TV, listen to radio and above all else talk.

So we sit in Nepal, or Pakistan, or London or America and stay up far too late, agonising, laughing and crying. Anyone who hasn't changed his or her mind many, many times during the past weeks isn't to be trusted. The sheer horror of the attacks on the United States have yet to really hit home for most of us. What I can't yet come to terms with is that how little convergence there has been between worldviews.

I have long felt, with the intensity of religious faith, that the "clash of civilisations" was a gross oversimplification that overlooked the role money, development, modernisation and circumstance. Yet 11 September was a powerfully direct challenge to that view.

As I watched the World Trade Centre towers collapse in Delhi, I was surrounded by people I thought I knew very well. I was devastated to hear some of them say, even as the buildings were down and thousands died, that the Americans deserved it, that faulty foreign policy in Washington somehow justified what was happening in New York. Middle class people who work for organisations espousing Western values—Westernised, in the words of Indian sociologist Dipankar Gupta—were somehow gaining satisfaction from the actions of intensely violent men who assume the right to harm and murder for political reasons—terrorism, by the classic definition of the word.

Friends in Turkey, Brazil and elsewhere in the developing world reported similar reactions, within themselves as well as without. I felt the western liberals' version of that. I wanted to blame Israel, Arid Sharon, the



opposition of the Palestinians, American swaggering and ineptitude in world affairs—the things external and pervently rational. But no, I think not. As much I'd love to see Arid Sharon on trial for the war crimes of Sabra and Shailta, as much as I have long felt that Israel's behaviour towards the Palestinians is cruel and—ultimately—against its own self-interest, that's not what is behind the attacks on America.

Nor is American affluence, arrogance or ignorance to blame, not at all. On the contrary, a picture is emerging of horrible clarity—the men at the controls of plane loads of screaming passengers, the planners and back room boys who laid the groundwork, perhaps even Osama bin Laden in his cave in Afghanistan, these people pulse with hatred in the same way as North

American racist militiamen or the twisted and alienated rich kids who joined the Baader Meinhof gang in Germany in the 1970s. They hate, and they act on that hatred.

I defy anyone who has espoused the cause of the Palestinians or the downtrodden anywhere else in the world to find common ground with the perpetrators of the acts of 11 September. Have the Americans done anything similar to anyone else? No, they haven't. They have backed a catalogue of villains around the world, they have laid in and out of troubled, complex situations usually to the detriment of all concerned. But they haven't thrown plaques of innocents into buildings. They are not angels—far from it. But they are accountable, eventually, and not just before their version of God. The press, Congress, human rights activists, the opposition, sceptics like Chomsky and Said, all hold the powers-that-be in America to account. Eventually, Who, save Rumsfeld, Bush and others are holding al-Qaeda to account?

No, I still don't think it's right to bomb Afghanistan further into the Stone Age. I still feel politics should have been given more time to ripple the ghastly Taliban regime, that money, dollars, should rain down on Afghanistan and every other hellhole that spawns hatred. They—the Americans—need to wrap up this somewhat pointless military campaign sometime soon and this time, spend as freely on schools, roads and irrigation as they did on Tomahawks.

But they need to defeat Al Qaeda and every other group that thinks it's right to kill the innocent. And we—the people—need to build consensus on that point around the world. We could start by behaving with logic, generosity and justice, everywhere and at all times. D

by DANIEL LAK



VILAGE VOICE

How much is too much?



PHOTO BY SHYAM DABA

INRAWA, SUNSARI: It's common knowledge that there aren't enough doctors in Nepal, especially in rural areas. Kathmandu Valley itself is full of doctors and so are maybe a few other towns. But there simply aren't enough doctors in most district hospitals, and some are even running in the absence of a single doctor. The stans of health services in most parts of Nepal is pathetic, and that is why the government is opening so many new medical colleges.

But I was surprised to find out that the Sunsari District Hospital in Inarawa has quite a few doctors. In fact, for the people of Inarawa, there seem to be too many. If you are from Inarawa and feel either better, I apologise. The hospital there has never been short of trained medical professionals. Besides the

doctors posted there by the Ministry of Health, the hospital has been adopted as a teaching centre by the BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (BPKIHS) in Dhurau. And for the last seven years, many have been provided here, to improve the quality of health care and also expose the doctors of tomorrow to the conditions in a not-too-well-equipped hospital. Now, consultants (specialist doctors) from various departments at the BP Koirala Institute go with students three times a week to provide specialist care in Inarawa's out patient department (OPD). And for the past three years, about half-a-dozen newly graduated interns have been posted there 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days year in rotation,

along with consultants from two departments. They help in the hospital and provide emergency services at any time of day or night under the supervision of the consultants and the doctors in government service posted there.

Well, by Nepali standards, this is a lot of doctors. So I guess some people think a few can be spared. Those of you who read *Kantipur* may have noticed a small item tucked away in the inside pages in the edition of 17 October. The report said that the people of Inarawa had beaten up the doctor who is here to call the DHO, who immediately referred the patient to the BP Koirala Institute in Dhurau. And, since the patient died on the way, an angry mob beat up all three people at the hospital. The gist of the article seemed to be that the interns were responsible for the death of the woman and that the beating administered by the mob was somehow justified.

Well, the snake had bitten the patient on the hand and not on the leg, and there was a physician from our institute who supervised the whole treatment from start to finish. And he, after discussing it with the DHO, referred the patient to Dhurau because the Sunsari District Hospital did not have equipment for artificial respiration, which she would probably require soon. The DHO and an intern telephoned the emergency department in Dhurau to inform them that this patient was on the way.

There are simply not enough doctors in rural Nepal. But one lucky district hospital doesn't value those it has.

the institute decides what to do with the internship program. But the key is, that none of us is terribly enthusiastic about going back and risking another beating. It sounds harsh, but I can't help thinking that the services given to Inarawa's hospital by the BP Koirala Institute should be suspended, at least temporarily, so the people there realise that they have as much to gain from the internship program as we do, if not more. And they need to understand that we are not experimenting on them or playing with their lives, but merely working under the guidance of our seniors while gaining experience. After all, similar internship programs are running smoothly in the Dhurau and Morang District Hospitals without problems.

It is hard to understand the antagonism to *skanda* doctors all over, especially in Inarawa. After all, no one is a great cardiologist or an neurosurgeon from this do. With the local lacks and unlicensed pharmacists who abound in rural areas. As for me, I intend to remain a trainee all my life, and keep myself open to all there to know. It is interesting, though, how people tend to forget that doctors are also human. And that all people, whether one's near and dear or doctor themselves, eventually die. Doctors aren't god.

I was disappointed to see that people were treating and serving had no clue what we were doing there after seven years. It was the medical beating—I was only hit by two badminton rackets, which I blocked off and broke—but the attitude of the people that got me all riled up. In any case, I am thankful that when the mob rushed towards our boat, at the doorway they ran into me—6 ft tall and 75 kg—and not a woman doctor. She would have met the same fate as Inarawa in this case.

But thanks to the 'beast' young men from Inarawa, there won't be too many doctors there, at least for the time being. One of the doctors was officially transferred to a different hospital a few days before the incident, leaving only one doctor there on government service. Since he was beaten up, my guess is the remaining doctor will get himself transferred out or simply quit. And for now, us interns have been posted back to Dhurau, while

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This Dasain I prayed for the people of Inarawa. May the red give them some health and the green sense to realise that there aren't that many doctors in Nepal. D

(Dr Milan Piyu is an intern with the BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences)

SOMEWHERE IN NEPAL

A newspaper down south gives us some insights into the private life of The Man Who Can't Be Fathomed.

So Pashpa Kamal Dahal is addicted to buffalo milk. For someone who religiously despises the opinion of the masses, the choice of stimulants to advance the cause must have been limited indeed. Comrade Prachanda is said to gulp down two large glasses of fresh milk unbolled and without sugar—each morning before turning on the radio for the latest news from Nepal, India and the rest of the Milky Way galaxy.

We were offered these and other rare insights into the private life of Nepal's reb-in-chief last week in a newspaper published down south. The piece served to shed much-needed light on a soul that has cast a long shadow on Nepal politics from the dark. Variations of who so far

adored our newspapers and magazines and they must have made many wonder what the man was actually like. UML leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, who joined other key Leftist leaders at a meeting with the Maoist leader in the Indian city of Silguri several weeks ago, refused to answer a reporter's questions on whether Prachanda really looked like what he does in those pictures. Nepal, who surfaced from his own underground after the restoration of multiparty democracy, laughed off the query as if an answer would have represented a breach of comradely confidentiality.

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PHOTO BY SHYAM DABA

SNM ADDI
Prachanda, or the Powerful One, is addicted to buffalo milk. He gulps down two big glasses of fresh, frothy milk—unbolled and without sugar—the crack of dawn before switching on the small Sony radio for the latest news from Nepal, India and around the world. Station-surfing over, he sits down to read and write, often dictating to a confidante. The morning routine never changes. Neither does the security cover for one of South Asia's most wanted men—16 bodyguards with AK-47s—a human shield that the enemies of Nepal's Fidel Castro were not dared to test.

Pusthpan (sic) Kamal Dahal alias Prachanda rules one-third of Nepal after a six-year-old civil war that has claimed 2,000 lives in the once-peasantry Himalayan kingdom. Even Kathmandu admits that its writ doesn't run anymore in 25 out of 73 (sic) districts where the Reds run a parallel government—collecting taxes, running schools, hospitals post offices, buses and dispensing justice. And the goal of the revolutionary army of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) fighters, led by the charismatic Comrade Prachanda, is to quickly capture the other two-thirds still ruled by Nepal's constitutional monarch, King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, and Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's CPC Congress Party.

The Maoist revolution will be completed very soon, not in the remote future, says the shadowy rebel boss who moves from bunker to bunker. He is one of the most secretive mass leaders in the world, with only two photographs of him known to exist. The Nepali media—newspapers and TV channels—carry the same pictures day after day. But his headlines versus are well known. All moderates are opportunist hogs, I detest them. There is no alternative to people's war and the gun is the best tool for social transformation.

Prachanda, who underwent military training while at university, adds gleefully, "Ultimately we will have to fight the Indian

becoming a full-time politician. (It is that when he discovered that 'colonialism, feudalism, imperialism, capitalism and revisionism are all bad?' Just a thought). Although it's unclear whether he keeps his home de genere after the "Prachanda Gorkha", the underground political group busted by the Rana in 1931, the Maoist chief seems to have drawn lessons from the movement on the need to maintain strict operational secrecy.

The man the government holds responsible for the deaths of up to 2,000 people—most of them his own supporters—is not heartless, after all. Prachanda's biggest regret in life that he was not by his mother's side when she died. When she was diagnosed with blood cancer in 1995, Pashpa Kamal and his brother Gopi were admitted to Bir Hospital. He spent a month with her in the hospital, but had to vanish after somebody tipped off the police. "I think it's the biggest problem that I should be of one kind a cordial invitation to the Bharatiya janas to come marching in through the back door.

POWER PLAY

An Indian journalist's account of meeting "the world's most secretive leader."

Amy. And it will be a very good thing because we will capture a lot of guns from them. It will be our national war of independence. His logic is that New Delhi will, sooner or later, come to the rescue of the Nepal government tottering under heavy Maoist assault.

According to Prachanda, colonialism, feudalism, imperialism, capitalism and revisionism are all bad. All peasants are good. And politicians are bad.

He entered Leftist politics in 1971 through a faction of the Communist Party, moving on to more radical groups, eventually ending up at the top of the Maoist faction in the mid-1980s.

Born on 11 December, 1954, in Dhikupokhari village of Kaski district in the Himalayan foothills, Prachanda was christened Chhabil by his father Muktiman Dahal, who worked as a farm hand. When he was seven, the family migrated to Shivnagar in southern Nepal. At the Narayani High School, he apparently impressed his teachers so much with his intelligence and conduct that they rechristened him Pashpan Kamal after the lotus, a symbol of purity and beauty. "As a child, he never led or fought with other children. In fact, he was called to mediate and resolve disputes," says Muktiman, who isn't seen his son since 1995.

After school, Prachanda enrolled at the Rampur Agricultural College, a 30-minute bicycle-ride from Shivnagar. "Students stared coming to our house. I learned that he was dabbling in politics. I told him we are poor, we can't afford politics, politics can destroy us. Even today, I'm pained when I hear that people are being killed on my son's orders."

Prachanda describes himself as an easy-going, fun-loving schoolboy who sang and danced and played football, volleyball and kabaddi. "But one day I saw a moneylender insulting my father. My father fell at the moneylender's feet. But the moneylender kicked him. It lit a fire inside me. It was a political lesson I

Dad, too, has been living with his own share of grief. ("I'm pained when I hear that people are being killed on my son's orders.") He hasn't seen Pashpa Kamal since 1995 and doesn't know where his wife and children live. That's no small sacrifice, especially when many people probably can't stop staring at him—either out of awe or antipathy—every time he takes a walk through the neighbourhood.

This shift seems to be guided as much by the writing on the wall around Tri-Chandra Campus as by the post-11 September international security environment. All this sounds like genuine realism. But Prachanda still believes the Maoist revolution will be completed very soon, and not in the remote future. It is this kind of fanaticism that obscures the insurgents' real intentions. I probably haven't read enough about the Long March and the Great Leap Forward to understand the true significance of such puffing. But I do know that two glasses of frothy buffalo milk and rich food in front of me, comrade, just make sure you keep your cholesterol levels under control. D

never forgot. It changed the course of my life."

Despite his Leftist leanings, after graduation Prachanda worked for USAID for a few months, before plunging full-time into politics. But long before that, he married Sita Paudyal. Nobody knows where Prachanda's wife and children live. Not even Muktiman.

The battle-hardened Prachanda's biggest regret is that he was not by his mother's side when she died. "She had blood cancer in 1995 and we admitted her to the Bir Hospital, the best in Kathmandu. My brother and I spent a month with her in the hospital. But somebody tipped off the police and I had to vanish before they nabbed me. I think it is the biggest personal sacrifice I have ever made."

But the uncompromising fighter conceded that he has a sweet tooth. He is also a passionate fan of Karmama Manandhar, the Madhuri Dutt of Nepal, and is known to travel miles to see her new releases. However, for Prachanda, the cause is all-consuming. "Maoism today is spreading faster than yesterday," he maintains firmly. (The Sunday Times of India)

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BIZ NEWS Spending rules

The government has announced new expenditure regulations to lighten spending on projects. Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat says this is to eliminate one of the 'loopholes' in development administration...

Nepal Lever profits down

Nepal Lever, a subsidiary of Hindustan Lever, has reported a roughly 50 percent drop in net profits for the fiscal year that ended mid-July 2001. Profits fell from about Rs 120.5 million in July 2000 to Rs 68 million in July 2001.

Mind our business

- The Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) invited Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba over to tell him how bad things were for business. Deuba said he was willing to help and that he'd amend labour laws...

Sanitary ware

India's Hindware has begun marketing its bathroom fittings and tiles in Nepal. The products are to be retailed through eight outlets in Kathmandu Valley, and gradually more all over Nepal.

Do you agree with the Maoists demand for a new constitution?

No, I don't agree. First of all who are the Maoists to demand? No government in the world can succumb to terrorist threats. Second, they are not the people's representatives, they point guns at innocent people to agree with their rhetoric.

ministers rather than loyal policemen. There is no point making other laws, because laws are written to be broken. Damar Bahadur Kharel, Delhi

towards improving the quality of life of all citizens. Without a democratic political framework in place, the alternative is the danger of totalitarianism, authoritarianism, anarchy, civil war, and fragmentation of the sovereign Nepal as we know and love it so dearly today. Padam Sharma, Minnesota

Government shouldn't panic. We need to think critically, and make the right decision that does not put the country in danger. A few years ago, the Maoists were nobody, now they want to take over the country and change the constitution. This is not far on other citizens who want democracy. Sushmita

What we need is a change of attitude, not constitution. What we need is action, not speech, and we need to not expect that from others, but set examples ourselves. Rajesh Bhat, Nepal

Progress means going forward, not backward. This constitution is not doing anything for the people. After 12 years it hasn't brought change, if Nepal is to go into the 21st century, we need total change, become a republic and have a presidential system. Dipak Sharma

There is nothing wrong with the current constitution, only with the people implementing it. Nepal needs a group of honest people to be elected who will run the country in its best interest, not their own. The political powers and the powers-to-be should remember that they are elected by the people to serve the interest of the people. If instead of worrying about who sits in which chair and holds what powerful position, they worry about the needs of the people, a lot of the troubles that we see will slowly disappear, including the trouble caused by the criminals masquerading as Maoists. It seems to be the nature of all those who acquire positions of power in Nepal to become corrupt. A new constitution will not solve the problem, what that is needed is to change the way people think. DDP

Yes, Nepal needs radical change, fresh blood, something new. If the current politicians run the country, we are going to be poorer. D Koirala, Biratnagar

I do not understand why on earth Maoist leaders are demanding a new constitution or a constitutional assembly. To formulate a constitutional assembly, first of all there have to be elected representatives from every constituency and then the representatives will construct a new constitution. This is a very long and complex procedure and an extravagant economic burden for a country like ours. Prime Minister Deuba is taking the problem seriously and positively. Now it is the turn of the Maoists to show similar honesty and vision. No doubt about it: the present constitution has some drawbacks, but these can be resolved through an all-party consensus. Merely changing the constitution means nothing, what we need is for it to be implemented in practice. Babul Pakhrin

My opinion this is not the time to change the constitution. There is no better ruling system than this. But it has not been handled properly by those elected by the people. If I were a Maoist, I would get rid of corrupt Atma Shrestha

With amendments to the current constitution, the multiparty political system can be improved to create an environment where leaders can rise with experience from village level public office to that of prime minister. Eventually, the system will produce principled visionary leaders who command the respect and support of the populace in leading Nepal.

ECONOMIC SENSE

by ARTHA BEED

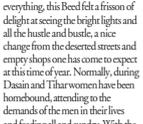
Silly season

This Tihar, think about doing business the next festive season.

Nepal undeniably needs a good kick in the pants to spur economic growth. And obviously taking a month off is the way to do it. Dasain and Tihar are wonderful festivals, a time to reaffirm one's commitment to family, society and so forth through the copious swilling of liquor, eating of goat and gongaling of savings.

But, the Beed, ever the clear-eyed killjoy also sees it as a month during which productivity is at a disgraceful low, and many offices take on the appearance of ghost-towns. It is autumn, and most of the population, sensing the end of the warm season, unthinkingly makes merry, and like the grasshopper, regrets it through the winter.

This year, while the government imports operating out of tax havens in India Chowk and its by-lanes may argue that there has been a viable recession, retailers nevertheless did frenzied business during the festival. A good reason is always a good prelude to a good Dasain, and agricultural productivity has been on the up this year. The dim, but noticeable, rays of hope emanated by the peace between the government and the Maoists have also fuelled some optimism in villages. Cries like 'Pokhan and Dhan, which have historically been happy to buy, buy, buy, your brick Dasain business will change the making. For instance, I'm doing too well, and retailers, hostels and restaurants there say



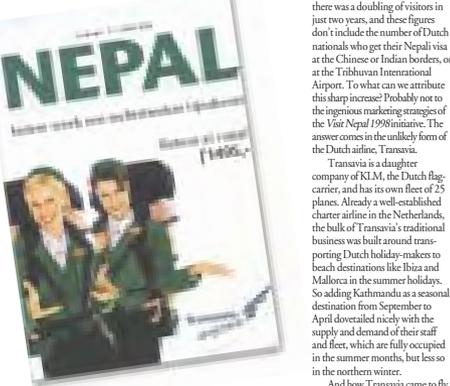
they don't remember a festival time in recent years when there have been such few tourists. This, the Beed was thinking, is actually the best time to assess the state of the economy, based on the money that changes hands. Gambling is as much part of our national psyche as are drinking and the darsa-sarwal, and since the festival legitimises betting and night, we see that the stakes pretty high and a mind-boggling amount of cash is exchanged. It is always rude to ask people the source of their income, and never more so than during Tihar, nevertheless, there ought to be something that can be done when in one night businesses bet amounts that otherwise they have earned over three years, and government employees play more than their life-time savings.

One may be crossbones of the bureaucratic lunacy that descends on the Nepal nation in the festive season, but that does not blind one to some other interesting sociological changes in the making. For instance, it was quite surprising to see on the streets during Dasain, despite

Readers can post their views at arthabeed@yahoo.com.

From below sea level to the highest mountain

Nepal and the Netherlands are an unlikely, but curiously compatible couple.



Cas F de Stoppelaar helped bring Transavia to Nepal.

MARK TURIN IN AMSTERDAM

Aside from being two small constitutional monarchies that sit alphabetically next to each other at United Nations conferences, the Netherlands and Nepal appear to have little else in common. The Netherlands is a post-industrial country with wide-ranging infrastructure, virtually no remaining unimproved natural and startlingly high income tax. Nepal, for its part, is essentially non-industrial, with little infrastructure to speak of, nor enforced taxes for that matter, but abundant in natural beauty. There is the most apparent and amusing contrast—in the Netherlands the highest point is a few hundred feet above sea level, which in Nepal would be swiftly dismissed as a dip.

both countries share. Nepal wants tourists and the Dutch are tourists. Whichever country in the world you care to visit, you are bound to find a Dutchie. Most are just travelling, but others settle down and turn to good old-fashioned Calvinist Dutch entrepreneurship. From beaches in Thailand to outposts in Alaska, there are Netherlands running bars, restaurants and businesses. Nepal is no exception; the cosy oasis called the Summit Hotel was established by their own countrymen and specifically caters to their cultural and dietary needs. In 1998, the number of Dutch nationals visiting Nepal saw a sharp increase. According to figures from the Consulate of the Kingdom of Nepal in Amsterdam, the total number of tourist visas issued were 6,649 in 1997, 10,860 in 1998 and

220-seater aircraft a week to Kathmandu for 35 weeks of the year, transporting up to 15,400 people to Nepal and back. The psychological importance of being able to fly directly from one's own country and, moreover, with a trusted home airline cannot be underestimated. By filling this niche in the market, the Transavia service to Kathmandu has quite literally placed Nepal on the map of possibility for a class of older, wealthier, non-backpacking Dutch tourists who might previously have gone to Bali for a beach holiday. And it's not just the Dutch. The number of Belgian tourists coming to Nepal has jumped 15 percent this year compared to last year—the only nationality to register an increase.

back, one thing led to another and in January 1997, Crown Prince Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands made an official visit to Nepal. Received, in line with expected protocol, by then Crown Prince Dipendra, Willem-Alexander extended an open invitation to the end of his stay for his host to pay a return visit. 1998 was a year of growing Dutch interest in Nepal, particularly due to the press coverage surrounding the IMAX Everest film, and the news that Nepal's crown prince would be visiting. De Stoppelaar, together with the influential Dutch travel agency OAD (which owns Nepal Reizen), had been approaching airlines with the idea of opening up a direct route between Amsterdam and Kathmandu, something on the order of 150 seats a week. The search ran into administrative obstacles—there was no Air Service Agreement between the Netherlands and Nepal. Such an agreement is a prerequisite for direct flights to commence between any two nations. On 10 June 1998, when the late Crown Prince Dipendra was in the Netherlands, an agreement was signed between Transavia and RNAC, allowing them to fly to each other's capitals. The first Transavia flight to Kathmandu took off on 23 September, 1998. In the cockpit—though not at the controls—was De Stoppelaar, himself a holder of a pilot's licence and a long-time aircraft enthusiast. As present Transavia flies two

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Dhulikhel shows small is bountiful



By concentrating on education, health and tourism Dhulikhel has become a model town.

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY
Dhulikhel has for centuries prospered from its location on the ancient trade route between Nepal and Tibet. Now, the country's smallest and best-run municipality is gearing up for the rush that will accompany the opening of a new highway that will soon be the only direct road access from Kathmandu Valley to the

eastern tarai. Half the traffic moving through Thankot is going to be diverted through Dhulikhel. Is this going to bring more dhulis (dust) or dhan (riches) to Dhulikhel? Dhulikhel is gearing for some well-planned honest-to-goodness commercial and social development. It helps that Dhulikhel has a population of only 12,000, there is

a thriving sense of community despite the cosmopolitanism. Part of the reason Dhulikhel is so well run is its mayor, Bel Prasad Shrestha. "We have set three objectives we would like to meet," says Shrestha. "We want quality education for our children, better health services and the promotion of tourism." There is good reason to take

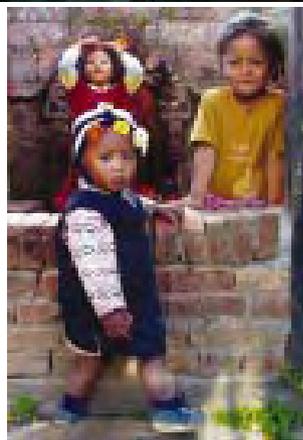
Mayor Shrestha's words seriously. An independent candidate serving his third term as mayor, Shrestha managed to bring in a successful university and a modern hospital. To take full advantage of Kathmandu University, which set up home here in 1995 on the western edge of the town, the municipality has been working to improve the quality of education in its schools, so more students from the area can get into KU. Locals even donated a large part of the land the university stands on. (See "College comes to Dhulikhel—and the country", #64)

Set up in 1996, the Dhulikhel Hospital, a modern medical facility with out-patient and in-patient departments, is said to be better than many Kathmandu clinics. The town has other, more pro-active ways of keeping its residents healthy—it has one of the most efficient and safe drinking water systems in the country. "Stomach ailments caused by poor drinking water have almost disappeared from here," says Govinda Neupane an old-timer on the main street who runs a homoeopathic medical store.

The drinking water program is admirable, but reaches only seven of the nine wards of the municipality. "The program was started before the municipality came into existence, but we are trying to provide for the remaining two wards as well," says the mayor.

Everywhere you go in Dhulikhel, you see signs of change. A large community ground has been constructed with the help of the Japanese government, and an artificial lake is on the way as an added tourist attraction. The town has also conserved the forest in its backyard, which is now a jungle that drapes the ridge connecting Dhulikhel to Nano Buddha. The trees have brought the birds back, and bird watchers flock here, as do Kathmanduites on weekend picnics.

But the most important change will be the Banepa-Bardibas highway being built by the Japanese, 22 km of which has just been completed. In another five years,



when the road becomes fully operational, it will provide a shortcut to eastern Nepal. The fact that Dhulikhel is so well managed will probably help it overcome the Mugling-effect—that wild west look that afflicts all major highway junctions in Nepal.

Dhulikhel is heavily preparing for full-scale war. Since the water supply was improved and the university moved in, real estate has become scarce and expensive. But, with the help of a German government grant, the municipality has already started building a bus park to make commuting easy should offices move here. "We plan to cash in on this road and convert the region into a major trading point that offers better deals to traders than Kathmandu," says Shrestha. Those residents of Dhulikhel not in the tourism industry will, he hopes, work to

establish a wholesale market. Shipments of Chinese goods would hopefully skip here first, encouraging the Valley traders to take advantage of the lower prices. The road would also make it easier for Dhulikhel to leverage its tomatoes, potatoes and milk. "Dhulikhel people have always shown much love for this place even if they do not live here. The important thing now is for all of us to remain united, whether we are hoteliers, farmers, or other professionals." U



time. Many residents are getting impatient, waiting for the benefits to trickle down. "A handful of moneymen entrepreneurs have profited from the tourism industry. Smaller ones like us have it hard," says Purna Man of the Nawaranga Restaurant and Guest House. Others, like Purna Bahadur Karki, a teacher at the Sanjevani High School, remain hopeful. "If there is proper infrastructure tourism here could do much better," he says.

Dhulikhel is swiftly turning into a modern municipality, with good infrastructure. It is still a united town where citizens are very much concerned with development. What it needs as it moves forward is consensus, so its residents continue to have a say in the future of their town. Mohan Prasad Shrestha who owns a stationery shop summed it up: "Dhulikhel people have always shown much love for this place even if they do not live here. The important thing now is for all of us to remain united, whether we are hoteliers, farmers, or other professionals." U

Things to see

Whether it's a mountain sunrise you're after, or 400 km of horizon from the Annapurnas in the west to Numbur in the east, the Himalayan skyline dominates Dhulikhel. And unlike that Thamel-on-the-Hill, Nagarkot, Dhulikhel has culture with its old Newari heritage. At 1,500 m it is also milder in winter than Nagarkot.

Dhulikhel was once known by the Buddhist name of Shivharadpur and still has a few Buddhist stupas in memory of the old days. Nano Buddha is an interesting and pleasant three-hour hike from the town, and has a nice mix of Buddhist flavour and old Hindu temples. Dhulikhel also has several ancient temples dedicated to Sweta Bhairava, Hari Siddhi, Shiva, and Narayana, each with an interesting story related to how they came into being.

There are plenty of other short hikes to undertake from Dhulikhel, but one of the best is the pleasant half-hour uphill from Dhulikhel to the telecommunication tower. Walk through a lush forest echoing with the chattering of racquet tailed drongos and turtle doves to come to a temple dedicated to Kaili. If you can manage to wake up early and get up there, it is a sunrise you will remember for years.

And there are more than a dozen hotels to stay for the night if you want to do this, from the upmarket Himalayan Shangri-la, which stands at the highest point here and offers the best views to the 28-year-old Nawaranga Restaurant and Guest House, which with its gallery of local art is a backpacker's dream come true.



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The new Chitko



Chipko activists Sunderlal Bahuguna protesting the Tehri Dam in 1995.

BHARAT DOGRA

TEHRIGARHIMAL, India The remote Himalayan forest of Advani was festive last week—villagers marched in singing, songs, chanting slogans. Women tied sacred threads around trees, symbolising their determination to protect them. They hope to save the forest, like the earlier Chipko movement did in the 1980s. The name of the village-level movement means "embrace." Some twenty years ago, a large number of trees in the same forest in Tehri Garhwal district of India's northern Uttarakhand state, were auctioned for commercial felling. When the contractors came to fell them with an armed police team, village women hugged trees to prevent them from being cut. The forest was saved.

The new threat to this forest, and

a large number of other trees of this region, comes from the giant Tehri dam project. The project is highly controversial because of its adverse impact on the environment, but work on it has begun and the government looks determined to complete it.

To transmit the electricity that will be generated from this project to other parts of the country, the Power Grid Corporation has been asked to lay 800-kV transmission lines from Tehri in Uttarakhand to Meerut in Uttar Pradesh state. Nearly 50 km of this approximately 200 km stretch are in hilly areas. The proposed path of the lines in the Himalayan area would cut into the forest of Advani, threatening about 100,000 trees. Dharm Singh Negi, a mentor to the young Chipko activists, asks: "Did they really take permission to cut all

these trees when the dam was cleared? I doubt that permission to fell so many trees would have been given."

Activists accuse government agencies of deliberately keeping any information about the environmental impact of the project from public discussions. Shekhar Singh, one of the experts on a committee appointed by the government to examine the dam, is anguished: "The loss of so many trees on Himalayan slopes was never brought up before our committee." Environmental impact is just one of the concerns the project has spawned. Earlier, the Environment Appraisal Committee, which examined the project, concluded that safety factors alone are important enough to stop the clearance of this project. The committee said: "Taking note of the unacceptable risk involved—the

by YASHENG HUANG

Keeping China down

most shops nowadays there is an infinite variety of goods made in China—low-priced sweaters and socks to high-value electronic products. China is a huge manufacturing base for firms from all over the world that invest there to benefit from its low-cost but highly skilled and disciplined workers.

But although a massive amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) has flowed into China in its age of reform, indigenous private firms have not developed fast as their market and business potential would allow. Many goods sold around the world are made in China, but very few are made by indigenous Chinese companies.

The size of a firm is a rough, although imperfect, indicator of its growth potential. Although India's economy is about half the size of China's, and has a lower growth rate, India is now home to a number of large, globally competitive firms. Today, the largest private firm in China is the Hope Group in Sichuan province run by four brothers. This agricultural conglomerate generated annual sales of \$600 million in 1999. The largest private firm in India, the Tata Group, generated sales of \$7.2 billion in 1995, of which \$163 million came from its tea business division alone. Another example comes from the pharmaceutical industry. In 1997, the largest pharmaceutical firm in China was Sanjia, which had sales of \$670 million. Contrast Sanjia with Ranbaxy Laboratories, one of the largest Indian pharmaceutical firms. In 1995, it generated sales of \$2.27 billion, despite the fact that the Chinese pharmaceutical market was three times as large as the Indian market. A comparison with South Korea during a comparable stage of economic development tells the same story. During South Korea's economic take-off, commonly dated from 1960 and 1980, a number of firms such as Hyundai and Samsung emerged that were globally competitive, later capturing government prizes notwithstanding.

China has not produced similarly competitive indigenous firms during the two decades of its "economic miracle" from 1978 to 2001. All China's large firms are state-owned enterprises, and large only because they are granted a

Why do indigenous Chinese firms grow slowly and stay at home?

monopoly custodianship over the country's most valuable assets—oil fields or savings assets from Chinese households. China's economy has taken off, but few of its firms have. The failure of competitive indigenous firms to grow wide propitious conditions points to the inherent inefficiencies in China's economic system. One is that China's goods and asset market is fragmented and has become more so in the last twenty years. A dramatic illustration of this is that the average distance over which freight is shipped has actually shrunk at a time when the government has invested massively in highways, air cargo facilities and railways. China is increasing its sales and exports to the rest of the world but internal trade is declining, making it difficult for firms to expand and grow.

The second factor is that China's financial system allocates its vast savings pool inefficiently. It allocated subsidised credit and cheap equity capital to China's most inefficient firms, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), while denying financial resources to China's dynamic private firms. Both SOEs and private firms fail to become competitive and foreign firms find it profitable to invest and produce in China. Chinese SOEs are inefficient and are not market-savvy, private firms don't have the resources to capitalise on their superior software capabilities.

This inefficiency impacts overall performance. Indians see about half of what China save and India gets one-tenth the annual FDI that China does. Yet India's GDP growth in recent years is about 80 percent of the Chinese growth rate. India is using its capital more efficiently, because its investment does not discriminate between private firms and state financial resources fund efficient firms. It is time for China to learn from India. (D. Prajapati)

(Yasheng Huang is Associate Professor at Harvard Business School.)

Breaking the nuclear boycott

NEW DELHI By facilitating a deal to transfer two nuclear power reactors to India, Russia last week broke an international boycott on transfer of nuclear equipment imposed as punishment when New Delhi first exploded a nuclear device almost 30 years ago. Concluded in Moscow during Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 4-7 November visit, the deal facilitates the transfer of two reactors for a \$3 billion power station at Kudankulam village in coastal Tamil Nadu state, where they are expected to generate 2,000 MW of power. The international boycott did not halt India's nuclear programme, but it did restrict its options for defence, as demonstrated by a second round of tests in May 1998. India has not signed the 1970 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and does not accept full-scope inspections of its nuclear facilities by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), established in 1975, and of which Russia is a member, prohibits exporting nuclear technology to countries that do not accept full-scope safeguards. After the present Bush administration took over, it asked Russia to supply nuclear fuel to the Tarapore power plant near Mumbai, although the plant observes full IAEA safeguards and was installed by US power giant General Electric in 1975. The US stopped supplies of nuclear fuel after 1974, but India sourced it from France and Russia, which kept up supply even after the 1998 tests. According to the *Indian Express*, Russia supplied 58 tonnes of low enriched uranium for Tarapore this year. Greenpeace says the Indian government maintains close links between its nuclear energy and its nuclear weapons programmes. "It was technology acquired by India, ostensibly to generate nuclear electricity, that was used in the 1974 and 1998 nuclear weapons tests," says Greenpeace campaigner Ben Pearson. (R/S)

Another row over rice

BANGKOK Rice farmers from Thailand's north-west districts are taking to the streets to protest the future of their much-sought, long-grain aromatic jasmine rice. This show of strength, in the provinces and in Bangkok, has been triggered by revelations that two US scientists gained access to jasmine seeds in order to develop a variety of the rice that could be grown in the United States. Last week wheat conservationists and grassroots activists joined the farmers in Roi Et province to protest against the US programme. "The consequences cannot be underestimated: royal farmers and farming communities could end up living in poverty," says Wilson Lanchanrom, director of the Bangkok-based BioThai, an environmental and activist group. Wilson adds that this is a case of "biopiracy." For some activists, it is "biopiracy." Such thinking has found resonance among lobby groups in Europe and Canada. "The Thai farmers and the national economy are threatened" by this effort, declared the European Free Trade Association. "Jasmine was bred and nurtured by Thai farmers from generation to generation and its market is vital to the well-being of many farming communities. If commercially successful, US-bred jasmine rice could supplant much of Thailand's \$1 billion export market and undermine the livelihood of millions of rice farmers," it added. Thailand produces three million tonnes of jasmine rice annually, half of which is exported to the United States, Canada, Australia, China and other Asian countries. What troubles BioThai and the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI), a Wisconsin-based NGO championing the concerns of rural societies, is the way the scientists gained access to jasmine seed samples. The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippine town of Los Baños gave the scientists the seeds from its gene bank without having them sign the agreement that protects Thailand from "biopiracy." The germ plasma of jasmine rice was "acquired in 1995 without the Material Transfer Agreement that obliges the recipient not to patent or otherwise monopolise the donated seed," says RAFI. (R/S)

Shantooch from Nepal?

NEW DELHI The seizure in New Delhi of a major shipment of shantooch wool from a Singapore-registered trader points to a possible new route via Nepal and Singapore to smuggle the banned wool obtained from the endangered Tibetan antelope. Three packages, said to contain woolen garments, arrived in New Delhi in early October as cargo aboard a Singapore Airlines flight. Upon inspection the packages were opened and examined at the Wildlife Institute of India, which confirmed that one contained 130 kg of high grade, raw shantooch. The other two packages contained pashmina, which is legal. A high quality shantooch shawl fetches around \$1,500 in the US and Europe. The shipment was sent by Globalistics Trading, registered in Singapore. Two Singaporeans, two Americans residing in California, and a Nepal national, Nalin Tulahar, are listed as officers; the Nepal and the Americans are shareholders. The consignment, which is finished shawls worth 10 million dollars at Singapore, was booked to a company in Delhi called RND Trading, registered months ago by three Nepalis with the same last name, Tulahar. The Delhi company's manager, Natottam Shrestha, appeared to receive the shipment and has been arrested. Shantooch, derived from killing baby Tibetan antelopes, Chiru, is banned under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Under international pressure, New Delhi recently banned the weaving and trade in shantooch. Since the antelope became endangered, China has banned its killing and run anti-poaching teams in the Tibetan plateau, the antelope's habitat. It is estimated that 20,000 Chiru are killed every year by the shantooch trade, and Chinese and American poachers are said to have been dropped to 10 percent of what it was 100 years ago. (The State Times)

No to Paras

Sanghu, 5 November

On Daxin, Prince Paras was made Crown Prince. The student wing of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) doesn't quite approve of this and is preparing to start an agitation soon. The pro-Maoist student wing has also expressed its dissatisfaction with the move. The Marxist-Leninist student wing has asked the king to reconsider his decision. They say that Paras should first of all make a public apology to the people. In a recent statement, the Marxist-Leninist youth group action said must be taken against Paras for all his misdeeds and the trouble he has caused in the past. The statement proceeds to clarify that the protest is not against Paras, the person, but rather against the criminal character that resides in the palace. The palace, they say, must not be a place of conspiracy and intrigue, or harbour traitors. It must be open and democratic and follow simple rules and norms. In addition, parliament must have the right to discuss and analyse the character of any member of the royal family. The right to appoint the crown prince must not be held by the king alone, parliament must also have a voice in this matter. This has become especially important after 1 June, say the students, and so the king must reconsider his decision. If he does not, the students say they will be left with no alternative other than starting an agitation.

Paras is king material

Jana Bhatnaga, 5 November

Excerpts from an interview with Ashok Nath Tiwari, Upper House member (nominated) Everyone is commenting on the appointment of Crown Prince Paras. Do you have something to add? His Majesty made the decision exercising the legal and constitutional powers vested in him. The Constitution of Nepal as a constitutional monarchy and Hindu kingdom gives the king the power. It was only natural for him to make his only son, Prince Paras, crown prince. It is not necessary for anyone to keep bawling on this issue.

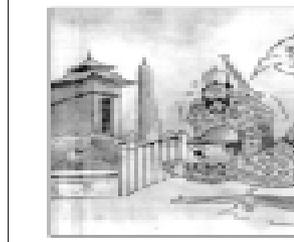
But questions have been raised about the Crown Prince's character... I have not noticed anything wrong with his character. All the qualities needed to be king are already showing in Crown Prince Paras. He will develop himself and grow to shoulder the responsibility he has been given. The royal palace was growing in stature, and gaining the respect and love of the people. In such a scenario, it is not surprising that people start raising a hue and cry about things. It is improper to raise questions concerning an accident. Many a time we have made minor kings in our country. So why are people bothered now when we make a grown up person crown prince? I cannot understand this.

Why was the announcement made during Daxin? According to the Hindu religion, Daxin is very auspicious. There is nothing wrong for a king in a Hindu kingdom to announce a crown prince during Daxin.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The only way out of our current political crisis is a constitutional assembly and if the present rulers don't even want to accept this minimum compromise, only the future will show what the frightening result will be.

Moist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai in *Janadisha*, 12 November



One Maoist to another: "No way will we kneel, comrade."

in *Janadisha* Naya Sadaak, 11 November

Crown Prince Paras?

Jana Ekata, 5 November

Dr Mathura Prasad Shrestha,

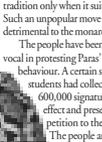
Leftist activist and former minister

It (the appointment) was an unconstitutional step. Being king does not give you the latitude to do anything. If you do that, you are not listening to the voice of the people, their aspirations. This may be detrimental to the nation. The king did not make the announcement earlier because he realised it would provoke strong reactions. The one-year mourning period has not even elapsed yet, and they have done this. This is against the very fundamentals of Hinduism. It goes to prove that the monarchy uses the shield of religion and tradition only when it suits them. Such an unpopular move will be detrimental to the monarchy.

The people have been very vocal in protesting Paras's behaviour. A certain section of students had collected 600,000 signatures to that effect and presented the petition to the late king. The people are not yet convinced that Paras was innocent in that incident. If you turn the pages of history, you will find that Paras was used to

Kingendra Sangraul,

Leftist writer



Paras has been involved in two incidents of murder and countless others of hoodlums and mayhem. The crown prince is the future king of this country and he represents the nation. He stands for all that the nation stands for—its prestige, its reputation. It is natural that people raise questions when someone like Paras is placed in that position. The role of the major parties of the country, the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party (UML), is very important. Intellectuals have always held that the character of future kings must be monitored carefully. But neither the Congress nor the UML took this seriously.

The constitution has given the king the power to nominate the crown prince. It is up to him, who he wants to nominate, why he wants to do so, and when. The king is empowered to do this by the constitution regardless of the character of the eldest son. But the crown prince is the future king, and while making the nomination, the king needs to keep this in mind. The Congress and UML should also have thought about this. There is a major problem in the constitution, and this situation is a result of that.

Shyam Shrestha,

Journalist, coordinator, *Samaajadi Andolan* (Socialist Movement)

The man who has just been made crown prince, Paras, has caused many deaths. The newspapers have reported extensively on his hoodlums. Only last year, he killed musician Praveen Gungung, and everyone knows about it. People took to the streets at the time of his death. The newspapers have reported extensively on his hoodlums and presented the petition to the late king, who asked the prime minister to look into the matter.

The crown prince is the future king. It is a serious matter that Paras has been made the future king. If the palace wants to remain a constitutional monarchy, it must be democratic in the way it functions. It must take the aspirations and opinion of the people into account. In a democracy nothing is more important

than the voice of the people, and their opinion. The people are paramount. In making this decision, their wishes have been crushed. This is a very undemocratic step. The constitution is a document of compromise, but it clearly states that whoever lies with the people, and the people do not like Paras. It is surprising that he was made crown prince during Daxin, when most people were busy celebrating the festival. He was not made crown prince in June because at that time the protests against him were at their peak. The people are still angry with him. But during festivals few people are in the capital and most are busy. They (the palace) realised that there would be few protests during this period and so decided to take this step. People must raise their voice against this.

The palace has always said that it only moves ahead after taking into account the opinion of the people. The people are against Paras, so this announcement is tantamount to going against the will of the people. This shows that the palace is still neither democratic nor constitutional.

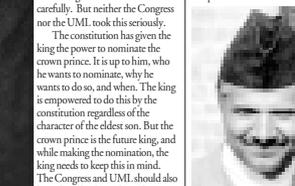
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There are many constitutional changes that need to be made, and this is just one of them. Everything concerning the monarchy needs to be discussed in detail. We did not do that earlier, and that is why we are in this situation now.

Narahari Acharya,

Central Committee member, Nepal Congress

According to the Constitution, the announcement of a crown prince is a normal matter. That is not a topic for discussion. The discussion going on right now is the manner in which this announcement was made. The most important thing is that the people have the right to discuss the character and behaviour of the person who sits on the



Mangal Sidhi Manandara, MP, UML

The decision is in keeping with the constitution. But the present situation does show that the institution of monarchy should be more transparent and democratic. Questions have been raised concerning this and in this light, the decision is a bit surprising. That is all I want to say.

The timing of the announcement was very surprising. It would have been proper if the king had called for a sitting of parliament and made the announcement there. The people have to be given some reasons, some answers. They have to be assured that what has happened in the past will not be repeated.

Padam Khadka,

coordinator, *Pragatishil Budhijivi Sangathan* (the Progressive Intellectuals Group)

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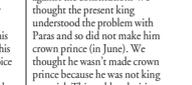
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The palace has always said that it only moves ahead after taking into account the opinion of the people. The people are against Paras, so this announcement is tantamount to going against the will of the people. This shows that the palace is still neither democratic nor constitutional.

Dr Kam Shrestha, Chairman, *Nepal Rastriya Budhijivi Parishad* (the National Intellectuals Council) To be proclaimed crown prince according to the constitution is not unusual. After the 1 June incident, no one mentioned the issue of picking a crown prince. Even now I do not think it necessary to go into that discussion. There is enough room for people to raise their voice and be suspicious. But there are other, more important issues to be discussed. To tackle issues concerning the monarchy, it is necessary to bring about major changes in the constitution. What is the point in just raising questions and not bringing about changes in the constitution?

There are many constitutional changes that need to be made, and this is just one of them. Everything concerning the monarchy needs to be discussed in detail. We did not do that earlier, and that is why we are in this situation now.

Narahari Acharya,

Central Committee member, Nepal Congress

According to the Constitution, the announcement of a crown prince is a normal matter. That is not a topic for discussion. The discussion going on right now is the manner in which this announcement was made. The most important thing is that the people have the right to discuss the character and behaviour of the person who sits on the

throne. It has become clear after 1 June that changes are necessary in the laws and rules concerning the monarchy and the heir apparent. The issue remains even after the recent proclamation. The timing of the announcement was very surprising. It would have been proper if the king had called for a sitting of parliament and made the announcement there. The people have to be given some reasons, some answers. They have to be assured that what has happened in the past will not be repeated.

Padam Khadka,

coordinator, *Pragatishil Budhijivi Sangathan* (the Progressive Intellectuals Group)

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Madhav hits out
Dhish, 6 November

UML leader Madhav Kumar recently made the following statement: "The Maoists do not have the ability to rectify their mistakes. They believe that they will be the masters of the universe they foresee. This is their mentality. In fact they are doing exactly the opposite of what Chairman Mao suggested, and the opposite of what history teaches. They are moving against the tide."

Disain day, the court of the Morcha was carrying out its activities and two people were killed and more than a dozen were injured. After this incident the government carried out a massive search in Pame village, which the Maoists proscribe.

The Maoists started following the directives of Marx, Lenin and Mao sometime in mid-1998. Earlier they supported the Maoists in principle only, but later they agreed to form an armed fighting force. A document was signed in a couple of months ago as the Maoists is now part of the Maoist organisation. Earlier the issue of an armed force had caused misunderstanding between the Maoists and the Morcha. Now all problems have been resolved. Gopal Khumbar, chairman of the Morcha, met Baburam Bhattarai in 1998 and decided that the two parties would help each other. The Morcha would be active in an area controlled by the Maoists and go as far as to be represented properly.

"A lion does not eat grass"
Dhish, 6 November

Nepal further said that the Maoist leaders and cadres believed in and were creating a cult of personality. He said the Maoists are anti-national... and fascist. He added that you should fire your gun only when needed, it should not be the fundamental defining policy of your organisation. Nepal insisted that the Left movement in Nepal could be seriously damaged or even destroyed because of the activities of the Maoists.

Dry days again?
Janadsh, 6 November

The All Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary) recently held its central committee meeting and discussed important issues among which were expanding the organisation, the agitation, publicity and publications, and matters of economic importance. Raba Sharma, head of the ANWA (RA), says the group has decided that by February it would have at least one million members and increase the number of volunteers to at least 25,000.

She further added that the party decided in detail both the 22-point agenda and the 34-point agenda, presented to the government a few months ago. The nationwide agitation has also discussed, and it was decided that this program would be carried forward vigorously. The party says that the government broke the agreement reached by the two sides earlier and has done nothing to implement its promises. The party has no other option but to re-launch its anti-oligarchy program again this month. Sharma said someone needs to find an alternative to alcohol.

Maoists allies
Shree Rastogi, 6 November

The Maoist organisation has begun working very closely with the Khudhari Mahila Mandali. They joined hands recently in Pame village in Sula Khumbar. Sources in the Morcha say some of its members took part against a few people, including Dhanraj Rai. Under the instructions of Minister for Tourism, Bal Bahadur KC, Rai was among those who were spying on the Morcha. The people (spies) were caught and punished. On

were living in India and they were doing their utmost to turn Nepal into another Sikkim. After all, whether it is a policeman or a Maoist who is killed, we are all Nepali. By killing one another, you are spreading mayhem and terror, and this is all helping India. The Maoists are not following the directives of Marx, Lenin and Mao. Why don't you contest elections, you might be able to win at least 40 to 50 seats? If you are prepared to stay quiet and not create trouble, I will release you. If you are prepared to go to the negotiating table, I will release you immediately. These were some of the things he talked about.

What was the reason the IGP wanted to meet you?
The reason he met me there was to name into another Dinesh Sharma. I say this because after meeting me, I believe he told some people "He is going to Nepal, he is Maoist and active. He is like a 16-year-old." I recently met Dinesh Sharma and he told me that.

Tell us something about your time in captivity.
I was detained for six months. For two months, I was in Mahargunji at the Police Training Centre, and for four months I was kept at the Armed Battalion office in Nauli. They used to handcuff me when they took me to Humanum Dhoka, that's a rule. After that they took me to the police station in Anamarg. Two days later I came to know that they had brought two police vans to the station. Later in the night they brought me outside and tied to handcuff me again. I told them, "I was handcuffed in 1960, in 1972, handcuffed again in 1985 and now again I am being handcuffed. It is not fair to me. This is not fair, I will always be handcuffed." I told them I was proud that I was being handcuffed. They looked disapproving and took me to Humanum Dhoka. So, on seven days I was in Humanum Dhoka, the Deputy Superintendent of Police addressing me said, "Dahabi, is there anything on your mind?" I told him that I was fine. A few days later, maybe four or five days later, the same DSP came and asked me the same question. I still did not say anything. After he left, I tried to figure out what he was getting at. I wondered whether he was asking me to surrender. He came back again eight or 10 days later. "I have your thought about anything?" I replied, "DSP Sahib, remember one thing. A lion does not eat grass. I am a lion, I will not surrender. He assured I would be free. This is what I believe in." I asked them for some newspapers to read. Five or five days later they came and asked me, "Do you want to read the Gita?" Two days later they came and gave me a 100-page book. I could only read during the day.

How do you spend your time in Sindhuli prison?
Although I could not do a lot of work, there were 100 days, and they have not released the issue of a republic. The third round of negotiations will start soon and the Maoists are preparing to stop all violent activities. This is because of the government's open policy towards them.

On rights
Singha, 5 November

Deuba's 100 days
Bhimsan, 9 November

What did Pradeep Sanshree discuss with you?
He told me that of my many leaders

plected 100 days. What has it accomplished?
The hundred days ago it was impossible for the prime minister to enter Singha Durbar without being harassed. The house could not work for 57 days. A large contingent of police was trapped and surrounded by the Maoists, and war was about to break out between the Maoists and the Royal Nepal Army. Large industries around the country were on the verge of closing down. All educational institutions were shut. People were in a state of shock and panic, wondering whether parliament and state institutions were really working or not. The Maoists were terrifying people, they were killing people at will. The situation has changed completely.

I am not saying the country has suddenly become very prosperous. These 100 days have been days of the police, the army and the Maoists and been created for this purpose; this is something we have to understand. Violation is always linked to the activities of the government. If a person is kidnapped, the government has to take action. All political parties are bowing their committees towards democracy. Industries have started working again. The government must act as and when it is required. Weakness and indiscipline in the government led to human rights violations. Action must be taken against violators according to the law of the land. If the government cannot stop the Maoists from killing and kidnapping people, that is a weakness. The government is responsible for stopping such activities.

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Only way forward
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People in government say that this is a political problem and so will only be solved through dialogue. Must be solved through dialogue. People's problems must be taken care of peacefully. Everyone including the Commission hopes that the dialogue will be fruitful. But because you think the Maoist problem will be resolved peacefully, I know the government has not done anything to suppress the people. The people and the Commission will hold the government to its promise. They will not go and place their demands in front of the Maoists. The government has deal with the Maoists. Killing people is not going to solve the problem. We must realise this and be vigilant against it.

Can the Commission play a role in setting up the assembly that have crupped up in the government-Maoist dialogue?
The Commission has played a part and provided direction. The release of prisoners and captives, for instance, did not happen partly because of someone's promise. The Commission has repeatedly told both the government and the Maoists that no one has the right to kidnap and kill people. We have established contact with the Maoists. They have visited Maoist-affected areas. The Commission's role has been similar to that of the press...

OBITUARY

Ernst Gombrich

Ernst Gombrich died on 9 October 2001 at 92 on 3 November. Gombrich was the most eminent art historian of the last half-century, for specialist scholars and for a wider public. The *Story of Art* (1950, 16th edition 1995) has been the introduction to the visual arts for innumerable people for more than 50 years, while his major theoretical books, *Art and Illusion* (1960), *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (1963) and other volumes, have been pivotal for professional art historians. The scope of his reading, the way he counted his knowledge and the accuracy of his memory were, as another historian described it, "awesome".

Gombrich was born into a sophisticated Vienna family. He was usually Jewish but converted at the turn of the 20th century to a rather mystical protestantism. He was anti-sectarian and unreligious, but it was impossible, in the wake of Austria's enthusiastic adoption of Nazism, to dissociate himself from Judaism, and he insisted on describing himself as born an Austrian Jew.

Gombrich came to Britain in 1936 and joined the Warburg Institute as a research assistant. He became director of the Warburg, combining the post with being London University's professor of the history of the classical tradition (1959-76).

The fact that he became one of the UK's most honoured scholars, a knight and a member of the Order of Merit, having held all the most prestigious chairs at Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and Cornell universities, and at the Royal College of Art—and received so many international awards (the Goethe, Hegel and Erasmus prizes), may lead one to forget that his first 15 years in Britain were fraught with difficulty: as a restricted alien, he struggled to look after his family. The war years checked his professional career, but the scope and originality of his work in 1945-60 make one aware of the pent-up intellectual energy and the sustained thinking and reading that must have preceded.

The serious understanding of music formed a crucial factor in the development of Gombrich's

thought. The pursuit of a rational study of painting, however different from music, seems one of the goals of his work in *Art and Illusion*. Gombrich sought in the optical and psychological basis of painting some equivalence to the rationality of musical structures. It was not that he believed the expressives music was reducible to principles of harmony, or painting to the psychology of illusion, but that these formed the framework for understanding artistic achievement.

Gombrich engaged for 50 years in a polemic against invoking the collective mind—whether of an age or a nation or a class—as explanatory of changes in art or politics. He did so because he saw such explanations as not only circular, but as failing to recognise the essentially rational nature of the way artists experimented and learned from each other. The way in which he set out to replace the formalisms of the turn of the century was *Art and Illusion*, first published in 1960. It presented an account of the psychological factors which made it possible for us to see a three-dimensional moving picture—such as a film or a television set—on a flat, still surface. The painter learned to do this by trial and error, checking whether his marks depicted the recognition of his subject. This led Gombrich to argue that the major factors in change in the pictorial style were the results of rational activities rather than mysteriously changing expressions of age. He was deeply opposed to any account of artistic creativeness which was couched in terms of a collective psyche rather than by reference to individual invention and discovery which often could have been anticipated. A third line of argument (manifesting his close intellectual relation to his friend from Vienna, the philosopher Karl Popper) was that the history of western painting, shared with science the self-critical urgency to overcome its own previous formulas so as to become more coherent and compendious in representing natural appearances.

For 40 years the book has remained central to the discussion of the visual arts by philosophers, art historians and scientists. It retained this position despite radical criticisms of parts of his argument because at its core it focused, as a not an historian before had, on the role of illusion, on the fact that in depicting nature, our brains are deluded, we are caught up by the represented subject that we recognise within it—the

KEN KESEY

Ken Kesey, best known as the author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, died on 10 November in Oregon. He was 66. The cause was complications after surgery for cancer of the liver late last month.

Kesey was also well known as the hero of Tom Wolfe's famous non-fiction book about psychedelic drugs, *The Electric Kool-Aid Test* (1968). In describing Kesey's role as the Pied Piper of psychedelica, Wolfe's book somewhat mockingly compares Kesey to the leaders of the world's great religions, dispensing to his followers not spiritual balm but quantities of lysergic acid diethylamide, or LSD, to enhance their search for the universe within themselves.

The book's narrative focuses on a series of quests undertaken by Kesey in the 1960s. First, there was the transcontinental trip with a band of friends he named the Merry Pranksters, aboard a 1939 International Harvester bus called Furthur that was wired for sound and painted riotously in Day-Glo colours. Neal Cassady, the Dean Moriarty of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, was recruited to drive. The journey, which took the Pranksters from California to New York City, was planned to coincide with the 1964 New York World's Fair. Its purposes were to film and tape an extended movie, to experience *Road America* while high on acid and to practice "booting the multitudes," as Wolfe put it, referring to the way a Prankster would stand with a flute on the bus's roof and play sounds to imitate people's various reactions to the bus.

Then, back in California, there were the so-called Acid Tests that Kesey organised—parties with music and strobe lights where he and his friends served LSD-laced Kool-Aid to members of the public and encouraged them to avoid "breaking out."

This was the public Ken Kesey, the magnetic leader who built a brigade from beatniks on the road to hippies in the Haight-Ashbury, who brewed the cocktail mix that featured everything from psychedelic art to acid-rock groups like the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane, who in the process of his pilgrimage blew an entire generation's mind.

Yet Wolfe also narrates the adventures of a more private Kesey, one who in addition to his quests took the inner trips that gave him his best fiction. It is true that by 1969, when he had his first experience with drugs, he had already produced a novel, *End of Autumn*, about college athletics, although it would never be published. But after he had volunteered at a hospital to be a paid subject of experiments with little-known psychomimetic drugs—that is, drugs that act on temporary states of the mind—his imagination underwent a startling change. To earn extra money and to work on a novel about the beatniks of San Francisco, Kesey also took a job as a night attendant on the psychiatric ward of the hospital. Watching the patients there convinced him that they were locked into a system that was designed to suppress their individuality and to provide the raw material for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. One night on the ward, high on psychedelics, he suddenly envisioned the book.

As Kesey explained, his discovery of Chief Bromden, despite not knowing anything about American Indians, gave him a character from whom to point of view he could depict a schizophrenic state of mind and at the same time describe objectively the battle of wills between two other key characters, the new inmate Randle Patrick McMurphy, who undertakes to fight the system, and the tyrannical Big Nurse, Miss Ratched, who represents lobotomising McMurphy. Chief Bromden's unstable mental state and Kesey's imagination of it,

presumably with the help of hallucinogenic drugs, also allowed the author to elevate the hospital into what he saw as a metaphor of repressive America, which Chief Bromden calls the Combine.

Cuckoo's Nest was published by Viking Press in early 1962 to enthusiastic reviews. Tom Wolfe's famous non-fiction book about psychedelic drugs, *The Electric Kool-Aid Test* (1968). In describing Kesey's role as the Pied Piper of psychedelica, Wolfe's book somewhat mockingly compares Kesey to the leaders of the world's great religions, dispensing to his followers not spiritual balm but quantities of lysergic acid diethylamide, or LSD, to enhance their search for

ABOUT TOWN

MOVIES
 □ Nepali and Hindi movies online ticket booking at www.nepalshop.com

EXHIBITION
 □ Kenichi Komatsu 2001 Exhibition and sale of photographs by Japanese photographer of Mustang, Dolpa and pilgrimages to old Nepali temples. Organised by Japan-Nepal Photographic Exchange Society. 22 November-7 December, Nepal Art Council, Baber Mahal, 220735
 □ Impressionistic photographs and Digital Art 1995-2001 by Sandy Shum and Jyoti Duwadi. Until 26 November. Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal. Revisited. 411122
 □ Colour of my mind Paintings by Mona Ghosh. 20 November-2 December. Alliance Francaise, Thapathali. 241163
 □ Paintings and sculptures by Surendra Pradhan and Ram K Bhandari. Park Gallery, Pulchowk. Until 20 November, 10AM-6PM, Sunday-Friday. 522307

EVENTS
 □ Action Asia Himalayan Mountain Bike Race Series 2001 18 and 24 November. Open to all, five race categories, great prizes. Himalayan Mountain Bike. Info @ kingnepal.com. 437437
 □ Contemporary jazz dance classes by Meghna Thapa. At Alliance Francaise Sundays and Tuesdays 4.30PM-6.30PM, 241163. At Banu's, Kamal Pokhari, Wednesdays 6.30PM-9PM, Saturdays 1.30PM. 434024, 434830

MUSIC
 □ Live acoustic music Dinesh Rai and Deependra every Friday at the Himalatte Cafe. 7.30PM-10PM 262526
 □ Weekends at The Jazz Bar The Jazz Commission on Thursdays, Chris Masand's Latin band on Fridays and on Saturdays An Fainne. 7PM onwards, Shang-La Hotel. 412999
 □ Live music Tuesday and Friday nights at the 40,000 y ft Bar, Rum Doodle Restaurant. 414336

EATING OUT
 □ Afro-Caribbean night with music and speciality food. Rs 500, 30 November, La'Soon Restaurant and Vinotheque, Pulchowk. For reservations ring 539520.
 □ Thai buffet dinner Adults Rs 750, Children under 12 Rs 500. Taxes extra. Summit Hotel, Sanepra. 521810
 □ Himalayan Feelings Fusion band every Friday night with full Sekuwa dinner and complimentary beer or soft drink. Rs 855 per head, Rs1010 per couple at Dwarika's Hotel. 479488
 □ The Cafe des Trekkers New Tibetan and French restaurant. Special Spanish Paella on 2,3,4, 9,10,11 November. Jyatha, Thamel, opposite Hotel Blue Diamond. 225777
 □ Barbecue lunch with complimentary wine or beer for adults, soft drink for children. Saturdays and Sundays at the Godavari Village Resort. 560675
 □ Rox Restaurant Traditional home-style European cuisine from a wood-fired oven. Steaks, trout, roasted vegetables, desserts. Hotel Hyatt Regency. 491234
 □ Peking Duck and Mandarin Music Chinese chefs' mild and spicy delicacies from the far-east at the Imperial Pavilion every Sunday. Hotel Shang-La. 412999
 □ Sandwiches Over the Rainbow American Diner with Fifth Avenue sandwiches, full meals at backpacker prices. Opposite Pilgrims Book House, Thamel. 426518
 □ Splash Bar and Grill New fifth-floor outlet with view of city and surrounding hills. Radisson Hotel. 411618

GETAWAYS
 □ Chiso Chiso Hawama Summer B&B package for Nepalis and expatriates. Rs 1,250 per head. Club Himalaya Nagarkot Resort. 410432, 414432
 □ Escape to Jomsom Two nights, three days, B&B package with tours and Pokhara-Jomsom return airfare. Expats \$250 per head. Valid until New Year. Jomsom Mountain Resort. 434870
 □ Dwarika's Anytime Escape under the auctioneer's hammer. Bid for a full overnight package in one of Dwarika's suites, starting from \$130 per night. Until 18 November. 479488
 □ Nagarkot Escape Weekends in cottages, views of the Himalayas, valleys and forests. Special rates for Nepalis and resident expatriates. Hotel Keyman Chautari. keyman@wink.com.np 436850

MARTIN CHAUTARI
 □ Media and democracy: Some thoughts about democracy Pratyoush Onta speaks, 20 November.
 □ Power reverses Film by Prahlad Dhakal. Dhakal leads discussion after screening, 22 November.
 Open to all. Unless otherwise indicated, all discussions are in Nepali. Both events 5.30PM, Martin Chautari, Thapathali. 256239, 240059

For inclusion in the listing send information to editors@nepalitimes.com

NEPALI WEATHER by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Enjoy this glorious weather for as long as it lasts—the wind direction changes and starts bringing in the haze again from the Gangetic plains from the southwest. A huge high pressure area over the Tibetan plateau is keeping away the effects of the cyclone over the Bay of Bengal which have only grazed Sikkim, and haven't brought any rain or snow over Nepal. This high pressure will also deflect the westerly disturbance currently over Kashmir and not bring any precipitation to the Himalaya. The days next week will be a balmy 25 but the minima are going to hit 5 degrees C on the edges of the Valley and 9 degrees C in the city.

KATHMANDU VALLEY

FR	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE
24/07	23/06	24/05	24/05	23/06

YAK YETI YAK by MIKU



BOOKWORM

Of Myths and Movement: Rewriting Chipko into Himalayan History Haripriya Rangan
 Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000
 Rs 952
 In the 1970s, local communities in Garhwal began hugging trees marked for felling in state-owned commercial enterprises in protest. This volume brings Chipko back from the realm of myth into the world of geographical history. It reveals how biography has been shaped by varying struggles over resources and how the 'sustainability' hinges on an understanding of substantive democratic processes.

Demystifying Tibet: Unlocking the Secrets of the Land of the Snows Lc Feigon
 Ivan R Dee, Chicago, 1996
 Rs 2,000

An authoritative view of the history and culture of Tibet. Feigon attempts to locate the origins of modern Tibet and sort out its controversial relationship with China. Although Tibetans and Chinese share characteristics as a result of their long association with each other, Tibetans have far more in common with their nomadic Central Asian neighbours, and the idea that Tibet is a part of China is very recent.

Courtesy Mandala Book Point, Kantipath, 227711, mandala@csf.com.np

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- HMB Mountain Biking Have your bike serviced or repaired by HMB's Professional Mechanics at the HMB Workshop. Riding gear, accessories and parts available. Second hand bikes bought/sold/ hired. New and reconditioned mountain bikes for sale. Himalayan Mountain Bikes—Tours and Expeditions. 437437.
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ART AND SOCIETY

The passionate pacifist

JANAKI GURUNG

If you walk to Basantapur on Saturday, 17 November and you pass the Kumar House you will see a pyramid of newly-harvested paddy (dhaan) with an AK-47 stuck on top. No, it will not mean an escalation of guerrilla warfare between the government and the Maoists. It will in fact be the latest installation art exhibition by Nepali artist, Jyoti Duwadi, trying to draw attention to the world's gun culture through art.

What I am trying to show is how much rice can be bought with the same amount money that it costs to buy an assault rifle," Duwadi told us while preparing for his exhibition. The show is called "Value" and will draw attention to how the economic cost of conflict exacts an emotion toll on both communities around the world.

Duwadi says he has been increasingly disturbed by the series of violent acts in the past year that have rent his motherland, and his adopted home, America. In earlier visits to Nepal, Duwadi had been concerned about the escalating Maoist violence, and just when he thought things couldn't get worse, the local massacre happened in Nepal, and then the World Trade Centre bombings. In despair, this passionate pacifist is trying to connect the connections between human conflict, militarisation, poverty and despair.

Duwadi is trying to collect as many of the names of the estimated 2,000 Nepalis who have died in the past six years of Maoist violence as possible and these will be exhibited alongside the rice. Visitors will be encouraged to light oil lamps and burn incense so that the artwork itself becomes a shrine and a memorial for the souls of the dead.

On Tuesday, the dhaan will be put into jute sacks and marked with the names of Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Congo and other countries torn by war, and replica rifle will be laid alongside the sacks to symbolise an end to violence.

Using dhaan for Duwadi is a metaphor for peace and regenera-



tion, and the artist says he is inspired by the poetry of his grandfather, poet Dharam Dhar Koirala who wrote 50 years ago:

*Nepal, your smiling face
 Would I see at, or, the without
 This is the worry that aches my heart
 Towards hope or despair.*

Duwadi left Nepal in 1971 and did his PhD in political science from Claremont. But his heart was always in art, and he did his first show in 1978 and has exhibited regularly in the US. In 1994 he came to Nepal on a brief stint with the United Nations. He has done several exhibitions in Nepal before, including one on nags, the serpent saviours of the water and air. "I want to generate an interest in the environment, and the nags were the perfect symbol," he adds.

An artist turns his craft to healing the world and Nepal of violence and conflict.

"Does he feel the tug of home, that why he has kept in touch with his homeland and keeps coming back? Absolutely. This is where my roots are, this is my connection to my past, my ancestors, my being." Duwadi's art form demonstrates this symbolic link to the land; his ongoing exhibition in the Siddhartha Art Gallery is called: "Earth Drawings to Digital Prints". (See below)

In his exhibits on display there, he took soil from Nepal, the United States and rubbed it on to produce colours and patterns that have a near-hypnotic effect.

In his heart of hearts, Duwadi is concerned about the global culture of violence and the effect it has on the human soul. Through art, he hopes to heal himself and

FAREWELL TO A PRINCESS



(From top to bottom) Princess Prekshya's body arrives at Kathmandu airport on Monday evening on a Royal Nepal Army Avro. King Gyanendra and Crown Prince Paras arrive at Pashupati for the funeral. Princess Prekshya's daughters, Shishima and Dilshani with Queen Komal prepare to guard the late Princess. Queen Komal and the Princess' two daughters bid a tearful farewell to a sister and mother.

Art, manipulated by AJIT BARAL

Art, manipulated

In other paintings, instead of working on the images available to him, Duwadi has created images that are purely abstract. On account of this, try as one might, it is difficult for the viewer to relate them to everyday reality. So one looks for aesthetic beauty in these images, and there one runs into another matter. Possibly because we are used to conventional paintings and colours, the images and their colours, while nice to look at, don't really strike a chord. Digital prints seem to lack that immediacy of colour and texture that conventional paintings have. Perhaps this is why the painting called Earth Drawing, though rather—a few lines drawn unaided by the computer—has a different, more appealing feel than the rest of the paintings.

Also on display at the Siddhartha Art Gallery is the work of Sandy Shum, a photographer from Thailand. Shum likes to call her work impressionistic photographs and, like Jyoti Duwadi's paintings, her photographs will be new to a Nepali audience. Shum has many photographed sculptures of the Buddha, Swayambhu

temple, gongs, bells and the windchimes—coloured pieces of cloth printed with Buddhist texts—that we see festooned around gompas. The subjects seems ordinary. But Shum's photographs are anything but.

She forges the idea of photographic reality and subverts the very essence of photography—that of capturing a subject precisely, in its finely detailed glory. Instead, they are rather characterised by vague, blurred lines and textures, very much like those in impressionist paintings. Some of Shum's subjects have hard, bone-like feel, similar to mixed media painting that uses adhesive. How she achieves this is simple—Shum presses a rounded nub of a special kind of pen against the Polaroid of a photograph and then prints it to get different textures. The process demands creativity, however—particularly in deciding what texture suits which surface.

Shum's photographs are different, no doubt. But are they beautiful? More beautiful than they would have been without being manipulated in Polaroid? This reviewer has his reservations. □

The work of Jyoti Duwadi and Sandy Shum is on view at the Siddhartha Art Gallery until 26 November, 11AM-6PM, Sunday through Friday.



Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

The mother of all inventions

A s a card-carrying nabob of negativism and a chronic cynic, it is difficult for this scribe to see non-existent silver linings on alleged clouds because usually pessimistic sources have just told us on condition of complete anonymity that the sky is about to fall anyway.

However, stung by recent criticism that I am habitually putting down the accomplishments of Nepalis from all walks of life, I have vowed now never to make fun again of the great strides taken by this country in the field of high technology research and development. My Nepal Era New Year Resolution this week is to make amends and recognise the tremendous achievements of our young scientists as they

Moving swiftly along, Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and senior members of his cabinet took a couple of hours off their strategy meetings in preparation for talks with Maoist guerrillas on Monday, to meet the inventor in a secure bunker inside Bhanuwar where the decision seems to have been taken that Nepal should pursue its research into a Missile Defence Shield and weapons of mass destruction.

The Prime Minister is also extremely concerned about Biraj's security in this age of international terrorism, and has instructed that the young scientist be given 24-hour security to prevent al-Qaeda operatives from kidnapping him. We cannot let such sensitive technology get into the wrong hands.



push the frontiers of science.

Nepalis are today going boldly forth where no Nepali has gone before, and this includes to the Federated States of Micronesia.

The best example of Nepalis dazzling the world is the news published in a national daily on Monday (right) of an eighth grader named Biraj who has designed a Three-stage, Booster-assisted, Laser-tracking, Heat-seeking, Sub-orbital, Semi-guided Launch Vehicle with a 50 Kilo-ton, Autonomous Nuclear Ultra-warhead capable of flattening an area of 27,000 sq km. Let me take a moment here to pay tribute to the intrepid investigative journalists who brought this news to the attention of the Nepal public, thereby restoring our confidence in this country's glorious future, and to show that if we all pull together there is nothing to stop us from being a parish nation that is feared and respected by all.

The Royal Nepal Academy for Science and Technology (RONAST), which has always shown exemplary open-mindedness to new ideas, has passed on this Star Wars invention to its Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Research Division, and will soon be giving 15-year-old Biraj permission to use the Army's missile test range in Rohini Bhanuwar.



Since this last report came out, we have also learnt that RONAST has been secretly involved in other areas of high-technology applications. Documents leaked to us show:

- The Royal Nepal Navy has already designed and built a prototype nuclear-powered submarine which has undergone high-speed, hot-pursuit trials in Begnas Lake.
- Nepal's space programme suffered a set-back when the countdown for the launch of our nation's first hunter-killer satellite (codename: *Dandi-Bu 1-B*) from the summit of Mt Everest had to be called off at the last minute as word came from Paris that a minister had just sold off our geostationary Indian Ocean orbital slot to a private company.
- Our labs have bred a genetically modified Turbo Yam endowed with a sylem that allows the super cyber not to be restricted in its growth by stones to the north or south.
- Our researchers haven't forgotten consumer electronics, and in an effort to automate every facet of national life, they are presently conducting field trials of a laser-guided precision nostril hair plucker that can also multi-task as an ear wax excavator and a belly-button lint remover. (Especially useful for civil servants who don't have much to do in their offices between the festivals.)

NEPALI SOCIETY

Bhakta Bahadur's Malaya

A t the age of six, his parents left their home village in Gopika and took Bhakta Bahadur Rana with them to Burma. That was a time when thousands of Nepalis from the midhills left their impoverished villages and headed east in search of work—to Darjeeling, Assam and further to Burma and Thailand. Bhakta Bahadur's parents were in the Thai town of Surat Thani when the war erupted. The Japanese were in Burma, and at age 16 Bhakta Bahadur left his parents and went to work in a rubber plantation in Malaya.

But in 1942 the war pursued him there. When it was all over, south-east Asia lay in ruins, the Japanese were gone but anti-colonial civil wars continued. In the jungles of the Malayan peninsula, Maoist guerrillas were

battling the British, and Bhakta Bahadur joined up with the colonial police as a staff sergeant. "Fifty years ago I fought Maoists in Malaya, now I see Maoists in my own country. Sometimes life is very ironic," rued Bhakta Bahadur during a Dasain trip to Nepal to make pilgrimages to Janakpur, Manakamana and Muktinath. Bhakta Bahadur looks much younger than his 80 years, and despite a fall from a horse in Muktinath after which he was evacuated by helicopter to Jomsom, he looked none the worse for it.

Today, Bhakta Bahadur and his son run a successful security agency. "I hire only Nepalis, they are my blood, you have to help people of your own blood," Bhakta Bahadur has given employment to more than 300 Nepalis in Malaysia many of them body guards for VIPs and business executives.

Bhakta Bahadur is the patriarch of the Nepali community in Malaysia, and often takes up the problems of the estimated 5,000 Malaysians of Nepali origin directly with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad. The latest case involved the predominantly-Nepali town of Rawang which was directly in the path of a new highway, the inhabitants were relocated and their housing needs taken care of.

Bhakta Bahadur says he has deep attachment to his Nepali roots and is worried about how younger Malaysian Nepalis are losing touch. That is why he gets the community to celebrate Dasain, speak Nepali and keep their Nepali identity. His only regret in life: "I never really had the time to study. Today the youngsters are all well-educated and it has opened their eyes."

Even without education, Bhakta Bahadur has the wisdom and vision to lead his community. Common sense and generosity, it seems, do not need education. "I have become religious in my old age," he admitted to us. "I have understood the value of my homeland, my soil, my water. I will come back and die here." □

