Peace by peace

ANALYSIS BY KUNDA DIXIT

A s Dasain approaches there are indications that both sides will observe an unofficial festival truce, but prospects of peace talks to resolve the conflict are more remote than ever.

A purported statement from the Maoists declaring a Dasain-Tihar ceasefire on Tuesday turned out to be a hoax. Rebel spokesman Krishna Bahadur Mahara set the record straight by dashes off an e-statement, but that was followed on Wednesday by another release purportedly signed by Prachanda saying the original statement was correct and ‘action’ would be taken against Mahara.

Analysts do not rule out the possibility of army disinformation at work, and see signs of a rift in the Maoist hierarchy following the group’s plenum in Dang last month which reportedly rejected peace talks for now. The meeting was followed by strident anti-Indian rhetoric and an intriguing silence on the part of Baburam Bhattarai, who is said to have favoured a softer line on India.

The contradictions between central-level statements about ‘links to fraternal parties’ and recent attacks on the leftist United People’s Front in the mid-west hint at a breakdown in control. While the leadership calls on UN mediation, grassroots militancy defies international condemnation of forced recruitment of school students, abduction of a Unicef staffer and looting of WFP aid.

In eastern Nepal there have been defections by senior command- ers disillusioned with the violence and hardship. And tensions are simmering between the Maoist central command and its regional autonomous units.

Despite signs of internal tension, the Maoist party is not about to split. One veteran general told us: “We shouldn’t be trying to divide them. If you do that, there is a danger of the conflict spinning out of control, with ethnic-based warlords taking over.”

Nepal’s Maoist revolution is part of a wider international revolutionary struggle. The country is often cited in Maoist literature as a ‘showcase revolution’ and references are made to finishing off what Mao Zedong started in China. Frequent expressions of solidarity by foreign comrades, and reports of intimate links with Indian Maoists could indicate coordination of strategy on Nepal.

This outside dimension is now recognised by Indian intelligence, which, after eight years, has finally admitted that Nepali Maoists have a safe haven in India. Noted Indian commentators warn this is now more India’s problem than Nepal’s. Even so, Indian and Nepali Maoists are said to have met in Calcutta this week right under the noses of the Indians. The People’s War Group in Andhra Pradesh is trying to negotiate with the state government in Hyderabad, and whatever the outcome, it will be significant for Nepal.

In Kathmandu, there is a reciprocal hardening of stance in government and military circles. The brutality of Nepal’s war is beginning to attract international attention with rights groups issuing reports this week covering both sides for widespread abuses (see p8-9). The hope lies in the only power centre that needs peace to survive: the political parties. Those on the streets and in Singhda Durbar urgently need to stop bickering among themselves and, with the king, launch joint peace moves...
DISAPPEARED RIGHTS

We have now given up trying to believe that the two sides in this country’s mad conflict ever want to stop fighting. Oh yes, they’ll talk about peace, about “maximum flexibility” and how they don’t believe in a military solution. They may suspend the slaughter temporarily over the holidays, but nothing longer. It is as if their very existence now depends on extending the conflict—the military so it can bolster its strength, and the rebels because if the killings stop they may turn against them. The palace doesn’t want to compromise, and the comrades think forcing the people to live through this nightmare is the only way to realise their discredited utopian dream.

But if they don’t want to stop the war, the least they can do is fight it according to the rules. There are laws enshrined in international charters that bind both state and non-state belligerents: if you must kill each other, go ahead, but don’t kidnap unarmed civilians, don’t summarily execute anyone (not even an enemy combatant) after capture, allow harvest members unhindered access to detainees, don’t disappear people.

This is a dirty war, and impunity is rife. The guilty may be identified, but they are never caught and punished. The full rate may have gone down this year compared to 2003, but the fall in fatalities is more than compensated by the extreme brutality of the murders—mercyless butchery that would make Dasai sacrifices look humane. Dozens of nails are hammered into a victim’s skull one by one, decapitation in days is not uncommon, and if there is a fate worse than death for relatives of victims, it is the turn against them. The palace doesn’t want to compromise, and the armed forces are quite happy to continue the war.

The Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports released this week put it in perspective, telling the tale of a population caught in the vice of war. “Neither the government nor the Maoists are particularly concerned with the protection of civilians while they fight this dirty war,” says the HRW report while documenting cases of extra-judicial executions.

The rebels are outliers, we don’t expect much from them. But a state can’t say ‘they started it first’, ‘they are worse’, or ‘they also do it to us’. A state party allowed by law to legitimately carry arms must answer to the laws of the land and international statutes to which Nepal is signatory.

The HRW report, Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Civilians Struggle to Survive in Nepal’s Civil War, documents individual horror that adds up to a shocking national tragedy.

It is not that we did not know all this was happening around us. Some editors@nepalitimes.com, www.nepalitimes.com

Last of the mandarins

History is just a collection of biographies of historic personalities.

In the Madhuban, Bhisma Pitamah cuts a sorry figure. He is tormented by the contradictions between his convictions and his loyalty to the king. Since the crown and the country are one and the same for him, loyalty triumphs and he finds himself siding with the palace and against the people. Such is the fate of courtiers who have served unjust rulers out of a sense of duty towards their country.

In the Nepali bureaucracy of the last century, Ram Mani Acharya Dixit was perhaps one of the first mandarins to wield enormous influence by virtue of his proximity to the all-powerful Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shumshere. Chandu used Ram Mani’s native genius to keep the Mahabir Gyan’s back and the country with the advice of these two brilliant babus. With their help, Chandu acquired some growing clout with the British over the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers and the mercenary services rendered by the Royal Nepali Army on the side of the British Empire.

Thirty years later, in Sardar Bhim Bahadur Pande, Juddha Shumshere found a young mandarin who could help him make money by clearing the buzz about setting up factories with public money, and running trading enterprises in discreet partnership with Newar and Marwari entrepreneurs. But Juddha was too impetuous to command the loyalty of anyone for too long and ultimately had to go into hiding.

King Tribhuvan relied heavily on the Indian brown sahibs, Bhugwan Babu and CPS Singha, the young lions of the court.

But there were always at loggerheads with the leaders of the Nepali Congress and this raised their stature in Narayanhiti. During Rana rule, Narayanhiti used to be a punishment post for bureaucrats. After the Shah Restoration, it became the sole power centre.

King Mahendra’s kingdom was run like a fiefdom. In the beginning, he didn’t have much use for the services of intelligent courtiers. But as Nepal opened its doors to the frigid outside world of the Cold War, he had no option but to take notice of family faithful, Pandu Babaur Khatri and scholar and thinker, Yadavindra Kahan. In time, Sardar Yadunath served as our ambassador to China, India, and the United States at crucial periods of Nepal’s relationship with these countries. He may have been spotted by King Mahendra, but he served King Birendra with no less distinction.

King Birendra had bigger plans. Initially, let’s bet the wizened mandarins fade away and handpicked whiz-kids as crown jewels for their promise rather than performance: Bilek Bahadur Thapa, Hakka Gurung, Pushpabati Shumshere for international Mohini, and Mohan Man Sainju. But in later years, he also fell back on his own mandarins: Ranjan Raj Khanal as domestic affairs counsellor, Narayan Prasad Shrestha, the adviser on finance and foreign relations and Chiranj Thapa as media manager. It’s not yet clear who King Gyanendra’s mandarins are, but our ambassador in New Delhi is one of them. Karn Dhoj Adhikari may be new to diplomacy, but he is a veteran of the Nepali bureaucracy having served in the ministries of finance and home before rising to the crucial post of chief secretary during King Birendra’s rule.

Nepali politics and diplomacy to the outsiders in his books: Reflections On Nepal-India Relations, Stray Thoughts, Nepal’s Transition from Isolationism, and Nepal After Democratic Restoration.

The passing away of Sardar Yadunath Kahan (picturred, above) ended an era in the history of Nepali bureaucracy. The civil service isn’t calling for the best and the brightest in the land anymore. Now it is just a career option, Yadunath Kahan passed away peacefully on Saturday, and it was a mark of the man that he didn’t want any fanfare and elaborate coverage to record his passing. All we have are his books to refulve a tumultuous period of Nepal history of which he was such an important part. •
Give me a break. They want to keep mum when we need you? Why do you keep mum when we need you?

Daniel

I am struck by an uncanny biblical parallel: wasn’t it the prophet Daniel who saw the writing on the wall and warned his king of impending doom? Our very own Daniel Lak has now rightly warned us of the great ruin that awaits us when the Big One strikes. (‘The Big One’, #215). The sudden interest shown even by my otherwise unconcerned daughter, among many others, is an indication that Lak’s readers have got the message about the dangers posed by earthquakes in Nepal. We can’t prevent earthquakes, but we can be better prepared, and community organisations under NSET-Nepal have been set up for just that. It would be good if the media took time off from reporting beauty contests, fashion parades and changa chaits to see the excellent work that has been going on in disaster preparedness and mitigation.

Bibhuti Man Singh
Ward 17 Disaster Mgmt Committee, Chitrapati

Lal Salam
O K Lal in his State of the State column seems to give more importance to the street protests in the name of so-called ‘regression’ than the Maoists problem. (‘Blind alley’, #216). I think the present government represents a majority of the political parties and it should receive cooperation from all sections of the society including the ones chanting slogans against ‘regression’. Lal seems to be exhorting parties in streets to conduct more bandas, jams, torch-rallies, tyre-burning activities etc where the right to demonstrate and speak of the agitators are upheld while common citizens’ right to movement is curtailed via hours of traffic jams and prohibition to enter many parts of the capital where demonstrations occur. Lal should appreciate the present government and its allies for trying to create a favourable environment to hold peace talks. The only way out of the present political stalemate is the free and fair election of the house than its restoration.

Bikendra Shamsher Thapa
Kathmandu

WHERE ARE YOU?
I was wondering what are Charitraheen Chelis doing these days? They were conspicuously quite during Tij, the ultimate celebration of Nepali womanhood. I waited with baited breath, but alas they have chosen to keep quiet. After all, Bandana Rana spoke eloquently about Tij (‘Tij with Bandana’, #214) and her views made more sense to me than any other definition of Tij I had ever heard in my life. And one letter writer in the next issue chose to misinterpret it as Rana possibly having ‘some personal prejudice against marriage and husband’. Charitraheen Chelis, where are you when we need you? Why do you keep mum when we need you?

Sanjana Shrestha, New Road

Bhola Thapa
I just want to add to the views expressed by Bhola Thapa regarding the location of a Cantas subsidiary based on Singapore flying Singapore-Nepal sector with a view to providing a connection to/from Australia. ‘We are all waiting for a truce’, #216). It would be convenient for tens of thousands of Nepali diaspora in Australia to travel back and forth to Nepal. At the same time, it would also provide a faster passage to Nepal for many thousand Nepalis from the most parts of the US. This makes such good business sense, I wonder why many airlines haven’t acted upon it yet.

Santosh Aryan, Sydney

STAVASTHYKO LAHGI HATIKARAK CHY

Do you know that Convergence Technology is at your doorstep?

SIT BACK. RELAX AND HAVE PEACE OF MIND

Get Convergence Technology at both Broadband Cable Internet and 68 high quality TV Channels through the same cable. No need to worry about telephone bills anymore.

Switch on to Broadlink

Where reality exceeds expectations

Visit www.subisubisul.com

Call 4429616 or 4429617
“I can win.”

Johannes Krebs, a German writer who has interviewed Sobhraj, says that Sobhraj has a strange and complicated personality. To him, Sobhraj is a character who can be unpredictable and bizarre. Krebs notes that Sobhraj can be charming and engaging, but also aloof and distant, making it difficult to get to know him.

Krebs adds that Sobhraj is a thinker and a writer, with a particular interest in philosophy and religion. He has written extensively on these topics, both in his prison cell and before his conviction. Krebs believes that Sobhraj’s inclination towards philosophy and religion is a reflection of his complex personality and his desire to understand the world around him.

Krebs notes that Sobhraj is a person who is always seeking to learn and to grow. He is never satisfied with what he knows, and he is always looking for new knowledge and new experiences. For Krebs, this is what makes Sobhraj such an intriguing and fascinating person.

Krebs concludes by stating that Sobhraj is a person who is always striving to be better, to do better, and to achieve more. Despite his challenges and setbacks, he remains committed to his goals and to his vision of himself as a person who can make a difference in the world.

“John McBeth in JAKARTA

Twenty-eight years ago, Dutch diplomat Herman Knippenberg sat in his rented house off Bangkok’s busy Sukhumvit Road pulling documents and photographs from a bulky green manila folder.

For several hours, stretching into that soft, long evening, he described to this writer in astonishing detail the chilling story of a smooth-talking Vietnamese-Indian serial killer, a French national who had lured gullible young foreign tourists to their deaths in countries across Asia.

Frustrated by the Thai police’s lack of interest, Knippenberg, then 32, had done almost all of the investigation himself, helped initially by what he called his “action team”—three colleagues from the Belgian and American embassies and his so-called agent-in-place, housewife Nadine Gires, the killer’s 22-year-old neighbour. It was only after Knippenberg had stitched the case together, carefully preserving his role from public scrutiny, that the Thais were prodded into action.

By then, 12 people had fallen victim to a killer who may have been the perfect real-life incarnation of one of his most dangerous characters—a cultured, cunning, satanically handsome villain with a compulsion to do evil. Charles Garmukh Sobhraj, now 60, was the victim of obsession, a fastidious, pathological
Francophile fluent in five languages, is now in a jail in Kathmandu.

Sobhraj was arrested in India in July 1976 and jailed for 12 years for the manslaughter of a French student and an Israeli tourist, and for drugging 22 members of a French tourist party who had dropped like flies in the lobby of a New Delhi hotel. But it is only now, seven years after Sobhraj eventually won his freedom, that Knippenberg believes justice has finally been served.

On 19 September last year, the day the Dutchman retired from the diplomatic service, Nepali police arrested Sobhraj in the bushes at Kathmandu’s Yak and Yeti Hotel, two days after a local journalist had recognised him in the street. And in August this year, the Kathmandu District Court jailed him for life on stabbing 28-year-old American backpacker Connie Brencht to death outside Kathmandu on 22 December 1975. Her Canadian boyfriend, Laurent Carriere, 26, had been murdered the day before, but that case was dropped because Nepali police couldn’t find the files.

The key evidence in rebuilding the Bronzic case came from Knippenberg’s four boxes of material, including yellowed photographs, extensive witness statements and photocopies of embarkation cards, flight manifests and passports. Knippenberg kept these with him in a diplomatic career that subsequently took him from Thailand to the United States, Indonesia, Austria, Luxembourg, Greece and New Zealand.

“I couldn’t forget him. It was like having malaria,” the 60-year-old Harvard graduate recalls from his retirement home in Wellington. “Every couple of years or so something would happen that would draw me back into the case again.”

Because of the case, Knippenberg, a doctor’s son from a small Dutch town near the German border, never did finish his PhD dissertation on That counterinsurgency operations. But he was to prove himself outstandingly able in something he had never prepared for: police work. As one senior Thai police general was to tell him: “I think you’re a natural.”

Sobhraj, the object of four books and three documentaries, managed to elude the full weight of the law for so long because Thai police, in particular, could not conceive of a foreign serial killer preying on tourists. The Siueng-born Sobhraj took breathtaking risks, but he also relied on the ineptitude of police in drawing links between seven brutal murders that took place in Thailand between August-December 1975.

It was Knippenberg who made the connections. Once asked about the tenacious Dutch detective who has never met, Sobhraj responded: “I don’t know what he has against me.” But the two have been bound together for over 30 years by the charred bodies of Dutch born Indonesian Henk Bintanja, 29, and his girlfriend, Cornelis Hemker, 25, were found on a roadside north of Bangkok.

That was on 6 December 1975. Knippenberg, at that time a third secretary at the Netherlands embassy, was given the task of finding out what had happened to the two backpackers. It was to set him on a pan-Asian trail of murder, robbery, smuggling and deceit that consumed much of his spare time, even after he was told by his superiors to stop his detective work.

In the late 1970s, Sobhraj gave interviews in jail to author Richard Neville and, in 1984, to Bangkok-based journalist Alan Dawson. Sobhraj talked of, but didn’t actually admit to, the 12 murders he is alleged to have committed with two accomplices. Looking back, Dawson says, “He gave a reason for doing it that white people had envisaged Asians with drugs and he was getting his own back without actually saying he did it.” Of Sobhraj’s alleged accomplices, his French-Canadian girlfriend, Marie-Antwerp Leclerc, then 21, has since died of cancer. Indian Ajay Chowdhury, 22 at the time of the murders, has never been caught.

By the time Knippenberg entered the picture, Sobhraj had already claimed his first five victims, most of whom had spent time at his Bangkok apartment. Astonishingly, on 8 December, 1975, the day the bodies of the Dutch couple were identified, Sobhraj and Leclerc: used the passports of their victims to fly to Kathmandu. And when they returned to Thailand on 21 December, they were travelling on the passports of Carriere and Bronzich.

Urged on by Knippenberg, Thai police briefly detained the three suspects in March 1976, then inexplicably released them hours later. The following month, with Sobhraj and Leclerc: long gone, Knippenberg was given police permission to carry out his own search of the Bangkok apartment. There, he found the personal effects of many of Sobhraj’s victims and eight types of medicines, including injectables and six bottles of an anti-diarrhoea medicine laced with rat poison.

By then the two were in Europe, but it wasn’t long before they were back in India. Naibed after the tour-party incident, Sobhraj spent the next 10 years in New Delhi’s Tihar jail. In March, 1986, two years before his scheduled release, he escaped. He was later recaptured in Goa and given another ten-year sentence, avoiding extradition to Thailand where he would have faced almost certain execution. When he finally walked free in February 1997, memories had lapsed and so had the Thai army-execution, which had expired a year before.

Sobhraj was deputy chief of mission in Athens at the time. “I thought, my God, let’s not complain,” he says. “It was terrible, of course, because of the serious injustices dealt, but at the same time I said to myself that after all the disappointments we had got more than we expected. Given the rate he killed, we had probably saved the lives of 50 young people or more by keeping him in jail.”

Sobhraj then lived for more than six years in the suburbs of Paris, revealing for a while in his notoriety. What made him return to Nepal is difficult to fathom. Knippenberg thinks Sobhraj knowingly took the risk to attract attention, letting himself believe, like many serial killers, that his superior intelligence would one day get him off the hook.

Except for this time, he forgot about a man who had never given up the hunt.

END OF THE ROAD: Retired Dutch detective Herman Knippenberg...
It will be safer in India. I am going to India to find work there. Here it’s difficult to survive once they have surrendered their weapons and death threats.

Some of the villagers had some money and paid Rs 2,200 each to take a helicopter out of Muga, but most are still stuck there. Living in Muga for 12 days proved to be too expensive, so a lot of them moved down to the regional headquarters in Camposari.

The refugees have approached government offices in Sukhet which oversees 15 mid-western districts, in the hope that the government will help them. But no assistance is forthcoming. “If the government is unable to provide us with food, clothes and lodging by Dasain, we have decided to

Whole timer quits

Bhojpur resident and former area-in-charge of the Maoist 5th Eastern District of the 6th Area, Raj Kumar Shrestha (seen above with his son), used to be a NC member. In May 2001 he went underground and later was responsible for the kidnapping of UML student leader, Rajendra Rai. On 13 September, he surrendered with weapons and subsequently fled to India with his family.

Excerpts from an interview:

Why did you quit the Maoists?
People are killed like animals. We had to threaten and frighten people to make them listen to us. We had to tell lies, saying that we were taking over the country and that we had done well for 85 percent of the population. Once I realised that nothing was going to be accomplished by all this, I decided to leave.

What was the situation of the party?
After the killings escalated, everyone was scared and tried to run away. We didn’t have enough weapons and lived in constant fear that somewhere, somehow the security forces would kill us. Now in Bhojpur there are less than 150 ‘whole-timers’, most of them have left. Even the ones who remain are looking for the opportunity to leave the Maoists and surrender. The activists have become like trapped animals—if you’re a rebel, it’s at the risk of losing your life.

But the Maoists still control the villages, don’t they? It’s only like that because the security forces haven’t been able to reach these places. The Maoists have been intimidating villagers with their weapons and death threats.

What are you planning to do now that you have left the Maoists? I am going to India to find work there. Here it’s difficult to survive once you abandon the Maoists as they will hunt you down and execute you. It will be safer in India.
commit collective suicide,” says a desperate Dhan Lal Buda.

Hari Krishna Buda says he is now more worried about surviving than about the Maoists. “I told my wife’s jewellery and the children’s bangles to take the helicopter to come to Surkhet, but here there is no place to stay and nothing to eat,” he says. Relief organisations have been providing some food and clothing, but this is hardly sufficient.

On 21 September the Maoists forced 3,000 teachers and civil servants in Surkhet to openly surround the district education office to pressure it into meet the rebels’ 15-day ultimatum to fulfill demands. One teacher at the march said he and others had been threatened by the Maoists to stage the demonstration. Previous protests had been much smaller, and the teachers said they had no option but to obey.

The Maoists are demanding the government turn down American aid for education, the security forces stop troubling teachers, students and schools and measures be put in place to make temporary teachers permanent. Then on 26 September, almost 1,000 families in Surkhet were forced to send letters to the government demanding relatives working in the security forces be sent home immediately. The Maoists threatened to run them out of their villages if they didn’t.

Amar Deb Gir of Birauli, who has a son in the army, has been forced to write a letter saying: “We want our sons back, the jobs aren’t important.” Another parent told us: “If we don’t get our sons back, they won’t let us enter our villages.”

Bal Ram Acharya, whose son is a soldier, says out of sheer desperation: “They should send our sons back or hold peace talks immediately.”

## 3 Steps to a Perfect Holiday in Malaysia

1. **Pick up your Phone**
2. **Dial 2012345**
3. **Overwhelm your wife later in the evening.**

A dream Holiday in Malaysia is within your reach. Even The Price. Just call 2012345 to find out about our fantastic holiday packages to Malaysia from Kathmandu.

Beaches in the morning, shopping in the afternoon, fly home at night. You will call it the perfect holiday; we will simply call it Malaysia. Never in a hundred years would you dream a better way to spend a week with your family.

5 nights of Dream holidays, including return tickets with Qatar Airways, stay at the Rs. 40,000 per person. Call today to find out more about fixed departures schedules.

---

**INSPIRE YOUR WORLD**

**FREEDOM OF LIGHTS**

STATUTORY DIRECTIVE: SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH
A climate of intense fear

102-page report by Human Rights Watch describes a disturbing picture of the human rights situation in Nepal, saying civilians are caught in the middle and neither side seems concerned about protecting innocents.

The report, called Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Civilians Struggle to Survive in Nepal’s Civil War, was launched on Thursday by Senior Emergency Researcher Peter Bouckaert, who has traveled to many parts of Nepal to document cases of abuse (see interview, below).

The New York-based agency said that while both the government and the rebels have made repeated commitments to protect human rights, in practice both have ignored them. The government has rejected virtually all allegations of abuse by its forces, and the Maoists have responded to allegations of abuse by maligning their victims.

“Rampant abuses have created a climate of intense fear in Nepal’s villages,” said Brad Adams, executive director of Human Rights Watch.

The report contains detailed case studies of extrajudicial killings, disappearances and abductions by both the security forces and the Maoists. It also describes the forced Maoist indoctrination of school children, teachers and the recruitment of children.

The report ends with recommendations to the government to take steps to ensure that security forces comply with the requirements of international human rights and humanitarian law.

The Human Rights Watch also urges the kings to accept the recommendations placed on his role under the 1990 constitution and to elect their representatives at the local and national levels. It wants the international community to keep up the pressure on both sides to observe human rights, and Nepal’s arms suppliers to monitor the use of the weapons they supply.

Banke

19 June, 2003

Around 10:30 PM a group of men who identified themselves as Maoists came to the village of Bhandariya and rounded up about 14 men. They were told to bring a high impact explosive and to pick up ‘chicken style’, a squatting position with their arms looped under their knees and tied up behind their ears. Villagers, including family members and children, were gathered around, watching.

The Maoists shouted at the men, claiming that they had passed information against the Maoists to the army. Among other things, the Maoists said: “Three of our comrades were killed. We are fighting for you and you dare betray us.”

The villagers believe that this was a reference to an army ambush near their village in which some Maoists, including a senior commander had been killed. Half an hour later some of the men were released. The Maoists took away four men: Jahara Sheikh, Triveni Prasad Baniya, Shaijad Ali Sheikh and Chief Prasad Sharma. Shortly thereafter, villagers heard the sound of gunfire from the fields. They formed a search group, and found the bodies. All four had been shot and their legs and arms had been broken.

Villagers noticed what looked like burn marks on Baniya’s body. His foot had been twisted around completely. Jahara Sheikh had bullet wounds in his forehead and his temple. His eye had come out of its socket with the force of the bullet. One of the four men survived the shooting, although he spent six months recovering in Bheri Zonal Hospital. He is still unable to walk properly. (HRW report)

Kabhre

4 February, 2004

Devi Sunuwar of Kabhre was a witness to an extrajudicial execution by government forces and gave statements to journalists and human rights workers. Within days, her daughter, a 15-year-old girl, was killed, reportedly by the Maoists.

Peter Bouckaert (above, right) has worked as Senior Emergency Researcher at Human Rights Watch in Chechnya, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Indonesia, Rwanda and Burundi. He has been in Nepal for the past month to help prepare HRW’s report, Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Civilians Struggle to Survive in Nepal’s Civil War, which was launched on Thursday. He spoke to Nepali Times about the seriousness of the crisis.

Nepal can’t

How does Nepal compare with other human rights hot spots where you have worked?

What is disturbing about Nepal is that although it is a relatively low-intensity conflict in terms of the daily fighting that goes on, it is extremely deadly. A lot of civilians are caught up and are casualties, or are being disappeared. This is a conflict that has a very high impact on the civilian population. It is a difficult guerilla war where it is hard to find the Maoist rebels, so a lot of times civilians get caught in the middle.

How different are the abuses committed by the two sides?

The kind of abuses committed by the Maoists and the government are very different in nature. What we find on the Maoist side is a very targeted campaign against certain categories of people like landowners, people who refuse to pay extortion demands people they perceive as spies and then there are peaceful political opponents from the RPP to the Congress and other political parties. They are extremely brutal in their methods that they use to control their areas. We have documented many killings by the Maoists which are basically demonstration killings; they are used to demonstrate to the population what happens when you oppose them. Particularly when the Maoists start targeting teachers and peaceful political opponents in the areas under their control, we get very concerned about their commitment to very basic issues of democracy and human rights.

And the security forces?

On the military side we find an army relatively uprooted and untrained to deal with the kind of military challenges they face. Traveling through Nepal from the east to the west, it becomes obvious how difficult it is to deal with an insurgency movement like the Maoists. We found that the army and the
Dallit school girl named Maina Sunuwar, was accused of providing food to Maoists and was taken away by soldiers. Since Devi was not at home at that time, the soldiers left a message with her husband, asking Devi to come to the barracks to secure the release of their daughter. When she went to the army, she was told that her daughter was not in custody. When the Human Rights Watch asked the army about Maina’s whereabouts, it insisted that an inquiry had been ordered and that the girl was not in army custody. It claimed that Devi Sunuwar was a liar who had lied about her niece’s execution and was now lying about her daughter’s disappearance. Yet in April 2004, Devi was finally told by an international agency that her daughter was killed by security forces on the very day that she was taken into custody, a fact later confirmed to Human Rights Watch by the local district administration. Not only had the army denied the arrest when questioning Devi and Hindus, she and thousands of others who have been visiting the family’s house regularly since then. Frightened by these visits and fearing another arrest and murder, the Sunuwar family left their home and are forced to earn a living as migrant labourers. Currently, soldiers are still turning up, questioning neighbors about the family.

(HRW report)

Kathmandu

15 February, 2004

Ganesh Chilwal, a 35-year-old father of two, was gunned down in broad daylight by the Maoists for his work advocating on behalf of the victims of Maoist abuses. Chilwal was an active member of the Nepali Congress and in 1998 he had been attacked by Maoists in his home village for his party activities. He was cut out over his body, leading to three months of hospitalisation. After this experience, he founded the Maoist Victims Association, an NGO working to help civilians who had been victimised in different ways by the Maoists. As part of this work, Chilwal spoke out openly against the abuses suffered by the people who sought his organisation’s support. The Maoists started threatening Chilwal directly. He received threats to his life through letters, faxes and telephone calls. His family asked him to stop, they knew from his first experience that the Maoists could be very brutal in their assaults. On 15 February 2004, as Chilwal was leaving his office in Kathmandu, two Maoists on motorcycles fired five rounds of bullets into him. He collapsed and died almost instantly. The Maoists have since claimed responsibility for Chilwal’s murder, even posting his murder as a success on their website, Krishna Sen Online. (HRW report)

Is the situation getting better or worse in your assessment?

The situation is getting worse. The Maoists continue to attack civilians who have been victimized in different ways by the Maoists. As a result, civilians who have been victimized in different ways by the Maoists.

Do you think Nepal is capable of resolving the crisis by itself?

Nepal can’t resolve this crisis by itself and it desperately needs the help of the international community. Nepal politicians have failed the people, the palace has failed in its duty, the security forces have failed and for sure the Maoists do not provide an attractive alternative if we judge them by their actions. It is important that the international community is united in pressuring all sides in this conflict and bringing an end to the abuses, which are very much at the base of the conflict. Both the Maoists and the security forces are targeting and using civilians in the conflict. But what we see is a deep split within the international community. There are some like the European community which have taken a strong stance against the abuses, and yet they have been hampered to some extent by the much greater silence on the part of the US and, to a lesser extent, the Indian Embassy.

Has international spotlighting helped reduce abuse?

The Nepalese government is concerned and it has tried hard last year at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to defend its actions. Appropriations from the US earmarked for the Royal Nepalese Army will now only be released if the Secretary of State certifies that it is complying promptly with habeas corpus orders and cooperating with the National Human Rights Commission in giving unimpeded access to places of detention. Although, the Secretary of State may waive these requirements if he determines that to do so is in US interests. The international community must continue to be more involved and press the government to abide by its stated commitments. But it is also important for it to be united and have a strong stance on the abuses of human rights by both the Maoists and the government: not just broad statements but specific actions.

And what is your recommendation to the Maoists?

They should immediately stop abductions, torture and killing of civilians and comply with international humanitarian law. They must ensure that the rights to freedom of opinion, expression and association are safeguarded in areas under their effective control and stop punishing people for exercising these rights. They must also stop forcing entire communities to attend political indoctrination programs.
The people of Khumbu see the effects of global warming all around them

Like mountain people elsewhere, Dorje and other villagers here have never heard of global warming, which is causing the snow to melt, the glacial lakes to swell up and triggering avalanches and floods. Up here, the Sherpas blame themselves for paying less attention to dharma. Older Sherpas, including learned monks, are from the spiritual school and don’t see the rational explanation to the changes that are transforming the Himalaya in their lifetime. In 1985, the Dg Tsho glacial lake near Thame burst and the flood rushed 90km down the Dudh Kosi, killing 12 people and destroying bridges, trails and Namche Bajar’s $1.5 million hydropower plant. There were rumours that someone killed an animal and threw it into the lake, and the angry gods punished the people with the flood.

“We try to explain to them that it is all because industrialised nations are burning fossil fuels,” says Sandip C Rai, a climate change expert with the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF). “But it is hard to explain why.” Scientists say GLOF’s (glacial lake outburst flood) are caused when increased snow melt causes the glacial lakes to overflow or burst.

“We were lucky that the flood occurred during the daytime. A lot of people could have died if this had happened at night,” explains 12-year-old Ang Maya Sherpa, who was just a teenager then. Ang Maya, who took us on the eight-hour walk up to the lake, relates how the yaks tried to escape to higher ground but were swept away by the brown wall of water and ice. Nearly 20 years later, the scars of that terrible flood can still be seen on the banks of the river.

“Only humans survived that day, but lost everything,” explains 85-year-old Lama Dorje in Ghat. He lost two houses, a huge tract of land and several cattle due to the flood. “All my houses and wealth is under that debris,” says Lama Dorje, pointing to the gorge that formed when half the village was torn apart.

There are fears that Imja Lake (see pic, top), across the valley, could also burst in the next five years. A team of Japanese researchers studying the lake have assured villagers that there is no immediate danger. “The younger generation is actually more scared because they know about global warming,” says 21-year-old Tenzing K Sherpa, son of one of the five Sherpas who perished in the Hillary expedition in 1953.

Tenzing was 12 when he started working as a mountain guide, travelling frequently to Everest, Ama Dablam, Nuptse and Lhotse base camps. “My generation now understands that these things are not the Nepali people’s fault, but because of excessive fossil fuel burning that is warming the atmosphere.”

Imja Glacier is receding at an astounding 10m a year as average temperatures rise. The lake, which was first observed in 1960, is currently 100m deep, 500m wide and 2km long and holds 28 million cubic metres of water dammed behind an unstable moraine wall. If the wall breaks, the entire Dingboche valley will be swept away. “Just imagine what would happen. We shouldn’t wait for it, we should do something now,” says 13-year-old Soni Sherpa from Khumjung School, who is here on an educational tour with her class and geography teacher.
"Fresh water will dry up"

The Rinpoche of Tengboche Monastery (left) is the most revered monk in Khumbu. The Rinpoche spoke to Nepali Times about global warming and its impact on the people.

The temperature of the earth is rising. This is not natural, it is man-made. People are becoming too materialistic and care less about mountains. Climbing Everest has become a fashion. All people care about is reaching the top of Chomolungma. You can see for yourself that climbing Everest has become so easy today, unlike before. Not only are people climbing, but even racing to reach the top. I hear that some climbers reached there in just eight hours. This is happening because there is less snow. Glaciers are shrinking rapidly and we must not depend on foreigners to do everything for us. This is our home. The people of Kathmandu should take care about what they do because it affects the rest of the country. The Sherpas of Khumbu may not know everything, but they are suffering the consequences of the people’s greed. We- mountain people should be careful and take precautions. It is high time that Nepalis started to depend less on foreigners. It is not the Nepalis but the foreigners who come here and tell us that our glaciers are melting. The solution for the people in the Himalayas is not to move down to the cities. They will have more problems there. Kathmandu already has a water shortage problem. If we don’t save Khumbu today, our freshwater will dry up and the problem will be impossible to solve in the future. It does not help anyone if we remain indifferent to each other’s problems.
Dogs celebrate World Animal Day

Unknown to some of us in Nepal who have reached the pinnacle of evolution, World Animal Day came and went this week without much fanfare because no one remembered to place an ad in national broadsheets congratulating all animals in our kingdom on the auspicious occasion. Big mistake.

They are going to remember this lapse, our furry and feathered friends. They will not take it lying down, they will plot revenge and perch overhead waiting for the opportune moment and, taking careful aim, squat salad dressing into your Caesars. Ever worse.

Alfa Males will lie waiting in selected five-star holes in the city to pounce on unsuspecting journalists so they can pulverise their faces.

As we all know, Nepal would not be the same without its diverse flora and fauna. I don’t want to name names here, but there are quite a few skunks and hyenas loose on the streets who give this country its unique character and aroma. Then there is one particular guru who seems to be separated from his herd and has a swarm of gnats buzzing around him at all times. Underground, there are the barbecue rodents who are busy digging tunnels under our vital statistics.

Moving on to the Class Aves, we notice that there is now a severe shortage of doves in the city. So many of them have been symbolically released in peace rallies in recent months that activists have been forced to switch to releasing chickens which have symbolically refused to fly off and have therefore been later barbecued.

The one species that celebrated World Animal Day with its usual gusto were Kathmandu Valley’s dogs whose Annual Mating Season coincided with the event this year. Dogs and bitches from all walks of life were seen staging public interaction programs at major intersections, oblivious of the monotonous traffic jams that they were creating because entertainment-starved commuters stood around to provide moral support and to cheer them on.

Speaking on the occasion, a Sitting Member of the Standing Committee of the Raigation Subba said: “What our amorous canine comrades are doing today sets a fine example for the rest of us in our landlocked Animal Kingdom, after all, what else can we do in the current situation except stand back-to-back, hope for the best and wait for a speedy disengagement?”

What all this shuffling means, of course, is that in the next three months the torch will be passed on to another generation of puppies whose responsibility it will be to provide us security in these uncertain times by howling all night and keeping militarily strategic parts of the capital awake. The puppies will one day grow up to be fierce guardians of the territorial integrity of the Garbage Heap they call home, so no outsider can ever covet sovereignty over the succulent water buffalo entrails it contains.

No commemoration of World Animal Day will be complete without a passing reference to the city’s rat population. Cows and bulls have been providing a yeoman’s service to the Valley Traffic Police as four-legged traffic islands, often putting their life and/ or limb in harm’s way as they chew on their cuds and sweat traffic violators with their tails.

In conclusion, I would like to once more thank the livestock, poultry and canine sectors for their contribution to national development and the process of natural selection. With this dedication, I have no doubt that in the very near future you will also reach the pinnacle of evolution like us.

---

**Unmatched Features at Unbeatable Rates**

![Call anywhere in the world for Rs. 25/- per minute](image)

**VAT and T&C applicable**

---

**The Chimney**

Sizzling Chimney Flambe!

Your choice of the finest Duck, Lamb or Cottage Cheese. Polenta Triangle served Ale Coint, and caramelized onions, roasted garlic and sauces, to give your taste buds a treat.

Eight scrumptious Sizzlers. Eight flaming Flambehs. Eight mixes of Mixed Potatoes. One place to be this Autumn. The Chimney.

---

**New tariff effective from October 1, 2004 (Ashtwin 15, 2001)**

**Local Call Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Zone</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00:00 – 18:00 hrs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STD Call Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Zone</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
<th>Rate Code</th>
<th>Duration (hrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:00 – 18:00 hrs</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**No congestion-STD calls in one attempt**

---

**For further information, please contact Guest Relations of 4289999 evm. 2865.**

**Advertisement**

---

**VAT and T&C applicable**

---

**UNMETERED TELEPHONE LTD.**

---

**www.yokandycy.com**

---

**The biggest music festival of the year starts tonight!**

---

**DATE: Friday, 8th Oct 04 Time: 5 PM – 7 PM**

---

**The first full-length outdoor hip-hop concert in Nepal. Get ready to bounce to the beats of 10 Nepali hip-hop artists in the biggest Nepali party ever!**

---

**WAVE MUSIC UTSAV**

---

**DATE: 08 - 24 October, 2004**

---

**TIME: 8.30 pm onwards**

---

**VENUE: The Club, Chygin**

---

**PRICE: 499 - 1199 /- nett**

---

**Complimentary bottle of carlsberg with every order.**

---

**For Sales, pleas contact Chygin, contact number 4289999 evm. 2865.**

---

**www.nepalitimes.com**
Durga Baral’s diabolical realism

When words fail us it is the images that reflect the ache in our souls

Durga Baral has been known in his native Pokhara for 30 years as a noted artist. But in the rest of Nepal, he is better known as the cartoonist, Batsayan. Using post-1990 freedoms, Batsayan burst into the national scene with his biting cartoon satires in which he lampooned feckless politicians, poked fun at inflation, water shortages, and day-to-day trials. In doing so, he taught Nepalis to laugh at themselves.

‘But as the violence got worse, and the conflict spread, I found that cartooning had its limits. I needed other ways to express myself, and that is why about two years ago I went back to painting around the theme of violence,’’ Baral said during the inauguration of his exhibition at Siddhartha Art Gallery last Friday.

Ever since Mukunda Saran Upadhya wrote his book of verse, Prakriti Pokhara and won the Nepal Academy 40 years ago, this lake-side town in the lap of Machhapuchhre has been an incubator for artists. ‘Pokhara is itself a poem/itself a painting/you don’t have to ever write poems about it/or paint it,’ versified Upadhya in his award-winning book.

Today, Pokhara is even more of a hub for intellectual and artistic fervour, and a lot of it has to do with the fact that people like Durga Baral and the novelist Saru Bhatika live there. Pokhara is the only place in Nepal where people pay to attend poetry readings. After FM radios started broadcasting in Pokhara, four new digital recording studios came up and Pokhreleys were churning out music, videos and CDs.

Creativity is easier when nature is such an inspiration. This idyllic valley, with its shimmering blue jewel of a lake and the pyramid of Machhapuchhre soaring into the sky now has the fires of insurgency raging all around. And it is here that Durga Baral has been reading about and watching the horrors of conflict engulf his beloved land. Having decided that cartoons were not adequate, he returned to painting. Not just one or two works, but an epic of 23 that chronicle the conflict which now make up the exhibition, ‘The Faces of Time and the Colours of Sensibility’ at the Siddhartha Art Gallery. In each of these soaring images we see the pain the artist has felt in seeing his motherland suffer. Baral shares this anguish with us through the medium of art.

Such pain is unbearable, for all of us. And at times like that words are not enough. Images and colours deliver a more powerful impact, and sometimes we turn to the passion of poetry to convey the outrage and shame better. But when words fail us, as they often do these days, it is images that reflect the ache in our souls. And, it is in these haunting images that we unexpectedly find solace.

It is a catharsis that somehow unburdens us, as if by sharing the pain of fellow Nepalis we somehow make it more bearable for all of us.

Other artists, poets, musicians and filmmakers have in their own ways begun to express the torment of being a Nepali at this time in our nation’s history. But Durga Baral’s is an all-consuming passion; two years of hurt expressed in paintings that force us awake from our slumber, to sit up, take notice, and do something. ‘These paintings may have provided a personal catharsis for the artist, but it deliberately offers no respite to the viewer,’’ says the curator of Siddhartha Art Gallery, Sangita Thapa.

In Next Door’s Tale, Through the Windows and Entrapment, we get a glimpse of how bewilderment, brutality, cruelty and grief around the living. The spirits, ghosts, corpses are always juxtaposed against those still alive and Baral bathes death in a contrasting warm glow that we associate with humanity, compassion and non-violence.

Other artists, like Picasso and Goya, also lived through civil wars and depicted them in haunting impressionistic works. Durga Baral has used everyday newspaper headlines, tales of disappearances, the gaping void that they leave behind in the hearts of their families, in a hyper-realism that Nepali art has never attempted before. Maybe peace can be achieved by talking less, by reflecting more, and through reflection, building a common cause against the cruelty that overshadows us. That is what powerful art everywhere compels us to do; it moves us to act.

‘The Faces of Time and the Colours of Sensibility’ is an exhibit at the Siddhartha Art Gallery the whole of October before moving on to Pokhara, 421848

Badal pari ko dekh ma

A musical tribute to Micky by his mother

Micky, as his family and friends fondly knew the late Captain Wangdi Lama, died young in the line of duty. Where others would have opted out, Micky had the courage to choose to do his duty.

I met Micky years back in a dial-the-night evening with family and friends. I recall him strumming his guitar and singing a popular folk song. He impressed me as a talented young man with a radiant smile, full of enthusiasm, out to win the world and looking forward to everything good in life. Unfortunately the happiness and radiance he spread to all those around him was to be short-lived. Micky died in July 2000 when the Twin Otter he was flying crashed into the mountains near Dhangadhi.

On the fourth anniversary of Micky’s death, a commemorative CD, Samaran Timma was released before a gathering of family and friends. The album is a collection of nine songs written in dedication to the memory of her son by Micky’s mother, Manju Lama. They are moving expressions of the themes of love and living, memory and uncertainty, struggle and longing, journey and grief. The album consists of music composed by Myojo Bajracharya, Raju Lama, Uday Somal, Surenkumar, Shreya Solanki and sung by Smiti Gurung, Raju Lama, Uday and Manika Solanki, Shreya Solanki, and Nihita Bajracharya.

The lead song, Badal pari ko deshma indenki chheema, is a moving tribute to a mother to her son, who touched the hearts of all at the launch ceremony at the Radisson Hotel last month.

In the county beyond the clouds, dressed in rainbow hues... shine forever amidst the moon and stars...

To the slow and gentle beat of Tamang style, Raju Lama’s powerful voice penetrated the hall with the song Bhagyaloo chhanea jwanko lamenting at the uncertainty of life:

‘Life is uncertain; it may be today or tomorrow. Let us live merely, we all leave eventually.’

Mellow Bhagyaloo satayo, karmale ruwato played in the background and sung by Manika Solanki reminds us of the vicissitudes of life:

‘Fate has troubled me, destiny has given me tears, Oh, lord how you have subjected me to this lot, Micky died as he lived, a wonderful friend and human being, a worthy son, and a dedicated flier who tried to do everything he did to the best of his abilities.’

Prem Subba works for the UN in Suya, Fiji.
Indian anger at Maoists

Anjan Ghimire in Kathmandu, 16 Oct

Five years ago, an American political analyst warned India about the Nepali Maoists’ growing influence in the region, but India did not take it seriously. The analyst had said that their growing power would affect about 10 Indian states where the Maoist struggle has been going on for decades. The analyst further warned that in a couple of decades, the Maoist revolution would affect the whole nation and ultimately India would become a communist country.

The analysis also mentioned that China would become a superpower in less than two-and-a-half decades. China’s political ambition is to spread its political ideals in several European countries in order to pressurise India to release their leaders.

The Indian paramilitary force Special Services Bureau shot and seriously injured Sitaram Koirala. The Indian security force increased its presence here after the Deuba visit to Delhi, following reports that the Maoists were using the jungle corridor to smuggle arms. The SSB has established 21 posts across from Bardia to strengthen border security. Two other people who were with Lohit are now missing. The Nepali youths were shot at while collecting firewood in the Haispunkuti jungle on the Nepal-India border and Lohit was brought to hospital by locals, who found him unconscious in the jungle. They shot me without asking any question,” Lohit said from his hospital bed.

Flip-flop

Deskantar, 3 October

UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal’s contradictory statements between 28 September and 1 October:

- "Considering the big festivals like Dussein and Tihar, I have proposed that the government declare a unilateral ceasefire so that the Maoists can be brought in for peace talks." (After the high level peace committee meeting on 28 September)
- "I have no idea who proposed the idea of a unilateral ceasefire and who rejected it during the high level peace committee meeting." (While addressing the Food Security Asian March in Kathmandu on 30 September)

- "Ideally, both sides should go for a ceasefire. If the Maoists do not make the move, the government must take initiative. If the government declares a unilateral ceasefire for 15 days, the sky will not fall down." (While addressing a UML training program on 1 October)

These contradictions are typical of UML General Secretary Nepal. He never remains consistent for even a single day. The way he has changed his versions diametrically this time has made many suspicious. Even his own party colleagues and cadres are left wondering why Nepal is flip-flopping like that. Many believe this is a survival tactic. It is no secret that the UML has been on a tight spot after it joined the government declaring that “recession” had not been corrected. The government remains unable to convince the people that this is the case, and that the peace and reconciliation element hasn’t improved either. Worse yet, it has made the lives of the exiled Nepalis more difficult by increasing the prices of petroleum products.

Since Nepal knows what the government has and has not been able to do, sometimes he takes the offensive and at other times he is defensive. With contradictory statements on the unilateral ceasefire, he is trying to please both the government and the people.

Baseless

Former Inspector General of Police Achyut Krishna Kharel in Nipakudya, 30 September

My judicial custody after I was implicated by the CAA was a

Women take over Kangtiper, 4 October

The exodus of men-folk from the villages due to the insurgency has forced women in Doti to depart from tradition, even when it comes to performing the final rites after a person’s death. Since there are no more young men left in the village, women are forced to carry dead bodies and cremate them—an activity that women have traditionally been strictly barred from carrying out. When an elderly man died recently, locals looked for young men to carry the dead body. But, since there were none, the women decided to do it themselves. And unlike in the past, when cremations used to take place at a river bank roughly six hours walk away, these days they are done closer to the village. Local priest Ramchandra Bhatta says the women are not strong enough to carry the dead bodies to the usual place for cremation, adding, “In normal circumstances, the cremation would never have taken place so near to the villages, but now we have no choice.” Locals say all young men have fled because of the threats from the rebels and the security forces. Earlier, young men used to carry sick people to health posts in dokos, but nowadays women do the work. Health worker Hikmatkrali Chepaliya says there has been a drop in the number of people coming for treatment. Life has indeed become difficult in these once male-dominated villages. The only work women don’t do is yet is ploughing the field, but if the men stay away from the villages for much longer, women will be compelled to do it as well. By this time of the year, young men would normally be returning to their villages for Dussein. This year, hardly any of them have come back. The Maoists will forcibly recruit any young person they see, and even teenage boys have left.

Nepal sitout

Nepal Samacharpatra, 4 October

Indian paramilitary force Special Services Bureau shot and seriously injured Sitaram Koirala. The Indian security force increased its presence here after the Deuba visit to Delhi, following reports that the Maoists were using the jungle corridor to smuggle arms. The SSB has established 21 posts across from Bardia to strengthen border security. Two other people who were with Lohit are now missing. The Nepali youths were shot at while collecting firewood in the Haispunkuti jungle on the Nepal-India border and Lohit was brought to hospital by locals, who found him unconscious in the jungle. They shot me without asking any question,” Lohit said from his hospital bed.

Back to normal

Deskantar, 3 October

UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal’s contradictory statements between 28 September and 1 October:

- "Considering the big festivals like Dussein and Tihar, I have proposed that the government declare a unilateral ceasefire so that the Maoists can be brought in for peace talks." (After the high level peace committee meeting on 28 September)
- "I have no idea who proposed the idea of a unilateral ceasefire and who rejected it during the high level peace committee meeting." (While addressing the Food Security Asian March in Kathmandu on 30 September)
deliberate move to defame me. The commission has ulterior motives. On what basis did the commission file the case against me in the special court? It has no basis for such a move. I have not pleased for the withdrawal of the case. If the commission can prove its charges, it can go ahead. The charge that I accumulated wealth through corruption is baseless. It is sad that even the CIAA files cases on an ad hoc basis. The evaluation has been wrong and unreasonable. I inherited a lot of property. The CIAA’s analysis was not accurate. I had made money from my business because they cannot be rented out. Is there anyone in Kathmandu whose house has not been rented out and has simply remained vacant? If I had earned money through corruption, the CIAA should have been able to pinpoint the corrupt activities I was involved in.

15 years
Sagathu, 4 October

Thousands of Nepalis die without even ever seeing a hospital. Even now, there are some in Nepal who are fortunate enough to make hospital beds their homes for 15 years. Sri Maya Tamang of Kabhre has been living in the women’s ward and Upar Gurung in the neurological room in Bir Hospital for the past 15 years. Sri Maya’s brother-in-law brought her to Bir hospital 16 years ago. She suffered from numbness in her limbs. During the course of treatment, the expenses rose. Her disease deteriorated into paralysis of her lower limbs and her brother-in-law left saying he would come to take her home. He never came back. Every morning Sri Maya wakes up, plucks her hair, puts on makeup and sits in bed. Hospital employees tell us she even has a husband who comes to visit her, but no one offers to take her home. Every year, about 72 patients are rejected because Sri Maya has been occupying the bed for so long. She is only 45, so the hospital can’t send her to the old age home, which only takes people over 60. Upar Gurung was badly injured in a car accident, and was brought to the hospital in critical condition. On regaining consciousness, he had amnesia and has forgotten everything about his life. Upar has endeared himself to the hospital staff and helps with cleaning and running errands. “If there was any organisation that would take responsibility for Sri Maya, it would ease Bir Hospital’s burden immensely,” says a hospital staff member.

‘Disco bomb nite’
Jana Astha, 6 October

Indian censors hold up *Fahrenheit 9/11*

Indian film activists have protested the country’s censors holding up release of the award-winning documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11* in Indian cinemas. “The censor board takes these senseless decisions because as a body it is irrelevant and completely behind the times,” Shuddhabrata Sengupta of the media and research foundation. Sanya said “The censor board itself should be done away with.”

The film was supposed to be released in Mumbai, New Delhi, Kolkata and Pune on 15 October, but has reportedly been sent to a revising committee. No reason has been given.

Bangladesh editor murdered

DHAKA—Assailants wielding knives and traditional axes brutally murdered the executive editor of the Bangla-language daily, *Daily Prothom Alo*, Saturday night in the latest attack on the press in Bangladesh. Bangladesh’s media has been bracing itself for rising attacks since last year’s elections.

Several press groups, was on his way home in Sherpur, a town in the Bogra district, when as many as five assailants ambushed and decapitated him. No known motive has been established for the murder but police said the killers were “professionals” and suspect a left-wing extremist group.

Helping at home

The richest Afghan community outside Afghanistan is in the United Arab Emirates, which is home to 150,000 Afghan citizens. (IPS)

Khalilzad further said that, unlike the case with Iraq, the international donor community has delivered much of the aid it promised Afghanistan two years ago. The international community promised over $9 billion for Afghanistan and has paid about a third of it. In the case of Iraq, the US Congress alone appropriated $18.7 billion, but only about $1 billion dollars has been spent to date.

The Afghan-born American envoy said aid from the international community can only rebuild Afghanistan’s infrastructure. To build the rest of the country, he emphasised, Afghans around the world must chip in.

The richest Afghan community outside Afghanistan is in the United Arab Emirates, which is home to 150,000 Afghan citizens. (IPS)

**Another reason not to vote in Iraq.**

George W Bush has been a failure not just in Iraq, but also on his own election campaign. But I am not surprised: if I were Bush, the last thing I would want to talk about is the economy. Yet many look at America’s economy, even now, with envy. After all, annual economic growth—at an average rate of 2.5 percent—still looks strong compared to Europe’s anemic 1 percent growth. But these statistics mask a glaring fact: the average American family is worse off. Median real income has fallen by over $1,500, with Americans being squeezed as wages lag behind inflation and key household expenses soar. In short, all that growth benefitted the same group that had done so well over the previous 30 years and that benefitted most from Bush’s tax cut.

For example, 45 million Americans have no health insurance, up by 5.2 million from 2000. Families with health insurance face annual premiums that have nearly doubled, to $7,500. American families also face increasing job insecurity. This is the first time since the early 1930s that there has been a net loss of jobs over the span of an entire presidential administration.

Bush supporters rightly ask: is Bush really to blame for this? Wasn’t the recession already beginning when he took office? The resounding answer is that Bush is to blame. Every president inherits a legacy. The economy was entering a downturn, but Clinton also left a huge budget surplus. But Bush squandered that surplus, converting it into a deficit of 5 percent of GDP through tax cuts for the rich.

The productivity growth that was sustained through the downturn presented both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity: if the economy was well managed,
the incomes of Americans could continue to rise as they had done in the 1990s. The challenge: to manage the economy so that growth would be robust enough to create the new jobs required by new entrants to the labor force. Bush failed the challenge, and America lost the opportunity because of his wrong choices.

True, the economy was stimulated a little bit by Bush’s tax cuts, and was probably stronger in the short run. But there were other policies that would have provided far more stimulus at far less cost. Bush’s objective, however, was not to maintain economic strength, but to push forward a tax agenda that shifted the burden away from those who could best afford to bear it.

Bush’s failed policies have not only cost the economy dearly, they have left the economy in a far weaker position. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office now examines that even without Bush’s new expenditure initiatives and tax proposals, costing trillions of dollars, the deficit will not be eliminated in the foreseeable future—or even cut in half, as Bush has promised. Expenditures on which America’s future economic health depends—on infrastructure, education, health, and technology—will be crowded out, jeopardising long-term growth.

Because fiscal policy did not stimulate the economy, a greater burden was placed on monetary policy. Lower interest rates worked (a little), but for the most part by encouraging households to refinance their mortgages, not by stimulating investment. The increased indebtedness of households is already leading to higher bankruptcy rates. National debt, too, has risen sharply. The huge trade deficit provides the spectacle of the world’s richest country borrowing almost two billion dollars a day from abroad, contributing to the weak dollar and representing a major source of global uncertainty.

There might be some hope for the future if Bush owned up to his mistakes and changed course. But no; Bush refuses to take responsibility for the economy. In 2003, having seen that its tax cuts for the rich had failed to stimulate the economy as promised, the administration just prescribed more of the same medicine. It now promises to make these tax cuts permanent, which is one promise that Bush, if re-elected, will try to keep.

In August, I joined nine other American Nobel Prize winners in economics in signing an open letter to the American public. It is hard for any two economists—let alone two Nobel Prize winners—to agree on anything. But in this case our concerns overcome disagreements. We wrote: ‘President Bush and his administration have embarked on a reckless and extreme course that endangers the long-term economic health of our nation…. The differences between President Bush and John Kerry with respect to the economy are wider than in any other Presidential election in our experience. President Bush believes that tax cuts benefitting the most wealthy Americans are the answer to almost every economic problem.’

Here, as elsewhere, Bush is dead wrong, and too dogmatic to admit it. (Project Syndicate)

Joseph E. Stiglitz is Professor of Economics at Columbia University and received the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2001.

Dirty cleanup

The Kyoto Protocol sets out three mechanisms to reduce emission of greenhouse gases: emissions trading, joint implementation and the clean development mechanism (CDM). At the heart of all three mechanisms is a means for companies in the North to continue to pollute, but find ways to offset this pollution.

The joint implementation (JI) facility allows the countries that have ratified the protocol, from among a list of 30 Annex I or industrialised nations, to implement emission-reducing projects or provide for carbon removals in other Annex 1 countries. In effect, however, JI would cover mostly industrial investments in Eastern Europe, so that the pollution at home could continue as usual while the company meets its obligations to cap emissions in an East European country at lower cost.

The CDM extends this principle to developing countries. A country from the North can take on a project in the South with claimed emissions capping facilities built into it. The certified emissions reductions (CERs) generated by such projects can be used by Annex 1 parties to help meet their own emissions targets, the Protocol says.

The Kyoto Protocol says the CDM is expected to generate investment in developing countries, especially from the private sector, enhance the transfer of environmentally friendly technologies and promote sustainable development.” Recent amendments to the CDM mean that companies from the North may not always have to offer technology to partner firms in developing countries. They can earn emissions certificates by planting trees instead.

Any additional emissions-cutting technology introduced by companies from industrialised countries in developing countries will come at a cost. CDM projects could mean that companies in developing countries end up paying towards the increased cost of new technology in a local project. Developing countries will then carry the burden of emissions reduction costs even though the Kyoto protocol formally exempts them from these measures, since the bulk of emissions come from industrialised countries.

**Bharat Gold Coin® • CB जीडब्लू बालीस्पैरा डेमोलायशन • Black Price**

* साम्राज्य सेवा उद्योग मंत्रालय रेलवे स्टेटर गार्डर्स क्वॉलिफायर* अधिकारियों के लिए हेड बनेंगे राष्ट्राध्यक्ष (लिए)
Talking golf

Tough terminology shouldn’t keep you off the turf

The mechanics of golf, the golf swing and other advanced techniques may be useful to seasoned golfers, but for those unfortunate enough to be subjected to a bewildering conversation between hackers, exploring a few more commonly used golf terms would be much more useful.

Hazards – The bane of all those who land within them. These are many sand bunkers and water hazards, including lakes, drains, streams and any other part of the course that has been declared as such. You’ll often hear golfers discussing how many balls were lost in water hazards and arguing on the proper place the ball should be dropped back on the course before the next shot is played.

Through the green – Ideally, the place the golf ball should remain after being hit before reaching the green, of course. This is the whole area of the golf course except:
- The teeing ground and putting green of the hole being played
- All hazards on the course (such as bunkers and water hazards)

Closely mown area – Usually, the place where the ball should be, which is any area of the course, including the paths through the green where the grass is cut to fairway height or less (approximately one inch).

Embedded ball – The rules permit a free drop when the ball is embedded in its own pitch mark in the ground in any closely mown area through the green. A ball embedded in a hazard must be played as it lies. If embedded in the rough, it should be played as it lies, unless the local club’s rules permit a free drop. In Nepal, this local rule is almost always applicable in the wet monsoons.

Abnormal ground conditions – Does not refer to all the divots and holes made when trying to hit the ball. Neither is it any indentation made in the ground out of frustration. It is any casual water, ground under repair, or hole, cast or runway on the course made by a burrowing animal, reptile or bird.

Ball lost – A common phenomena that afflicts errant golfers. A ball is lost if:
- It is not found or identified by the player within five minutes after the player (or their caddie) started the search.
- The player has put another ball into play under the rules, even though he may not have searched for the original ball.

Ball in play – A ball is “in play” as soon as the player has made a stroke on the teeing ground. It remains in play until it is holed, except when it is lost, out of bounds or lifted, or another ball has been substituted, whether or not the substitution is permitted under the rules.

Out of bounds (OB) – Usually said with a grimace – “I hit the ball OB.” This is an area outside the boundary of the golf course or a particular hole. Borders are usually marked with white stakes and lines on the ground. The road over the fence is usually OB. So are places such as the club house, practice range, parking lots, public areas and neighbouring farmland.

Next time you’re subjected to an endless dissection of the game, impress the hard core golfers with some of these terms. Be warned however, to quickly move away, unless you’re ready to be inducted into this marvelous game.

Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu.

prodeepak@hotmail.com
FESTIVAL AND EXHIBITIONS
• The Faces of Time and Colours of Sensibility Paintings by Durga Baral at the Siddhartha Art Gallery.
• The Expressions Paintings by Umesh Shrestha, Hari Jung Bowimj and Sudan Kumar Shrestha at Nepal Art Council, Babarmahat.
• Hamro Prayas Art exhibition by AVM School grades 6-10. 8-26 October at NAPA Gallery, Nasal.
• Bangladesh Single Country Fair 8-10 October at BICC, New Baneshwor.
• Hyundai Road Show at Gemini Supermarket, Bouddha. 9 October.
• I AM onwards.
• Kathmandu & Kaligandaki Sales exhibition of original black and white photographs by Sugata. October 11-15 at Patan Museum, 10AM-4PM.

EVENTS
• Kathmandu Utsav at Birikul Mandap, 8-17 October
• WAVE Music Utsav Five days of music at Birikul Mandap. Rs 25 Nep-hop Nigh – 10 Nep hip-hop artists on 8 October, 5-7PM
• Acoustic Vibes—pure acoustic on 10 October, 5-7PM
• Rock Your Senses—Robin and the New Revolution, Xamica and Ellipsis on 12 October. 5-7PM
• Funk and Metal—Anarchy and volume rule on 14 October, 5-7PM
• The Blue Note—Kathmandu’s finest blues on 15 October, 5-7PM
• Mohak Festival 12 noon-8PM on 9 October. Food, music and talent show to celebrate Mohak’s 2nd birthday. 5537801
• Big Night Out at the Rox bar. 8PM on 9 October. Rs 400
• Creating the causes of happiness The Buddha’s teachings on freedom. 9-10 October, 9.30 AM-4.30 PM at HBMC. 4414843
• Kids tennis camp at Hotel Yak & Yeti. Two hours a day for two weeks, starting 10 October. 4248899
• Nepal-Irani Business Seminar on Agro Technology at the Hyatt Regency. 12 October at 9:30 AM.
• Telecom Israel 2004 at the Hyatt Regency, 13 October at 10.30 AM.
• Nepathya for the Disabled 16 October, 5.30 PM, Khagendra, Nawalparasi Kanda, Jorpati. Entrance RS 500 and Rs 1,000. 4470874
• Changa Chati 2001 Kite flying at Club Himalaya, Nagarkot. 16 October. Rs 100. 4410432
• Bluebird Festive Blast Shopping special for Dasain and Tihar. For both Tripureswor and Lazimpat outlets.

DRINKS
• Drink...ing Utsav ‘04 Drinks of all types at the BICC, 15-19 October.
• Reduced prices on drinks for Dasain at Subtemple. Saturday. to Thursday, free entry before 11PM. 4422905
• Just Devine Dashain! After office happy hour, 4-8PM at October at Jack Lives Here’1905 Kantipath.

FOOD
• San Miguel October Fest @ Soaltee Crowne Plaza Unleashed Chef Sam May Sizzling Stone cooking and games until 9 October at the Garden terrace. 6PM onwards. Rs 77. 4273999
• The Sizzling Stone Cooking Experience Volcanic stone cooking until 15 October at the Rox, starting 6PM. 4491234
• Kebab Fiesta at the Rox Lounge until 25 September. 12 noon-3:30 PM and 6:30-8:30 PM. 4491234
• La Soon Restaurant and Vinotheque, in the lane next to the Egyptian Embassy, Pulchowk for spacious indoor and outdoor seating. 5531676.
• 1905 Bow-Thai Promotion Burmese-Thai Cuisine from Burmese Guntha Chef Rashan. Every day. 8PM at 1905 Kantipath. 4225272.

SEMINARS
• Dream Holiday package tour to Malaysia during Dasain and Tihar. Marco Polo Travels and Quatar Airways, 2012345
• Dasain Adventure Holiday at the Borderlands Resort, 16-23 October. 4701295, info@borderlandresorts.com, www.borderlandresorts.com
• Summer in Shivapuri Transui village, superb views and birdwatching. Shivapuri Heights Cottage, on the edge of Shivapuri National Park. Steve@escape2nepal.com
• Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge Pure relaxation and business as usual. 4961550
It was when 18-year-old Payal Shalaya finally reached the summit at 5,000m and looked down at the Imja Glacier that she realised all the hard work was worth it. "I did it!" she shouted, "I feel like I am on top of the world!"

Just two months earlier, she had already been to the top of the world when she was crowned Miss Nepal in Kathmandu. Now, as Conservation Ambassador for the World Wildlife Fund for Nature Conservation (WWF), Payal went to see for herself how fragile the Himalayan environment is and why it needs to be protected.

At first, Payal admits she was nervous about climbing all the way to Island Peak, but she wanted to prove to herself that she could do it. "Beauty queens are usually considered brainless, but I wanted to show I was different," she says. But Payal was beginning to feel the effects of altitude: a severe headache and nausea.

She had pushed herself too hard and felt the effects of altitude. "I felt the effects of altitude: a severe headache and nausea," Payal says. "But I pushed myself too hard to achieve her goal, and now I realise it it's very relevant to all of us," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participate in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

-inter-Galactic-: Mahesh Chabal, star of Naya Padosan, at the Galaxy Disco on Friday an hour-and-a-half before a fight broke out in which Siddhartha Rana of the Sautree Group and his fiancé were beaten mercilessly.

"We pay so little attention to our environment," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participating in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

Pushing up: Women candidates for 2nd Lieutenant positions in the Royal Nepali Army do push-ups on Wednesday in Kathmandu. This is the first time women are eligible for the post, for which there are a total of 782 candidates.

"We pay so little attention to our environment," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participating in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

On top of the world

It was when 18-year-old Payal Shalaya finally reached the summit at 5,000m and looked down at the Imja Glacier that she realised all the hard work was worth it. "I did it!" she shouted, "I feel like I am on top of the world!"

Just two months earlier, she had already been to the top of the world when she was crowned Miss Nepal in Kathmandu. Now, as Conservation Ambassador for the World Wildlife Fund for Nature Conservation (WWF), Payal went to see for herself how fragile the Himalayan environment is and why it needs to be protected.

At first, Payal admits she was nervous about climbing all the way to Island Peak, but she wanted to prove to herself that she could do it. "Beauty queens are usually considered brainless, but I wanted to show I was different," she says. But Payal was beginning to feel the effects of altitude: a severe headache and nausea. She had pushed herself too hard to achieve her goal, and now she feels the effects of altitude. "I felt the effects of altitude: a severe headache and nausea," Payal says. "But I pushed myself too hard to achieve her goal, and now I realise it it's very relevant to all of us," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participate in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

Pushing up: Women candidates for 2nd Lieutenant positions in the Royal Nepali Army do push-ups on Wednesday in Kathmandu. This is the first time women are eligible for the post, for which there are a total of 782 candidates.

"We pay so little attention to our environment," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participating in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

Pushing up: Women candidates for 2nd Lieutenant positions in the Royal Nepali Army do push-ups on Wednesday in Kathmandu. This is the first time women are eligible for the post, for which there are a total of 782 candidates.

"We pay so little attention to our environment," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participating in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

Pushing up: Women candidates for 2nd Lieutenant positions in the Royal Nepali Army do push-ups on Wednesday in Kathmandu. This is the first time women are eligible for the post, for which there are a total of 782 candidates.

"We pay so little attention to our environment," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participating in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

Pushing up: Women candidates for 2nd Lieutenant positions in the Royal Nepali Army do push-ups on Wednesday in Kathmandu. This is the first time women are eligible for the post, for which there are a total of 782 candidates.

"We pay so little attention to our environment," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participating in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

Pushing up: Women candidates for 2nd Lieutenant positions in the Royal Nepali Army do push-ups on Wednesday in Kathmandu. This is the first time women are eligible for the post, for which there are a total of 782 candidates.

"We pay so little attention to our environment," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participating in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

Pushing up: Women candidates for 2nd Lieutenant positions in the Royal Nepali Army do push-ups on Wednesday in Kathmandu. This is the first time women are eligible for the post, for which there are a total of 782 candidates.

"We pay so little attention to our environment," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participating in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)

Pushing up: Women candidates for 2nd Lieutenant positions in the Royal Nepali Army do push-ups on Wednesday in Kathmandu. This is the first time women are eligible for the post, for which there are a total of 782 candidates.

"We pay so little attention to our environment," says Payal, "and there is nothing like being here to see how fast the glaciers are receding."

As soon as she returns to Kathmandu this week, Payal will begin preparations to participating in the Miss World pageant in China in November. She hopes someone in the jury will ask her about global warming, and adds laughing: "I have become an expert on climate change."

(Deepak Gurung)