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BREAKTHROUGH IN DELHI?

Whatever is brewing in New Delhi this week, it is certain to have far-reaching impact on Nepal. The conflict and confusion here comes from the tripolar nature of the fight. The attempt at resolution is to try to bipolarise it.

Of course, it would have been more logical and 'natural' for the two constitutional forces (the king and the parties) to have reached an understanding and thereafter to tackle the Maoists.

For months, the parties waited on King Gyanendra but he didn't budge. Last week they were spurned again in front of an international audience at the SAARC summit and before his departure for an African safari. There is the question of whether this monarchy can any more be considered 'constitutional'.

The attempt by the political parties to forge an alliance with the Maoists would have been out-of-line had the rebels not decided to forsake militancy for politics. That is what the Maoists seem to have decided at their plenum in Rolpa last month where a unanimous decision was taken to:

- join pluralistic politics
- allow unimpeded access to the heartland by the political parties, and
- seek UN involvement in overseeing the laying down arms in the run-up to constituent assembly elections

We are told that the word 'peace' makes its appearance for the first time in that Maoist document.

Given their past record, it will be legitimate to doubt the Maoist sincerity. The difference this time is that the insurgents seem pressured in their search for a safe landing. The comrades have finally realised that capturing state power through armed struggle is just not possible, the war is turning the people against them, their political agenda is losing momentum and motivation of the cadre has plummeted.

The political parties, who have suffered more than others under the rebel onslaught of the last decade, have decided to give the Maoists space to join the mainstream—provided they rest their arms. Why think of a 'bloody nose' when proffering a handkerchief will do?

As we write this Girija Prasad Koirala, Madhab Kumar Nepal, Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Baburam Bhattarai are all in New Delhi. As long as the discussions are between Nepali actors for a Nepali solution, we have no issue with the venue. The proper perspective, always, has to be what Nepalis overwhelmingly want: and that is peace, democracy and national sovereignty.

The nervous among the international community need to trust the good sense of the party leadership on this one. And a warning to the national right: don't try to put a spanner in the works.



Military fatigue

JALESWOR—As long as soldiers remain in the barracks, they are usually a benign force. But unleash them into civil roles and we have seen the military turn into a law unto itself the world over. This has become a frightening reality in Nepal, as the incident of beatings of devotees by soldiers in this tarai border town last week showed.

Compared to unresolved disappearances and deaths elsewhere, misdemeanours of a few inebriated soldiers in Mahottari may seem minor. It got a

STATE OF THE STATE

CK Lal



mention in the media, and was promptly forgotten. No follow-up, no commission to investigate it, no human rights activists. As if an incident in which no one died during Chhat in a small tarai town was somehow less important.

But wounds when covered fester. Gashes in the public psyche do not heal. Grievances when ignored pile up until they reach the boiling point. The military hooliganism in Mahottari needs to be aired so such incidents are not repeated, and also to prevent the anguish of the injured

community turning into open anger.

In countries with civilian regimes, be they democratic or authoritarian, there are at least three requisites that legitimise the use of violence:

- the use of force has to be rational
- force is to be used for public purpose, not to settle private scores
- the consent of the people expressed through lawful civilian authority is a necessary condition for soldiers to resort to violence

If even one of these conditions is not met, violence becomes illegitimate and can be classified as 'state terror'. And terror, as we have heard, is terror.

Due to its ethnic composition, the Royal Nepali Army is not exactly seen as a friendly force around here. But that didn't matter as long as the soldiers remained in the barracks. Since 4 October, 2002, however, the RNA is practically running the show along the tarai highways. When soldiers interact with locals on daily basis people get to know first-hand what it means. Especially if it is a force that doesn't speak the language, doesn't respect the customs, doesn't relate to the people, has little or no concern for their beliefs, and bears little

The Jaleswor incident is a pointer to bubbling resentment

resemblance to their society.

The long-term implications of such behaviour is frightening. If the RNA is to improve its image, influence, and prestige, it must take immediate corrective measures to get its foot soldiers to behave. But the current situation makes it difficult for a rigid force to change.

Contrary to the claims made by top brass in Kathmandu, frustrations run deep among officers in the field. The soldiers are trained to put up a brave face, but probe a little and they admit frankly that this is a war they can't win but can't afford to lose. An army, any army, requires clarity of mission and certainty of conditions to give its best. But all this one is being asked to do is to degrade the insurgents and stand by an authority with questionable constitutionality.

The deployment of the current force bears little resemblance to ground reality. The countryside has been left free for the insurgents to roam. Concentrated in safe urban pockets, soldiers keep themselves busy with perfunctory duties, manning checkpoints, moving around in mufti. For newly recruited soldiers with low motivation, little education, and inadequate

most notable in relation to Nepal's insurgency.

India has adopted a narrow and contradictory view of the conflict, publicly blaming the Maoists for everything, and then allowing Maoist leaders to hold talks with Nepali political parties on Indian soil. India all along advocated a military solution to the conflict, and until recently was the largest supplier of arms to the Royal Nepali Army, despite reports of grave human rights violations. But New Delhi was not doing nearly enough to stop the flow of arms from India that ended up in Maoist hands. And just because India feels that UN mediation would set a precedence for Kashmir, it rejects it for Nepal as well.

Remarkably, some relatively progressive officials in India's UPA government and Ministry of External Affairs appear to have understood how damaging the chaos in Nepal is, not only to India, but also for Nepalis themselves. It is because of their pressure that New Delhi has maintained its critical stance on democratic reversals since the royal takeover on 1 February.

India stopped all military assistance to Nepal, although some 'non-lethal' assistance was subsequently allowed. Some senior Indian army officials want a resumption of arms transfers, but the government is holding firm. New Delhi also seems to have finally recognised that dialogue and reconciliation are the only way to resolve Nepal's problems.

The Nepali government and state-owned media continue to whine about India unduly interfering in Nepal's affairs. It is deeply frustrating that Nepal's rulers can't seem to grasp the (surely not so complicated) idea

that human rights are universal and interdependent. India, like any state, does not have the right to interfere in another state to the detriment of human rights. But, like all states, it has a duty to promote human rights in other states.

Like its former colonial master, India's recent foreign policy has largely been cynical, selfish and unethical. Yet with regards to Nepal since 1 February, India has, for once, done the right thing. Indians and Nepalis alike should encourage the Indian government to continue with this policy.

In Dhaka this week, Manmohan Singh reiterated what he told King Gyanendra in May in Jakarta: that he should reach out to the political parties. Singh said he was looking for concrete steps towards multiparty democracy, obviously aware that concrete steps are being taken in the opposite direction.

Does this amount to a reversal of Indian foreign policy towards Nepal? It is true that for the first time in a long time India's views have coincided with wishes of the vast majority of Nepalis, but New Delhi doesn't appear to have a clear long-term strategy.

India would do well to halt all 'non-lethal' military assistance to Nepal, pressure Nepali political parties to improve governance in order to further strengthen the legitimacy of their movement, adopt a more balanced view of the Maoist insurgency and better coordinate with the international community. Above all, it should put the human rights of the Nepali people at the centre of its Nepal strategy. ●

Sunit Bagree works in the field of international development, specialising in conflict and governance.

Biggish brother

India's policy towards Nepal has been cynical, selfish and unethical, its time to change all that

When Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told a pre-SAARC press conference in New Delhi that there were "failing states" in India's neighbourhood, he might have delved into India's role in facilitating their fragility.

Despite its supposed commitment to human rights, democracy and peace, New Delhi openly supports a despotic Bhutani regime and an oppressive Burmese military junta. Its bizarre intervention in Sri Lanka's civil

GUEST COLUMN

Sunit Bagree



war and role in Kashmir's protracted agony are just some further examples. The Indian establishment's fetish for military approaches to maintain territorial integrity has harmed human security and human rights in South Asia and beyond.

Indian ministers have frequently said one thing about foreign policy and done something completely different. Moreover, they have played on and exacerbated Islamophobic prejudices among sections of the Indian public to suit their own agenda vis-à-vis Pakistan. Sadly, mainstream Indian civil society is largely uncritical of their government's claim to be driven by high moral standards, particularly in relations with neighbours.

Nepal's rulers bear the greatest responsibility for their country's problems, but ever since the asymmetric 1950 Treaty, India has also been playing a negative role here. Successive Indian governments have ruthlessly pursued economic and political goals without consideration for the consequences on Nepal's people. In the past decade this is

LETTERS

INACCURATE

Kunda Dixit's page one article ('Taking flight', #272) inaccurately characterised the US Embassy's 4 November statement as warning the political parties 'to stay away from the Maoists'. In fact, as I have publicly noted and personally assured party leaders, we fully support any dialogue between the political parties and the insurgents to convince them to rejoin the political mainstream. This is a goal all friends of Nepal can support, including the United States.

But dialogue is one thing, formal alliance with an armed and authoritarian insurgency is something else—and far more dangerous. Our statement reminded the parties (and the Nepali public) that the parties themselves have publicly ruled out any formal relationship with the insurgents, unless and until the Maoists firmly renounce violence, put down their weapons and commit to supporting the democratic process.

US policy toward Nepal remains constant. The United States supports the restoration of democracy and prevention of a Maoist takeover. Toward these ends, we have called and will continue to call, for the King to reach out to the political parties to find a way to work toward a democratic and peaceful future for Nepal and its people.

James F Moriarty
US Ambassador, Kathmandu

● Ambassador James Moriarty's statement in support of Nepali democracy and human rights is confusing ('Taking flight', #272). In Palpa recently he called for Maoists to come to the mainstream but now when the seven party coalition are trying to get the Maoists to do just that it appears he doesn't find it acceptable.

Recently, the Carter Centre supported some Nepali political leaders to go on a junket for peace-building. But we haven't heard what they learnt on that trip. President Ronald Reagan called Nepal "a neighbour on the other side of the globe" President George W Bush also seems to realise Nepal's geostrategic and military significance. Can the US shun its responsibilities to help restore peace in Nepal? The US must use its resources prudently to get the right information on Nepal and support the right pro-democracy groups including moderate Maoist factions. No military solution is possible.

Archana Thapa, Naxal



● It is when rulers start making decisions based on the movement of the planets that we know we are doomed. After reading CK Lal ('Omens from Mars', #272) about the 'palace taking comfort from the closeness of Mars to planet Earth' and then Kunda Dixit's Under My Hat ('From the Kingdom of Amnesia to the Republic of Insomnia', #272) I realised that things are far worse in Nepal than I'd imagined. Heaven help us.

Dinesh Aryal, Babar Mahal

● Kanak Dixit's account of the king's activities ('The king at the summit', #271) leaves us with a gaping question: who is better placed to represent the country at the moment? Parliament was constitutionally dissolved, and even if it wasn't its mandate has expired by now. After dissolution in 2002 the parties did little to defend the people's rights to elect a new government but instead succumbed easily to the Maoists' threats (or their own self-serving interests). Instead of getting together to jumpstart the democratic process, they engaged in endless "agitations" against any government (party-led, king-led), which brought little respite to the people, and only hurt our economy and image. To top it all off, now that the king's regime has taken up the challenge they have never taken it seriously and when it announced elections they trash that as well. One can't help but ask why such people are better-placed to represent our country internationally right now when they too don't have the legitimacy of being "elected". Or should Nepal just recede from any international interaction whatsoever and declare itself a pariah state?

Abhishek Basnyat, email

● Congratulations to His Majesty the King and his address at the SAARC Summit. At last we have a head of state who didn't fumble, grovel or make an ass of himself like our so-called elected leaders in the post-1990 period. His Majesty sounded sincere and straightforward and this was appreciated by his audience.

Sagar Shah, email

● King Gyanendra's representation in the SAARC summit is illegitimate. This is not an elected official representing Nepal in the SAARC summit. Kanak Mani Dixit is correct: this king only represents Nepal's ruling clique which has a selfish agenda of power and authority over democracy for the people. The international community is aware of this authoritarian regime and hopefully, like always, they will continue to exert pressure on moving from a dictatorial rule to a democratic rule. Hats off to Dixit for continuing to be one of the few level-headed journalists who dares to write boldly in support of democracy.

D Mahat, email

● As a Nepali living abroad, it is very interesting to read the news on *Nepali Times* eSpecial. I have read lots of stuff about the government and the king but I don't see much about the attitudes and practices of

Nepali politicians and the their corruption and misuse of power. We must not forget that democracy is not a slogan on a piece of paper, it is the spectrum of practices, attitudes and behaviour of people, which must be exhibited in our daily practices. Why doesn't the Nepali media, including yours focus on that? It would help Nepali society to be more democratic and transparent in the future. We are not slaves of any political party or the king. We want to build an egalitarian society where everyone can prosper and live happily.

Gita Rijal, Minneapolis, USA

YAM

Welcome back, Daniel Lak. His 'Thinking the unthinkable' (#272) read like a checklist of things going wrong in Nepal. I would like to second his opinion that Nepal should stop referring to itself as a "yam between two boulders". Use of this metaphor, specially in schools by teachers during history or geography lessons should be discouraged. If our country were just a yam, it would have been crushed by two giant rocks long time ago. If we want to describe the geopolitical reality of Nepal why not describe it as "a pebble positioned in between two boulders". Defeatism reflected in the yam metaphor definitely needs to be cast aside and let's be more imaginative when defining our country's geographical position.

Sameecheeta Jhangad, Jhapa

MANDU JAZZ

As Artha Beed writes in Economic Sense ('Youth power rising', #271) the best way to harness the power of the youth is education. But the 'Extreme Rock' show at the stadium was a gimmick because it did not feature any proper rock band and musically if someone thinks that bands like Axe, 1974AD or Robin & the New Revolution are extreme rock bands, then it is time for them to be reeducated in music. At the Jazzmandu show at Gokarna the crowd seemed educated enough but even though they were paying a huge amount of money they had to wait from 4PM to 8.30 PM for the jazz to start. For four-and-half hours they just heard 'mandu' and not 'jazz'. Disillusion reigns amongst the performers, spectators and the organisers. It seems they are facing an identity crisis.

Den Tshering Lepcha, email

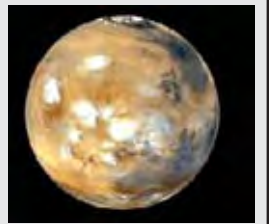
NAR AND PHU

Pristine as it looks in Wanda Vivequin's photographs ('Nar Phu', #271) I am reminded of the harsh realities of living in high mountain villages and my own trip in 1996 to Nar Valley. We walked to Nar via Chame to see how we could help the local people maintain their microhydro system. Although Wanda mentions a New Zealand support to this scheme (unless there has been new donor support) the Nar microhydro and the Phu solar systems were provided by HMG's Remote Area Development Committee. Later, the menfolk of Nar came to

Kathmandu and we had discussions on how they could maintain their microhydro and start productive enterprises if

tourism were to expand in the region. I am glad that against all odds during last month's devastating blizzards, the people of Nar are persevering and hopefully, our small trip and long interactions over endless glasses of Tibetan salt tea were worth it. I still hope one day I can make it back again especially to see the two wonderful sisters, Lakpa and Sonam, who sheltered us for a good one week against all odds. And if someone reaches there before me, and reads this, please pass on the message.

Kavita Rai, UK



ONSLAUGHT

Thank you very much for publishing my letter to the editor (Letters, #272). But the balanced message I put forward has not been conveyed in true spirit with your editorial onslaught. I had suggested that the agitating parties should be 'putting forward criteria to ensure a free, fair election. They could strongly propose themselves to have an interim government before election'. Further, I wrote 'the government also is creating a problem rather than a solution by promulgation of highly disputed ordinances on media without adequate consultation with the concerned institutions and then try to implement it forcibly in a hurried manner. Has not the time come for all the concerned forces to shed their egos and sit on the table for discussion towards a lasting peaceful solution?'.

Badri Raj Pande, email

CHELIS, COME BACK

Just wondering where on earth the Charitraheen Chelis have disappeared. Did they give up their wonderful and courageous mission or have they all got DV visas or got married? It is a matter of great concern for people like me who miss their fresh and bold writing terribly. They were so good doing brave things and challenging society's mores. Hope this mail will ignite their motive again.

Rajesh Swar, email

LETTERS

Nepali Times welcomes all feedback. Letters should be brief and may be edited for space. While pseudonyms can be accepted, writers who provide their real names and contact details will be given preference. Email letters should be in text format without attachments with 'letter to the editor' in the subject line.

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Decoding the Code of Conduct

Donors and NGO don't like what they see

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

Nepal's donors who fund non-governmental groups took a week to study the government's new Code of Conduct for NGOs on Wednesday, they finally gave their message to the government: withdraw it or else.

Minister of Women, Children and Social Welfare Durga Shrestha fired back a salvo soon after, warning NGOs to follow the code or else. Both sides are now set for a major confrontation that could have far-reaching impacts on Nepal's rural development and service delivery.

"We want it to be withdrawn and the issue to be revisited because the process through which this so-called Code of Conduct has been prepared, was not a voluntary participatory process of the people directly concerned, that is the essence of our concern," said UN Resident Coordinator Mathhew Kahane who signed a letter to the ministry on behalf of 13 donors.

The donors are holding another meeting coordinated by DfID in London on Friday.

Government officials denied that the donors had not been consulted. "We sat with them, we corresponded with them and we have included all their suggestions in the document," Sharad Sharma, Member Secretary of the Social Welfare Council, told us (*see interview below*).

The fundamental difference between the government and donors seems to be over the very definition of the term 'non-governmental organisations'. The government believes NGOs are purely for social work and its staff are voluntary. Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare Durga Shrestha said Wednesday, "Since the job of the social organisations is to serve society, they should have no problem with this code of conduct. Only those who mint money through such organisations are opposing it."

NGOs and their donors define the area of work as being outside the government's

ambit and not just limited to social development, but includes human rights, democracy and social activism.

The other difference is over finding itself. The Code of Conduct prohibits NGOs from receiving funds that are part of official foreign aid to Nepal from donors. Most bilateral donors currently channel funds earmarked to Nepal to both the government and NGOs.

"The issue of how donors would disagree with the government on the use of funds including employing non-government organisation as implementing partner is a wide one which we deal with normal development discussion," Kahane said.

On 20 September, US Ambassador to Nepal James F Moriarty had written to the Social Welfare Council citing reservations on the provision. 'As one of the primary bilateral donors active in Nepal, the United States is deeply concerned that a proposed code might attempt to limit or control

the NGOs' ability to receive funds from donors,' the note said.

He even went on to remind that the Strategic Objective Grant Agreements between Nepal and the US confirm that the USAID acts through international and local NGOs. '...any code of conduct for NGOs (should) not undercut the relationships between the US agencies and the NGOs as set out in the grant agreements to which Nepal is a party,' Moriarty added.

But donors and the NGOs they fund have been criticised for lack of transparency. Says Auditor General Bishnu Bahadur KC: "The government does not know what comes in through them and how it is it spent."

The donors don't say it implicitly, but they interpret the new rule and its timing as part of an effort to curtail civil rights and silence the voice of NGOs, especially those working on human rights. Indeed, the last clause of the four-page Code has a mandatory condition that NGOs function in line with the government's policy and under its mechanism.

Arjun Karki of the NGO Federation doesn't mince his words: "This code of conduct has been introduced to launch crackdown on the civil society movement that has gained momentum in the country." Karki and the Association of INGOs in Nepal also argue that the Code of Conduct can't be legally binding.

Kahane seems to agree: "A Code of Conduct is normally drawn up by those people or institutions that wish to abide and guided by it in a voluntary participatory fashion, Codes of Conduct are not drawn up by another party and then simply promulgated with or without consultation."

The UN Human Rights Commission's Nepal office chief, Ian Martin, had sent a separate response to the draft reminding that it was not for the government to prepare the code of conduct. NGOs working in the field say security forces have been apprehensive of the access they have to rural areas.

Some donors had a tacit agreement with previous governments to work in Maoist affected areas with community organisations and the Code of Conduct would put a stop to such projects. ●



MIN BAJRACHARYA

WE HAVE A PROBLEM:
Shibesh Chandra Regmi of AIN points to the government's Code of Conduct document.

"The Code of Conduct is confusing and vague"

Shibesh Chandra Regmi, president of Association of INGOs in Nepal believes that the Code of Conduct will obstruct development. In an interview with *Nepali Times*, he explains why.

Nepali Times: What's wrong with the government wanting to regulate money coming in through NGOs?

Shibesh Chandra Regmi: Despite the rhetoric about massive consultation as claimed by the Social Welfare Council (SWC) in the preparation of the Code of Conduct there have been protests against it from the international community, various agencies of the UN, donors, civil society, I/NGOs, international community, etc. The Code is confusing and vague, clauses can be interpreted in many different ways. It is not clear whether it is for NGOs or INGOs or both. INGOs can't directly implement programs, they can do so only through local NGOs. But the new rules

stops us from doing so. NGOs cannot receive any funds without prior approval of the SWC, even INGOs can't select local partners without consulting the local administration, they cannot assess and report the abuses of human rights no matter from which side. We are not saying that NGOs should be left without any legal framework. What we say is that the Code of Conduct should be seen as a moral document and not a legal one. There already exist many legal instruments in this country on the basis of which action can be taken against any social organisations that do not comply with them.

Are INGOs angry because the new Code prohibits them from using donor funds earmarked for the government?

No. But we are also unhappy on this restriction imposed on NGOs' access to bilateral funds. The reality is that while there are many INGOs that have got their own funding mechanisms which means they bring their resources from outside Nepal, there are many that rely on donors' funds within the country. In any case, who are we to decide about it? Shouldn't the donors have their say about who they should be partnering with?

How about the criticism that INGOs have been using foreign aid meant for Nepalis?

It will be very unfair to criticise the INGOs for this since they only give resources but do not carry back any resources from here. If you had known how hard they work to

mobilise the resources nationally and internationally for the poor and excluded people of this country you would not ask this question. Unlike many other aid and grants, the money that INGOs bring is completely non-political, it is simply for development and humanitarian assistance.

As far as the streamlining of the work of social organisations, improving coordination in their work for more sustained results, avoiding duplication, ensuring that programmes reach out to the poorest of the poor are concerned, we all are positive towards it. We clearly see a need for it.

Why should donors and INGOs have problem working through a government mechanism?

Neither donors nor INGOs have any problem working with the government. In fact, because the government has got the largest network in the country as it has a very strong physical presence all the way from village and ward to the national levels, we need to make the best use of this structure. There are many programs that donors and INGOs have been implementing in partnership with government and many sections of the civil society. But again there are so many other factors that one has to look at: the bureaucracy, commitment, transparency, clarity in vision, governance, political stability, legitimacy, urgency, accountability...

Cosmic sightseeing

Cosmic Air is launching mountain sightseeing flights with its Fokker 100 jet aircraft from Sunday, the company announced after a test flight this week.

At present Buddha Air and Yeti have sightseeing flights in smaller turboprop aircraft. Although Cosmic's flights will fly at the same altitude, the faster planes will be able to take in all mountains between Makalu and Dhaulagiri as it flies past Sagarmatha (*left*). In the 1980s, Royal Nepal Airlines used to fly similar flights with Boeing 727s.

Cosmic will sell only 70 seats in the 100-seater jets to give passengers window seats and the 'companion seat' on the aisles will cost less than window seats, the airline said. The company hasn't decided fares yet, but other airlines charge \$ 100. Cosmic introduced first-ever jet services in domestic routes last year.



ANUP PRAKASH

NEW PRODUCTS

NEW LOGO: Surya Nepal has revealed a new logo and redefined its corporate values with the slogan: 'Creating Enduring Value for Society and Among Stakeholders'. The company was the first Indo-Nepal-British joint venture when it was created in 1986 and has recently branched out into garments. "The sun symbolises our passion for excellence, our expanding horizons and our resolve to create international quality products with a proud Made in Nepal label," said Surya Nepal in a statement.



ULTRA THIN NOTEBOOKS: Neoteric Nepal of Golchha Organisation has launched X and P series of Samsung NotePCs. Presently one model of each series X20 and P29 is available in the market. The notebooks use Intel Centrino platform. Ultra thin, light and ergonomic design meets the international standards and can be wirelessly connected. Prices start at Rs 74,999.

VICTORINOX IN TOWN: Authorized dealers TAG Heuer, Seiko and Doir watches, has made Victorinox Swiss Army watches available in Kathmandu. Times World Switzerland Victorinox has been making these watches since 1909 and is the only company to have the rights over the use of the 'Swiss Army' name. The watch is available in many models and the prices start at Rs 7,000.

NOODLE ATTACK: Himalayan snack and Noodles has launched yet another noodle brand: J-mee. A 75 gm packet of the noodles is priced at reasonable Rs 10 and a prize is offered in return for 10 metallic wrappers of the product as a launch promo.

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More and more your favourite Beed gets to experience how far off the radar Nepal has dropped in the international economic arena. Not that we had a very big blip anyway but now we don't even register.

ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed



It is just another conflict-prone zone and the past four years has become just another dateline with bad headlines. True, the concerns of tour agents about Nepal's security situation is dwindling due to the ceasefire but the fact that no place on earth is safe anyway and at least in Nepal the violence is not arbitrary.

But for potential investors, it is just another country in the long list of high-risk hot-spots like Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti and Sudan. If Nepal shuts down for months, it ain't gonna affect no one much anyway. The more an economy is integrated into the global economy the more its chances of stability and economic growth. Even in communist-ruled West Bengal in India the setting up of call centers and outsourcing businesses have made the government conscious about curbing the state's notorious labour problems.

If a few cities in India are closed down repercussions can be felt across the world. Similarly, a strike at a Malaysian or Thai airport can throw the supply

chain of retail stores in Europe out of gear.

As Nepal searches for stability perhaps it may be possible to use economic reform measures to be able to participate in the progress of the global economy. Your Beed has always maintained that the solution to the ongoing conflict can neither be political or military, it has to be economic. If Nepal becomes an offshore banking facility for the increasingly affluent Indian and Chinese, then we may not be able to afford strikes anymore, or have holidays to commemorate eclipses and a time zone off whack by 15 minutes.



Similarly, if Nepal becomes a large power exporter, we will have to ensure that it meets reliability criteria of its clients. Thailand's grid is interwoven with power producers in Laos and would never allow disruptions there. The importance of nations is not judged by its geopolitical and strategic location anymore, now it is how intricately it is linked to

the global economy.

So if you are producing goods or services for other nations, you better have your house in order and vice versa: if you don't you will not be producing goods and services for others. If you are not a part of the global business link you will be forgotten. Burma is rich in natural resources, but is virtually ignored by the rest of the world. And there are many other countries in Africa similarly bypassed.

For Nepal to get out of the current quagmire, we have to explore different approaches to global integration. Surely there is a big role here for overseas Nepalis eager to invest in their motherland. Maybe they could be the first link in the chain by investing here despite the odds, instead of just focusing on how to get dual-citizenships and own property here. They could catalyse the movement of products, capital and services.

If this happens, Nepal can't afford to have strikes, conflict and political instability. And everyone would benefit. While we're at it, let's think outside the box, not just outsourcing, tourism and manufacturing but also a health destination, medical tourism, destination for retirees. The objective would be to pursue more than a single idea. We still have not been fully written off but we need to ensure that we are not. A country of 25 million does not deserve being just another black hole on the globe. ●

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ENDURING VALUE FOR ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Grade one children learn about Lenin



NARESH NEWAR

Sanghu, November 14

सोघु

ROLPA-For Regan Roka, it is a daunting task teaching children at the Maoist-run Sahid Smriti primary school in Thawang. As the school headmaster, he is trying hard to impress the children with janbadi siksa (revolutionary curriculum) in this school established last year. He and his two assistants have been intensely involved in teaching 49 students between 4-13 years old. But Roka's concern is whether he and rest of the teachers can really do a good job as they lack training material and books. Roka is himself unsure about whether the children have really benefited as intended by Maoist leaders who thought up this new alternative curriculum. All the Maoist teachers have done is talk about the need for revolution but the question is:

has it helped develop the mental abilities of the children at all? However, the teachers are positive that the value of the Maoist education will be realised one day. The Maoist formal schooling started with the objective of educating the children of Maoist supporters and activists killed in action. The Maoist Rolpa in-charge Comrade Chiring says students admitted in the Maoist school get free food, shelter and other facilities. Twelve-year-old orphan Bimochan Roka was transferred here from the government school where he was studying in grade two. His guerrilla father was killed in battle and his mother died of cancer. But all he gets is a notebook from the Maoist school unlike the government run one where he was provided with text books and other materials. Bimochan complains about it, saying there are no books to read and he doesn't think much of the untrained teachers. He spends most of the school time playing. His headmaster says the government textbooks glorify the king, but the revolutionary curriculum glorifies Maoist martyrs and their struggle for the 'people's liberation'. The Maoists are hoping that their education system will help children think creatively and catch them young to build confidence. They also hope the children will not be superstitious and will want to change things when they grow up. They say the curriculum also aims to inculcate the values of hard work, of local realities about environment and science as well as builds interest in culture and art. The education curriculum also includes military knowledge, mother language, physical course, music and dance. Even children of grade one have to learn about the Nepal Communist Party, memorise Maoist declared autonomous regions, flags of various Maoist-affiliated bodies. They even read about the life histories of Lenin, Marx and Prachanda. Physical education also has a martial element to it: sticks, khukuri, sickle, axe, bow and arrows, catapult, guns and other homemade weapons. Comrade Chiring believes this is needed to make the children patriotic and 'fight the imperialists'. The Maoists have established 37 schools teaching their revolutionary curriculum in Rukum, Salyan, Jajarkot, Kalikot and Rolpa districts.

New VDCs

Kantipur, 12 November

सन्तियर

Local people in a village in Bhojpur district have gone ahead and selected their parallel representatives on their own. Tired of waiting for VDC and because development work has come to a standstill as they haven't had an elected council for four years they got together and elected their own officials. This is the first time that civil society has taken up governance in its own hands and formed an institution with the authority to represent the people. The villagers of Kulung VDC organised a big mass meeting where they formed an executive committee of their VDC with all political authority. They call it the Community Development and Service Committee. It is made up of former representatives of the people and other prominent figures in the village. "We don't make recommendations like other government offices do, but we play decisive role in discussing and implementing development in our village," said Dambar Bahadur Rai who has been selected chairman by the villagers.

The committee has a vice chairman, a secretary, a joint secretary and a treasurer. There are nine members in the committee representing the nine wards in the village. There are three other members representing dalits, oppressed and tribal communities.

The appointments are made in accordance with the newly formed committee's separate statute. The newly selected representatives have said that they would work toward conserving human rights and civil freedom. They have also enlisted road construction, electricity, communication, industries, education and health as the areas they would be working in

Soul-searching

Former Foreign Minister Bhik Bahadur Thapa in *Deshantar*, 13 November

देशान्तर सन्तियर

We need to strike a balance on our role and that of foreigners when it comes to dealing with our internal affairs. What we lack is self-confidence and unity. Being dependent on foreign powers can't be the solution. As if the solution does not lie within Nepal, some are going overseas while others are sending SOS to our neighbours. Before we cry foul about foreign intervention, we need to look at ourselves in the mirror. There has to be soul searching whether we have been running the state within the perimeters of our national interest. Are we for rule of the law? Do we have civil rights in the country? These are the parameters the world community uses to judge us. The situation of our country is open to everyone. The country is about to go off the edge. So the real need is unification among all internal powers. That is our prime responsibility. It is only natural

to seek support of foreign powers. But, to believe that foreigners will be our saviours is not a rational thinking.

(Inter)national

Political scientist Ganga Bahadur Thapa in *Dishanirdesh*, 13 November

Those foreign powers that were disillusioned by the royal takeover of 1 February have now begun to realise the truth. In the beginning they wrongly thought that the king had to takeover because the communists had begun to command both the jungle and the urban areas. There was also speculation that the king might have been backed by India and the US from behind the scene in order to get rid of the communists. Few buy that myth now. International organisations and even Indian political parties have been critical of what is happening in Nepal. What more could foreign powers do to support democracy in Nepal? After all, if the situation deteriorates any further, there may be direct intervention. Foreign powers will certainly continue their support if opposition parties and the Maoists join hands. One thing is for sure: it's not for the foreigners to launch a movement in our country. They can't do much as long as Nepalis themselves gear up for the movement. When all political parties stand united, they will surely win the support of the international community. The history of Nepal is replete with examples of outsiders backing domestic people power movements. After the multi-party system was abolished in 1960, Nepal did see movement of the opposition parties for so many years. But the movement won international support only in 1990, only because it was then the movement garnered people's support. In the same way, if we are committed to multi-party democracy and move toward constituent assembly, there is no reason why we cannot get international support.

How they went

Jana Aastha, 16 November

आस्था

Security agencies have reported to Crown Prince Paras that senior Maoist leaders Baburam Bhattarai and Krishna Bahadur Mahara have reached India traveling past Raj Parisad Council chairman Parshunarayan Chaudhary's house in Dang district of western Nepal. In a report prepared for the royal palace, the security agencies have stated that the Maoist leaders sneaked out to India just when government officials were engaged in Tihaar celebrations. The Maoist leaders are said to have used the jungle in Gobadiya in Deukhuri as a secret corridor to reach India. This area near Kapilbastu is believed to be quite weak from security point of view. It is the same area where the border security personnel of Nepal and India recently held a meeting.

सर्वोच्च न्याय!



Supreme justice.

हिमाल Robin Sayami in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 16-30 November

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ It took the Maoists ten years to realize it is wrong to kill people. It took the Nepali Congress 61 years to realize that it shouldn't carry the king on its shoulder. ”

Maoist In-charge for Phulbari, Kailali, Comrade Sangharsha talking to Himal Khabarpatrika

What they agreed on

Himal Khabarpatrika, 16-30 November

हिमाल

What the parties expect from the Maoists

- Give up armed struggle
- Commit to multiparty democracy
- Stop attacks and intimidation, even punish guilty
- Adopt political stance
- Allow freedom to political party cadre to operate
- Struggle against dictatorship

What the Maoists expect from the parties

- Parties shouldn't go back to join the king
- Be positive towards political agreements
- Stop treating Maoists like enemies
- Not to see Maoists as anti-democratic or against peaceful agitation
- Minimum program should be setting up a democratic republic through constituent assembly

What they agreed on:

- Not to unnecessarily attack each other
- Maoists will accept multiparty democracy
- UN-supervised laying down of arms at the time of constituent assembly elections
- Accept result of the constituent assembly election
- Take part in peaceful political struggle
- Focus on struggle against dictatorial monarchy
- Not to create obstacles in peaceful agitation of parties
- Boycott municipal elections and not let it happen

“People power is invincible”

NC leader Narhari Acharya in *Jana Aastha*, 9 November

आस्था

Nepali Congress is indeed passing under a difficult phase. We have engaged ourselves in a movement for the last three years and yet we have failed to give it direction. There is a lack of clarity in policy. Therefore efforts are on to make things clear in our party.

I am just back from a visit to the areas that are said to be infested with Maoists. But the situation there is different than perceived by outsiders like us. There were certainly some areas where Maoists' activities are predominant but the general people and their activities are the same as they used to be in the past. After the Maoist intensified their activities, such places saw an increase in violence. But the positive outcome of all this is that the people today are much more aware of their rights. They are capable of grasping new ideas and thoughts.

However the fact remains that many people have suffered from Maoist atrocities in the past. Their property, under control of the Maoists, have not been returned to them even after the announcement of the unilateral ceasefire. Party workers have been complaining that the Maoists have seized their property yet the rebels are talking about alliance with the parties.



On the other hand the district are being politicized during the ceasefire. Political programs are taking place in different villages. Political parties are yet to reach many areas like Garayala and Aathbiskot of Rukum where NC and the UML have jointly organised programs in which Maoists have also attended. They have asked us questions and expressed reservations about our criticism of their policies.

When we criticised the Maoist atrocities and physical attacks, they said it was useless talking about what they called 'the past'. They said: "We must be forward-looking for a new beginning or else we will be caught in the same old disputes." The Maoists who had attended such meetings were not dressed in combat fatigues nor were they carrying guns. If they were

carrying arms in their bags, we would not know. They did introduce themselves and let us know their ranks in their party.

I agreed with them that we should not be prisoners of the past but I also made it clear that we need to discuss some of the old issues in order to sort out the difficulties they have caused. In Rukum alone, 50 political workers have been killed, out of which 42 were of the NC. So, it has to be made clear why were they killed. Were they targeted because they were from the NC or because they disagreed with the Maoists? Or had they committed such serious crimes that they had to be killed?

But, that does not mean we should seek revenge and hold back the forward-looking political course. The NC is in no mood to continue crossing swords with Maoists. It has the objective of trying to get a solution to the current political crisis and to include the Maoists in the same peaceful political process. If the people are united, the autocratic regime the King has been leading will be weakened. People power is invincible but for that we need to create the right environment. In politics, 'people' is an abstract noun but it can be shaped. People are also individuals. To make organisations out of such individuals is the role of the political parties. If they are successful in bringing people together for a cause, the people will never be vanquished. The faster people's power gets consolidated, the sooner anti-people power centers will lose out.

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PICS: MIN BAJRACHARYA

Reviving

They’ve withstood the test of time, now they will take care of the water needs of a thirsty city

MALLIKA ARYAL

When the ancient Malla kings of Patan decided to build an elaborate canal system to bring water to their royal baths from 13 kms away, it must have been an undertaking like the Melamchi project is today.

Three hundred years ago the royal engineers diverted water from the Lele River at Tika Bhairab at the southern edge of the Valley, channelled the water along subterranean contour-hugging canals, across the outskirts, under the town all the way to the sunken spouts of the Darbar Square. They had to survey the gradient and precisely map the course of the canal.

Not much is known about how long it took to build, or even who constructed it—just the names of kings who not just took credit but also took baths in the water that came gushing out at the other end.

The most astounding thing about the Raj Kulo is that it also provided water for irrigation along the way and were working till as recently as the 1970s. Now, civil engineers who have studied them say that if revived the ancient royal canals of Patan and Bhaktapur could take care of the

water needs of a considerable part of the Valley’s population.

And that is exactly what the group, Environment and Heritage Conservation Nepal (EHCN), is trying to do with VDCs along the way and support from the Indian Government. Till the 1950s the Raj Kulo was maintained with support from the state but as the funding dried up so did the canals.

Houses and roads were built with scant attention to the canals underneath and within a few years the spouts at Darbar Square ran dry. In the past decade, urban expansion has taken its toll even on the southern suburbs of Patan. Engineers say that the Raj Kulos of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur are past rehabilitation but there is still hope to partially reconstruct the Patan canal.

“It is a tribute to the people who built them that rehabilitating the canals will not only restore an ancient heritage but also take care of the water needs of the poorest of the poor,” says Sagar Rana, president of EHCN, who is also the Nepali Congress representative from Lalitpur District.

The Patan Rajkulo used to be 11.2 kms from Tika Bhairab to Darbar Square but today it barely reaches Thecho, 5.6 kms away.

The Raj Kulos were not just

FOUNTAINHEAD: Santa Lal Maharjan points to the source where the Raj Kulo originates at Lele on Wednesday (left). When the work is finished in three years, the royal canal will take the water upto the spout at Sundari Chok in Patan (overleaf) where Malla kings once used to bathe.



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g Patan's royal canal



water canals. They integrated water supply with irrigation: indicating the fine urban-rural balance of the Kathmandu Valley civilisation. The Raj Kulo irrigated rice fields along the way, traversed many towns filling up ponds and wells, they provide a constant flow of clean water to urban dwellers in Patan and helped sustain the ground water levels by recharging aquifers along the way.

“A revived Raj Kulo could be an immediate solution to the water scarcity problem the Valley faces every year,” says water expert Prayag Raj Joshi who is involved in the rehabilitation project. Joshi says that when the work is finished in three years, the ancient royal canal will provide safe drinking water to 40,000 people in Patan and irrigate an additional 450 hectares of farms

on the city’s outskirts. The Raj Kulo itself is 1.5 m wide and 1.3 m deep and in most places runs along the surface until it reaches town. In core city areas there is an ingenious underground aqueduct that takes the water to various water spouts. The first phase of the rehabilitation program is underway now and covers 8.5 km of the canal from the source to the

Sunakothi VDC passing through Chapagaon and Thecho. This includes rehabilitation of the upper stretches of the canal destroyed by the 1982 flash flood on the Lele River. Santa Lal Maharjan, chairman of the Chapagaon User Committee thinks his community would not just benefit from the water but also learn more about Patan’s history. “The Raj Kulo is such a

big part of our tradition and day-to-day lives, we understand the benefits but we also understand how important it is to preserve what our forefathers accomplished,” Maharjan told us. Sagar Rana agrees: “The Raj Kulo is not just about water, it is about heritage and preserving the close-knit communities that the canal made possible during the time of our ancestors.” ●

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NARESH NEWAR

DISARMED:
Narjit Basnet's left
hand was hacked off
by Maoists when he
failed to give them a
"donation".

Frontline teachers

More than any other profession, teachers have borne the brunt of the conflict

NARESH NEWAR in RUKUM

As a teacher, Dhan Bahadur Khadka used to walk around his village urging parents to send their children to school and chasing after the students who missed class. The villagers looked up to him for advice and information. He was respected, and everyone called him ‘Gurujī’.

That was 10 years ago. Ever since the Maoist ‘Peoples’ War’ began teachers across Nepal and especially in these remote mountains of central Nepal have become pawns in the conflict.

Teachers like Khadka are prime targets of Maoists for extortion and have to pay five to 10 percent of their meager Rs 3,000 monthly salary to the Maoists. The rebels often abduct teachers along with students for weeklong forced indoctrination, and in their ‘base areas’ the Maoists force teachers to follow their ‘revolutionary curriculum’ or face punishment.

Most teachers have no choice, but that immediately makes them suspect in the eyes of the security forces who regard them as Maoists or at least as sympathisers.

“Either you do whatever they say or quit your job,” says Khadka. Teachers in the remoter areas of Rukum have no choice and have to follow the diktat of the Maoist party.

Khadka’s daily routine is simple. He goes to school, teaches his class and in the evening goes home and waits for day to break again. Once a month he gets Maoist permission to walk two days from Pipal VDC to the district capital in Musikot to collect his government salary and rushes back. One day’s delay to pay the Maoist tax of five percent of his salary will mean public humiliation and threats.

There are plenty of examples of what happens to teachers who defy the Maoists. “We may be

paid by the government but we are just teachers, we aren’t political workers, why can’t the Maoists understand the difference?” asks Narjit Basnet, whose left hand was hacked off by Maoists in Pipal VDC nine years ago.

No matter how hard he tries to forget the incident Basnet is reminded of it when he looks in the mirror.

Nearly 150 teachers have been killed in the last nine years of the war, according to a tally kept by the rights group, INSEC. Eighty-four of them were killed by the Maoists and the rest died in the hands of security forces. Both state and rebels have been equally responsible for the detention and torture of another 227 teachers.

Teachers are at the frontline of Nepal’s decade-long war: the only government employees who still remain in the villages after police, postmen, health workers and agriculture extension workers fled. There are 147,000 teachers on the government’s payroll and 19,000 of them in primary schools in the most remote VDCs of the country. Most of those still in the villages have to pay the Maoist tax, so it is the government that is indirectly subsidising the Maoists.

Ironically, it is the very fact that teachers remain in the village that makes them suspect in the eyes of the security forces. During past states of emergency it was the teachers who were detained, disappeared or killed because the security forces regarded them as Maoist sympathisers.

In fact, more than any other professionals, teachers have faced the most hardships during the conflict. Aside from physical harm, many teachers suffer from stress-related disorders from having to balance on a knife-edge between the rebels and the state every day.

One teacher who did not want

to be named broke down as he told us: “I endure the beatings and the extortion but when one of my own students joined the Maoists and humiliated me in front of the whole village I just couldn’t take it.”

Khadka remembers the days in the early 1990s when he was almost revered in the villages. His task was not just to teach but to counsel villagers and inform them about what was happening in far-away Kathmandu or in the world. Sometimes he had to give health advice, suggestions to farmers and even settle disputes.

Today, Khadka walks with his head bent, trying not to be noticed by the security sentry on the outskirts of Musikot as he hurries back to his village with his paycheck. A slight hesitation and nervousness could mean detention. His colleagues have been beaten up for not giving details of Maoist positions. But Khadka knows that when he gets back to Pipal, he will be punished by the other side if he doesn’t pay his tax.

“My father was just an ordinary teacher and we don’t know why he was arrested,” a young girl on a bus going from Nepalganj to Surkhet told us. A fellow inmate who witnessed the incident told the family after his release that the girl’s father was taken to the jungle and shot dead.

“We are really demoralised, we are treated like criminals by the Maoists,” explains Sakta Bahadur BK, a teacher from Rukum’s Pokhara VDC. Dipendra Roka used to be a Maoist, quit the movement and is now living as a refugee in Musikot. He says it is the children of the poorest families who are most affected by the Maoist closure of schools: “Teaching has become an insecure job especially for those working in the villages and when we leave, the children don’t get an education.” ●

Same old Nepal

Diaspora Nepalis are not impressed with visitors from the homeland

LONDON—Just as Nepalis in Nepal, overseas Nepalis are also recovering from Dasain and Tihar. And also from the slew of visitors from Nepal that passed through London, New York, Boston and beyond through the festivals.

It is looking like an exodus. Aside from politicians on various junkets there seems to be a perceptible increase in the outflow of the best and brightest Nepali minds from Nepal. It’s not just the DV wallahs and illegals one sees these days but newly-arrived Nepalis with Highly Skilled Migrant Visas. One gets the feeling that Nepal is being deserted at her most insecure time by those the motherland needs the most.

Nepali surgeons, computer engineers, teachers are arriving in droves to the UK and other developed countries. Can’t blame them, though, because we have rulers who have no skills in keeping them at home.

The travelling politicians were in great demand for talk programs and tête-à-têtes where they waxed eloquent about what was wrong with Nepal over lamb curry and chardonnay. The dissidents were on whistle-stop tours of Europe and North America and held forth with the practiced air of those who seemed to have said the same things many times over.

There was Krishna Pahadi, celebrated human rights activist dressed in trademark yellow on an Amnesty International-sponsored tour of Europe and North America. In a discussion forum, he ended up talking more about republicanism than about human rights violations in Nepal and seemed to falsely assume that if only we were a republic all of Nepal’s woes would be over.

Student leader Gagan Thapa was on a US government junket and stopped over in London on his way across the pond. He also argued that the monarchy was the main impediment to Nepal’s future development. Our Gagan is a very good orator and he has a vision of a new Nepal where justice and equality are possible. However, the basic question in everyone’s mind was: “How?” As usual, that question remained unanswered.



Gagan Thapa presented the monarchy as the reason for a raft of serious problems like festering economic woes, endemic corruption, the insurgency. However, he was smart enough to leave some time to hit out at the party bosses who he described as ‘very authoritarian and archaic’. With a sigh, we realised that if Nepal’s best minds don’t enter politics, they will have to be ready to be ruled by incompetent crooks.

Minendra Rijal the NC-D spokesman preached about the beauty of democracy. When he was asked about reforms and democracy within his own party, however, he managed to sidestep the question with a smirk. The good doctor is among the most upbeat politicians in Nepal but he couldn’t transfer his optimism to his audiences here.

So, I guess we get the politicians we deserve. The younger crop of leaders have immense enthusiasm and commitment and also the energy to see through their ideas. But looking at the rate in which Nepalis are leaving Nepal, it’s hard to be optimistic even from this far away.

Nepal needs a clear political strategy and coherent leadership. From the party’s rank and file to the top brass and from leaders of the bygone generation to the younger ones. But all we heard over Dasain and Tihar here were catchwords like ‘loktantra’, ‘ganatantra’ and ‘samabesiya prajatantra’ and it made you wonder if those uttering them knew what it really meant. Everyone seems hung up on the process rather than on finding a way out of the crisis.

If these buzzwords remain cheap political slogans and we are not shown what it really means in real behavioural changes, a new Nepal will remain a distant dream. ●

“Hind-Chin Bhai-Bhai” again

India and China woo cross-border business

HOWARD FRENCH
in SHANGHAI

For years, the rapid growth of China and India has been based on business with the developed world and has often meant taking business away from western industries. Now, companies in those countries—the world’s two largest emerging economies—are beginning intensive drives to hunt for business in each other’s markets.

In recent months, one giant business after another from the two Asian giants has announced ambitious expansion plans in the other’s economies. Trade between the two countries had already been growing at a phenomenal rate, reaching \$13.6 billion last year: a sevenfold increase from 1998.

Driving the new boom in cross-border investment is the shortage of talent in crucial sectors in each country. China is an industrial powerhouse in the

making, while India has placed its bets more heavily on services. Nowhere can this trend be seen more clearly than in information technology, where India is already perceived as a global leader and where China vows to catch up.

Infosys Technologies, an Indian software and information services leader, to take one leading example, recently announced plans to invest \$65 million to expand its business in China, where it will hire 2,000 computer experts over the next two years and build large new corporate campuses in Shanghai and Hangzhou able to accommodate thousands more workers. Infosys has not previously made an investment in China of that size and scope. Experts say it presages similar moves by other Indian technology companies.

“We are going to use China as a global development centre, as much as we do India,” said Saikumar Shamanna, who heads the company’s human resources development for China, adding that Infosys would seek business not only with foreign multinational corporations in China but also with China’s own emerging multinationals.

The Indian IT sector is

growing so quickly that wages in some areas are increasing 25 percent a year and qualified graduates from the country’s best schools are becoming scarce. China produces 400,000 engineering graduates every year, many of them in computer studies, and Indian companies’ expansion into China is aimed in part at wooing them.

Infosys, based in Bangalore, has risen from obscurity in the past few years to become one of the world’s top 10 computer outsourcing companies, mostly by providing software services to large corporations in the United States and elsewhere in the west.

Infosys’s recent moves in China have been mirrored by those of several other large Indian companies that specialise in computer services and outsourcing, like Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro and Satyam Computer Services. Earlier this year, Satyam announced its plans to build a major campus in Beijing. Another Indian company, NIIT recently created over 125 computer schools in China.

On the Chinese side, the drive to explore the Indian market is being led by corporate giants, like Huawei Technologies, a networking equipment manufacturer that competes with

Cisco Systems. “Since we are a company whose business is based largely on globalisation, we felt we had to be in India,” said Huang Ji, the chief executive of Huawei’s Indian operation, which has recently hired 700 Indian software experts in Bangalore. “In recent years, Chinese companies have been doing research on software on a small scale, and things are still not very standardised. In India, lots of companies have reached a very high level already and we would like to learn from them.”

For now, Indian companies enjoy a lead in cross-border investments. A stiff challenge for them remains, however: how to break into the Chinese corporate market, where outsourcing of information services is less established than in most developed economies and where a strong bias in favour of working with Chinese partners remains in force.

Chinese manufacturing goods have become ubiquitous in the Indian marketplace, bringing down the prices of many products and forcing some Indian producers out of business. The future of the two countries’ economic relationship will depend in large part on the openness of the Chinese. ●



SUBHAS RAI

They still have a long way to go...

PRANAB BARDHAN in BERKELEY

The media have been all agog over the rise of China and India in the international economy.

But while there is no doubt about the great potential of these two economies, severe structural and institutional problems will hobble them for years to come.

Both China and India are still desperately poor. Of the total of 2.3 billion people in these two countries, nearly 1.5 billion earn less than \$ 2 a day.

Of course, the lifting of hundreds of millions of people above the poverty line in China is a historic achievement. Conventional wisdom now suggests that globalisation is responsible for this feat. Yet a substantial part of China’s decline in poverty since

1980 already happened by the mid-1980s largely as a result of agricultural growth—and before the big strides in foreign trade and investment in the 1990s.

Assertions about Indian poverty reduction through trade liberalisation are even shakier. In the 1990’s, the decade of major trade liberalisation, the rate of decline in poverty by some aggregative estimates had, if anything, slowed down. In any case, India is as yet a minor player in world trade, contributing less than one percent of world exports (China’s share is about six percent).

What about the hordes of Indian software engineers, call-centre operators and back-room programers? The total number of workers in all forms of IT-related jobs in India comes to less than a million workers, one-quarter of one percent of the

Indian labour force. India is the largest single-country contributor to the pool of illiterate people in the world.

Even in China less than one-fifth of the labour force is employed in manufacturing, mining and construction combined. Nearly half of the country’s labour force remains in agriculture (about 60 percent in India). Domestic private enterprise in China, while active and growing, is relatively weak and Chinese banks are burdened with bad loans. Commercial regulatory structures in both China and India are still slow and heavy-handed. To start a business requires 71 days in India and 48 days in China (compared to six days in Singapore).

In the economic reform process, the Chinese leadership has often made bold decisions and implemented them relatively quickly and decisively

whereas in India, reform has been halting and hesitant. This is usually attributed to the inevitably slow processes of democracy in India. And though this may be the case, other factors are involved.

But inequalities (particularly rural-urban) have been increasing in China and those left behind are getting restive. China is far behind India in the ability to politically manage conflicts. Over the last 50 years, India’s heterogeneous society has been riddled with conflicts, but the system has by and large managed these.

We should not lose our sense of proportion in thinking about the rise of China and India. There are many severe pitfalls and roadblocks that both have to overcome before they can become significant players in the international economic scene on a sustained basis. ●

Pranab Bardhan is professor of economics at the University of California, Berkeley and chief editor of the *Journal of Development Economics*.

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NO MORE YELLOW

Nine tips

A winning singles strategy

Early on in my tennis career, the only strategy I knew was to run as fast I could and get the ball back over the net and wait for my opponent to make an error. As I moved on to play better players, I needed to add new strategies to be successful. Here are nine tips that will help you be a winner on the court.

1 PLAY HIGH PERCENTAGE TENNIS

Reduce the number of points lost by unforced errors and increase the number of points by forcing your opponents into error. Unforced errors are mistakes made with no applied pressure from your opponent. Forced errors are the loss of point from applied pressure from your opponent.

GAME POINT
Sujay Lama



2 KNOW THE ZONES

Use the traffic light analogy to understand the three zones on the court.

Red Zone: Baseline

Play safe and be consistent (Ground strokes with lots of spin and height)
Yellow Zone: Midcourt
Proceed through with caution (Approach shot)
Green Zone: Frontcourt
Go for it (Volleys and overheads)

3 KNOW YOUR TWO TARGET AREAS

Four quadrants: The closer you are to the net the greater the potential angle you have (130 degrees from the baseline as opposed to only 19.6 degrees two feet from the net)
Height = Depth minus Aim at a three to six feet window over the net for depth.

4 BE CAUTIOUS WITH DIRECTION CHANGE

The difference between down the line shot and crosscourt shot is 19.1 degrees. You have more chances for error changing direction off a deep ball. Make sure you are well set up to pull the trigger up the line.

5 UNDERSTAND ERRORS

The best error to make is long. The worst error is the net and a close second is the wide error. Center the ball with height- that will reduce the angle for your opponent as well cut down your errors.

6 ATTACK THE SHORT BALL

Once you have depth on your ground strokes, you will get short balls. You have got to attack them and get to the net to apply pressure on your opponent. The key is to understand how many steps it will take you to get into a good volley position by the time your approach shot bounces. You want to approach the weaker side and also the side where your opponent will hit higher and longer.

7 AWARENESS OF DEFENSIVE, NEUTRAL AND OFFENSIVE POSITION

A defensive position is when you are a foot or more behind the baseline. From this position, your goal is to get plenty of height on the ball and play crosscourt most of the time.

A neutral position is when you are on top of the baseline. From this position you can play consistently as well as look for the opportunity to be aggressive and look for the down the line shots.

An offensive position is when you are a foot or more inside the base line and looking to attack a short ball and transition to the net.

8 HAVE PLAN

You have to be able to adapt and change tactics and rhythm when needed in a match. If Plan A is working that is great but if it is not working go to Plan B or C. It might be adding more or less top spin or varying the speed on your ground strokes. It could also mean serving and volleying instead of staying back or attacking a weak second serve and charging the net. You could also affect the rhythm of your opponent by playing slower or faster or taking the ball earlier to give them less time.

9 SMILE AND HAVE FUN

Don't take tennis too seriously. After all, it's just a game.



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Nepal in finals



KIRAN PANDAY

Hopes rise as the Under 19 home team reaches the finals.

ALOK TUMBAHANGPHEY

The final game of the Asian Cricket Council Under 19 Cup 2005 will take place on Saturday between Nepal and Malaysia in Tribhuban University's cricket field. In a series where 15 Asian non-test playing nations participated, Nepal reached the semi-finals after defeating Singapore by a 100 runs (223 for 9 wickets). Nepal elected to field first after winning the toss against Kuwait in the semi-finals.

Nepal's aggressive bowling stopped Kuwait at 39.1 overs for 146 runs. Kuwait's bowling was no match for the Nepali batting line up and the team made an easy 147 in 37.5 overs for just one wicket. Bowlers Amrit Bhattarai and Sashi Kesari took three wickets each and captain of the home team Kanishka Chaugai

scored 78 runs. As news of the success spread, thousands of supporters gathered at the University grounds to rally their team to victory. The Nepali team now looks steadfast and ready to face the challenge that lies ahead playing against the Malaysians.

It was a good start up for Nepal when the team sent Baharain packing off in the first game with only 67 runs to their credit and stopped Brunei at just 21 runs. Nepal's bowling line up is considered among the best in the Asian junior level with the likes of Amrit Bhattarai, who is one of the major factors contributing to the success. Nepal's aggressive bowling tactic has helped the team so far but if Nepal is to really give its old foe Malaysia a tough time, it has to strengthen its batting.

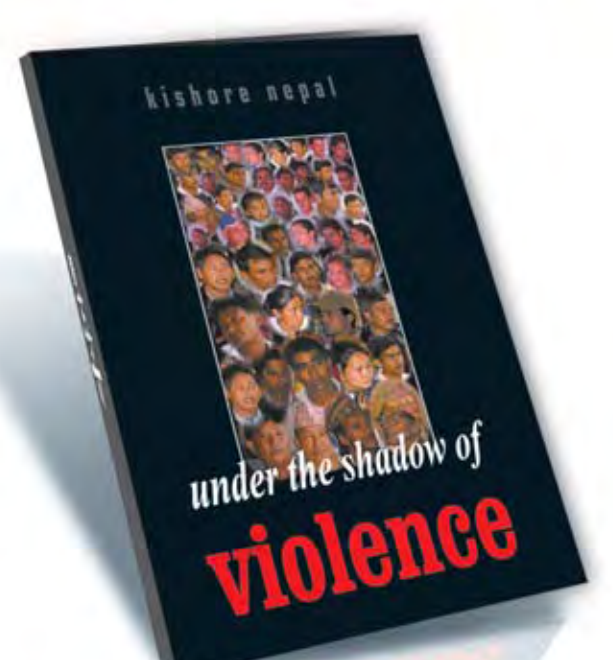
Manager of the Nepali team

Pradeep Karki has his hopes high and fingers crossed for the future of Nepali cricket. "A majority of the players have played in the under 15 tournaments. There is hope that these same players will one day form a successful national team." However past experiences have shown that not all buds bloom beautifully. In the Junior Cricket World Cup held in 2002 in New Zealand the Nepali team defeated Bangladesh and Pakistan and earned the name 'Giant Killer'. The very same team was unable to meet expectations later. This time around though, with a successful tournament on its way to completion, the Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) deserves a pat. ●

The winner of the ACC Cup will qualify to play the ICC Under 19 Cricket World Cup 2006 in Sri Lanka, where test playing countries will also take part.

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under the shadow of
violence



A REALITY READ

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"Lata ko desh ma gaando tanderi." (In a land of fools, even a man with a bad goatee can be a hero.) - as translated by UNACOOTs, the United Nation's Association of Cartoonists

THE ADVENTURES OF HEROJIG

Cooking With Khandro Didi
#73 - Using What's Locally Available & Economical

Today, let's focus on poultry, which has dropped from 80/nrs to 10/nrs giving the Didi a much needed break in the price of meats. First, let's begin preparing one of my favorite dishes: Chicken Flu-Less...

Steps for Preparing A Tasty Healthy Chicken

1. Have regular health checks for your chicks.
2. Provide a safe clean nest-area, away from cats, ministers, and hungry rebels.
3. Now, forget about eating them and prepare a nice Aalu Tarkari.

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~ Ancient Quotation (pre-metric system)

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ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Around Annapurna** panorama photographs by Andreas Stimm 18-27 November at Indigo Gallery. 4413580
- ❖ **Nature's Fantasy** based on oriental art technique by Hare Ram Joju at Lajimpat Gallery, 18 November-2 December. 4419353
- ❖ **The Desmond Doig Exhibition** featuring watercolors and drawings, 22 November-6 December at Siddhartha Art Gallery. 4438979
- ❖ **Photographs** by Susan Griffiths Jones, 20 November-7 December, Lajimpat Gallery Café. 4428549



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

- ❖ **Aasa Ko Biu (Seeds of Hope)** HELP/ Nepal fundraising program for children at Patan Museum, 18 November.
- ❖ **WTO, Public Health and Hong Kong Ministerial** youth discussion series, 18 November, 3PM at Martin Chautari. 4256239
- ❖ **Finlandia** party at Liquid Lounge with Dj Kiran, 18 November.
- ❖ **Dance Fiesta** with famous DJs and door prizes, Hotel de l'Annapurna, 18 November, 5PM onwards.
- ❖ **Rosemary Cafe's** first anniversary, 18-24 November. 4781591
- ❖ **3rd SIRC Charity Golf Tournament** at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort, 19 November.
- ❖ **Asman Mela** at Hyatt Regency, Saturday 19 November, 10AM-6PM.
- ❖ **What is life and how to handle it**, at HBMC. 4414843
- ❖ **Universal Children's Day** 20 November
- ❖ **World Television Day** 21 November
- ❖ **British Film Festival** at Gopi Krishna hall, 21-25 November.
- ❖ **Reporting Skills** at ELD, 21-25 November. 5555071
- ❖ **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** 25 November.
- ❖ **Ride and Rage** bikers ride up to the Last Resort and party, 25-26 November.
- ❖ **Mean Streets with De Niro and Scorsese** film festival at Lajimpat Gallery Café, till 30 November. 4428549
- ❖ **World AIDS Day** 1 December.
- ❖ **AWON Christmas Bajar**, 3 December at Hotel Hyatt Regency. Rs 100.

MUSIC AND PERFORMANCES

- ❖ **U2 Night** at Moksh, 18 November 7PM, Rs 150.
- ❖ **Traditional Newa Music Concert** by Tanani Bajan Khala from Jyapu Tole 20 & 27 November at Hotel Vajra. 4271545
- ❖ **Ramailo Saanjh** at Dwarika's with Maya Mantra 1 December. Rs 1000 per person, 7PM-10PM. 4479488
- ❖ **Unplugged** sessions with Strings, Jatra Saturday nights. 4256622
- ❖ **Live Music** at Juneli Bar, Hotel de l'Annapurna. 4221711
- ❖ **Wonderful Wednesdays** great music at the bar, Dwarika's. 4479488
- ❖ **Ladies Night Wednesdays**, one free cocktail to the ladies at Jatra.
- ❖ **Live Jazz** by the pond at 1905, Kantipath. 4225272

FOOD

- ❖ **Kebab and Biryani Festival** cuisine from the house of Mughals at Hyatt Regency 5-20 November, 6.30 PM onwards. 4491234
- ❖ **Tapas & Margaritas** at Hotel Yak & Yeti, 10-22 Nov, Rs 699. 4248999
- ❖ **Culinary Voyage** to 14 kitchens of the European Union at Hyatt Regency.
- ❖ **The Sidewalk BBQ** with Shades of Blue, Wednesdays, Shangri-La. 4412999
- ❖ **Ciney and Par-e-jat** every Friday 7PM at Dwarika's.
- ❖ **Sushi and Saki Promotion** at Hyatt Regency. 4491234
- ❖ **The Chimney Restaurant** signature dishes at Hotel Yak and Yeti.
- ❖ **BBQ Ban Bhoj** at Godavari Village Resort, Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. 5560675
- ❖ **Jazz Gourmet** fine dining redefined at Hotel Shangri-La. 4412999
- ❖ **Autumn Chill out Moments** at 1905 Kantipath, delightful entrées and lounge grooves by DjPj. 4225272

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge**, call for reservations. 4361500
- ❖ **Overnight Stay Package** at Godavari Village Resort. 5560675
- ❖ **Escape Kathmandu** at Shivapuri Heights Cottage. steve@escape2nepal.com
- ❖ **Junglewalks**, rafting, elephant rides all at Jungle Base Camp Lodge, Bardia. junglebasecamp@yahoo.com
- ❖ **Conferences** at Godavari Village Resort. 5560675

Quest Entertainment

In a world of lies, Arjun (Fardeen Khan) is a man with a plan. The only thing he has not counted on is Natasha (Koena Mitra), a woman lured into his world but who, unknown to Arjun, has a plan of her own. Throw in the uncrowned king of the underworld, Sikander (Gulshan Grover), his hired gun Kaif (Kay Kay), Arjun's partners in crime Rohit (Rohit Roy), Jack (Amin Haji) and Bhatia (Mukul Dev) and the biggest mark that Indian cinema has seen (Feroz Khan) and what we have is a roller coaster ride where it remains to be seen who's playing whom and who ultimately wins!

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NEPALI WEATHER by MAUSAM BEED

The characteristic winter haze blowing in from the plains is upon us, this is filtering the sun and bringing down the maximum temperature. This is reason for poor visibility even though the sky is clear. If you are trekking you will notice that the haze level is only up to 3,300 m and above that it is bright and clear. This satellite photo taken on Thursday morning shows the Nepal Himalaya on the borderline of a high pressure system riding astride a circulation approaching from the Bay of Bengal. The result: wind direction will change to northwesterly and send the temperature plummeting over the weekend to six degrees with accompanying fog in the Valley.

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गरी कमसल पक्षहरूलाई
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भलो छ ।

श्री ५ को सरकार
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
सूचना विभाग



FREQUENCY MODULATION: A radio activist holds a larger-than-life radio used as a prop in a pro-freedom rally organised by civil society groups on Monday.



DON'T FORGET US: Bhutani women at a sit-in last week protesting the decline in aid to refugee camps and calling on the UN to resolve the refugee crisis. They called off the protest on Tuesday after assurances from the UN that their demands would be considered.



IF IT'S TUESDAY IT MUST BE BELGIUM: Nepathya performs to eager crowds in Brussels as a part of the group's successful Europe tour.



HELPING NEIGHBOURS: Relief material from Nepali donors for Pakistani earthquake survivors being loaded on a Royal Nepali Army HS-748 aircraft at Kathmandu airport before departure for Islamabad.



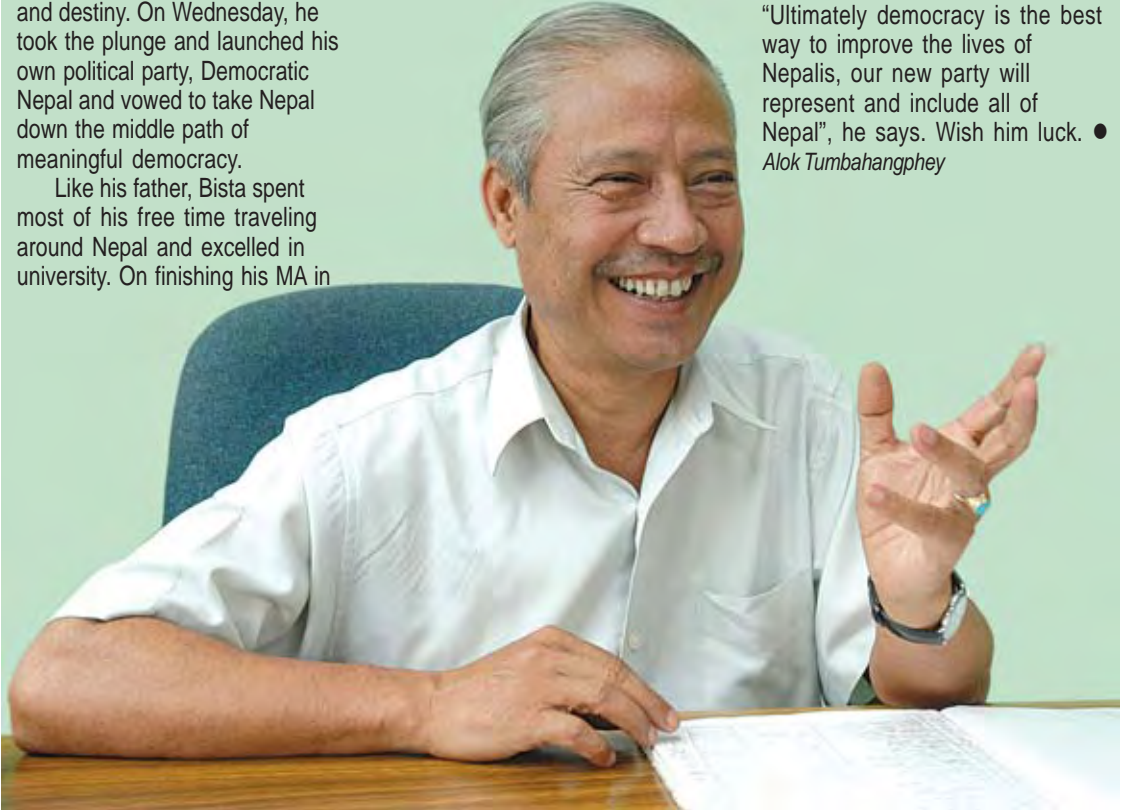
AND ALL THAT JAZZ: Vocalist Tipriti from Soulmate belting out a tune at the grande finale of Jazzmandu last Saturday at the Summit Hotel.

His father's son


As a 17-year-old Boy Scout, Keshar Bahadur Bista travelled the world in the 1960s. Like many Nepalis, he could have stayed abroad and done well for himself in the diaspora. Fortunately, his father Dor Bahadur Bista would have none of it. The famous social scientist and author of the book *Fatalism and Development* decided his son had not seen enough of his own country and forced him to return to Nepal. It was a decision that shaped Keshar Bahadur Bista's life and destiny. On Wednesday, he took the plunge and launched his own political party, Democratic Nepal and vowed to take Nepal down the middle path of meaningful democracy. Like his father, Bista spent most of his free time traveling around Nepal and excelled in university. On finishing his MA in

Political Science from Tribhuban University where he received a gold medal for outstanding academic performance Bista volunteered for the National Development Scheme (NDS) and was sent to Sindhupalchok with three classmates where he worked for a year implementing rural development projects. If one needs proof that the NDS was the best thing that ever happened to Nepal, one just needs to look at the commitment and drive of participants like Keshar Bahadur Bista. He returned to act

as coordinator of the NDS that sent thousands of college students for one year mandatory development work in villages across Nepal. Bista shied away from politics, although he served a brief stint as minister of culture during the Panchayat years. Seven of his ancestors were executed by Bir Shumsher so the initial reluctance to get into politics was understandable. But the yearning to do something to save the country was too strong and Keshar Bahadur Bista has now returned to his true calling. Asked why he launched his own party, Bista says, like many other Nepalis, it was because of the unfulfilled hopes of democracy. "Ultimately democracy is the best way to improve the lives of Nepalis, our new party will represent and include all of Nepal", he says. Wish him luck. ● Alok Tumbahangphey



KIRAN PANDAY



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It's a tough Act to follow

If you have turned to this page in search of comic relief, then I'm sorry to have to break the distressing news that you have come to the wrong place. Is that twittering I hear from the back? No twittering, y'understand? Twittering is against the national interest and is strictly prohibited until further notice.

What's so funny anyway? It's no laughing matter when Mars is so close to planet Earth, it's deadly serious. We don't want anyone to be in stitches around here and if caught indulging in unprovoked laughter perpetrators will be tickled with a feather on the soles of their feet. If you want to laugh I suggest you go elsewhere, for instance to the humour-mongering state media which is the only official mouthpiece licensed to poke fun at the higher-up authoritarians without let or hindrance.

Here on this page we are seriously committed to follow the directives laid down in the Royal Ordinance Amending Some Press Rules and Regulations Act 1984 (hereinafter referred to as 'If This is Not Draconian Enough For You We Can Issue Another Edict') which has finally introduced much-awaited and welcome restrictions on uncontrolled guffawing, mindless chortling, chuckling for no reason, falling off one's chair clutching one's belly, and all public display of amusement of any kind at the expense of those in positions of power and authority without written approval by the Department of Mirth Control of the Ministry of Infotainment and Population of an application signed, fingerprinted and filed in triplicate two months prior to the publication of the alleged joke. Permission will be granted on a case-by-case basis under the credo: 'He who laughs best laughs behind bars, and that includes Rumdoodle.'

And as long as we are on the subject we'd also like to bring to the notice of citizens new provisions in the decree proscribing rumours, gossip, innuendo and mindless chitchat with immediate effect. Only officially-sanctioned propaganda is henceforth allowed to be circulated by word-of-mouth provided they meet minimum government-approved standards of sycophancy and adulation to the high and mighty.

Even though it may be belabouring the obvious we would like to reprint sections of the said ordinance to refresh people's memories. Don't tell us we didn't warn you.

Amendment to the Get-Tough Act 2015
Notwithstanding anything already written in Proviso 52 (d) of Section 3 (i) Sub-Section 15b Clause (c) of the Freedom of Expression Act or elsewhere in the existing statutes, any corner momo shop, barber shop or beauty parlour that transgresses prevailing laws on sedition by allowing customers to take part in conversation that can be construed as 'news' will henceforth have their licenses revoked. Only conversations among clients dealing with 'informative items' like health, education, family planning, environment, weather, road transportation or related to any development activities with an objective of promoting public awareness will henceforth be allowed.

Amendment to the Tough Act To Follow 2017
In Clause (d) of Sub-Section (2) of Section 18-D of the Act, the words 'fine up Rs 500,000 or two years imprisonment or both' has been added to the provisions on defamation. The definition of defamation has also been widened to include: 'Anyone practicing voodoo with the intention of countering officially-sanctioned occult rituals, or anyone harbouring negative vibes about aforementioned regime or thinking nasty anti-national thoughts is liable to punitive measures under the law'.

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