Not quite there yet

The constituent assembly could still create problems and the party-rebel accord leaves out a warring side

NAVIN SINGH KHADKA

On the face of it, the 12-point accord between the opposition parties and the Maoists appears to be a breakthrough but analysts say there are still significant points where the two sides don’t agree.

The compromise by the parties was on the issue of constituent assembly in return for the Maoists agreeing to decommission arms under UN supervision in a run-up to it (See p 6 for full text of agreement). However, some experts say the constituent assembly election is a major sticking point between the parties and the rebels. Also the palace-unity combine will never agree to it.

“IT IS A MIRAGE, IT IS NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN,” constitutional lawyer Ganesh Raj Sharma told us. “The conditions for the elections of a constituent assembly in the agreement are so vague that one can’t see when it will ever materialize.”

The government’s first reaction to the party-rebel alliance was surprisingly muted. The king’s trusted foreign minister, Ramesh Nath Pandey, told reporters at the airport on Wednesday on return from Tunis: “It doesn’t matter who restores peace, as long as it is restored.”

His colleague, Information Minister Tanka Dhakal was less diplomatic but even he said that the government was‘studying’ the agreement.

“ Since both ministers were with the king before his African safari, they must reflect the monarch’s mindset. In fact, there are indications the king was briefed about the impending agreement before he left last week. It is in the best interests of the king that is most outraged. The king’s adviser and former commander-in-chief Satish SJB Rana on Wednesday lashed out at the 12-point agreement, calling it ‘unnatural’. It is clear that the palace considers a constituent assembly election as synonymous with republic and a no-go. Furthermore, the main hurdle still remains because this is not yet an agreement between the two warring sides.

All eyes are now on the king and his scheduled return on 2 December, the same day the Maoist unilateral ceasefire is due to expire. Will he listen to his hardline advisers or respond to his increasing international isolation? Will the Maoists extend the ceasefire? Will the army reciprocate?

The reaction from the international community has been cautious optimism. The UN Secretary-General said Wednesday he was ‘carefully studying the details’ of the agreement and he was ‘ready to assist in any manner that would help bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict’.

The Americans and the Indians seem to be in close touch. But New Delhi, which has been the most vocal opponent of UN involvement, reacted guardedly: “India believes that all outstanding issues ought to be resolved through the efforts of the people of Nepal themselves and that the rule of the international community should be limited to support these efforts.”

Without a UN role, there will be no constituent assembly elections and the parties will boycott all polls under this regime. For Sharma, all this points to continued deadlock despite the 12-point agreement.

“IT MEANS NEPALIS WILL BE DEPRIVED of their right to vote for an indefinite period and that in turn means power will continue to remain in the hands of the palace and our neighbours,” he added.

“The only point that makes some hopeful is that the agreement paves the way for the rebels to enter mainstream politics. Under pressure from political figures in India, the Maoists don’t seem to have much of a choice.’

And the Indian statement doesn’t miss this point: “It remains to be seen whether Maoists are genuinely prepared to live up to their commitments and refrain from acts of violence and extortion.’
Labelling those with divergent views as ‘anti-national’ is the least of our problems. The real issue is to acknowledge the constitutional vacuum. But they are pretending that the 4 October, 2002 takeover didn’t create a constitutional role. For his own sake, for the sake of the country, and to avoid the humiliation on their own, each wants to claim that this is a voluntary devolution. After this, it is pointless war.

The Maoist’s hesitancy to extend the unilateral ceasefire for an indefinite period seems to be a calculated tactic. They too know that nothing can break the present deadlock. They are unlikely to accept an exit strategy that shows us a bit of the Nepal they want to create. They will only release the king if their demands are met.

If we can’t fix it ourselves why not let others do it for us? That is why the commanders will not decommission their weapons under international supervision. It is not a question of trust, but one of principle. It is an act of self-interest, not enlightened self-interest. Besides, there is nothing new about Nepali political figures using trips to India: King Tribhuvan called enlightened self-interest. Besides, there is nothing new about Nepali political figures using trips to India: King Tribhuvan called enlightened self-interest. Besides, there is nothing new about Nepali political figures using trips to India: King Tribhuvan called enlightened self-interest. Besides, there is nothing new about Nepali political figures using trips to India: King Tribhuvan called enlightened self-interest. Besides, there is nothing new about Nepali political figures using trips to India: King Tribhuvan called enlightened self-interest. Besides, there is nothing new about Nepali political figures using trips to India: King Tribhuvan called enlightened self-interest.
All citizens and not just the mainstream community. We.” As a state party, it has to be more responsible towards the country to the brink. While being forced to deploy in an RNA for its own good and for the future of this country that like CK Lal who have the courage and foresight to warn us...
Demand outstrips supply

Get your candles, torches and generators ready for a long, dark winter

Three years ago, the Ministry of Water Resources was ready to implement time-of-day tariffs to reduce demand at peak hour, but the government changed and it went into limbo. Had demand management measures been put in place, the supply deficit would be only 9MW in January. But without it, the shortfall will be 40MW.

Even if these plans work, and it looks iffy, the gap between supply and demand will be too great by mid-December. From then on power cuts at peak hour are here to stay for at least five years, experts say.

The problem isn’t lack of power, it is shortfall at the evening peak hours in winter. During the rest of the day and during the monsoon the grid has more energy than it can handle. Most of it is wasted and the NEA suffers huge losses because it is power it has to buy but can’t sell.

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Homage to Drucker

Guru taught that good management was a power for good

Peter Drucker, the man who invented the art of management, died in his sleep at home in California on 11 November. He was 95. Though most tenured professors at top-tier US business schools do not respect him enough to assign his writings to students, this idea that work is a social act, that books, many essays and lectures have long resonated with managers in for-profit and non-profit organisations worldwide.

In my spare-time reading of Drucker—with books bought from a reading collection at Kaptuthal’s Educational Book House—I have come away with three ideas that have influenced my thinking about business and management.

Long before the widespread use of the internet, Drucker saw the rise of knowledge workers. He pointed out that a baker’s son today need not grow up to be a baker as he would have done 40 years ago. That son might be a lawyer, an X-ray technician or an artist. This freedom to change one’s profession from that of one’s forefathers, argued Drucker, is a relatively new phenomenon in human history. And it has positive implications for the nature of work and management.

A member of a hospital management, for example, can express dissatisfaction over an X-ray technician’s tardiness. But the management cannot do the technician’s work, which is specialised. Given this, the challenge for anyone in management is to figure out how to get the best out of specialists or knowledge workers who work for their organisation. Viewed this way, being in management is akin to being a conductor who has to coax music out of orchestra members, each of whom is a specialist in playing an instrument.

Drucker’s second insight was that managerial effectiveness can be learned through consistent practice. He had no use for CEOs as glamorous cover boys. Instead, he drew upon his consulting experiences to assert that managers’ personalities, attitudes, values, strengths, weaknesses, extraversion or Introversion made little difference if they were not effective and if they did not deliver the results for their organisations. He argued that a manager’s job was to ask the right questions about what needs to be done, how to do it through action plans, assign people to do it and then get it done by keeping communications open. Anything else was simply a distraction.

Drucker wrote much on the art of self-management. He understood that different people learn the same thing differently. Some enjoy reading, some learn by writing, while others master new ideas by talking things over with many people. Drucker encouraged all to discover their own learning style and put that to work by honing their strengths. It is easier, he observed, to go from strength to strength than to try to turn a weakness into strength. He realised that knowledge workers do not necessarily do their best work within the traditional nine-to-five work schedule and suggested that management think out of the box to get more productivity out of employees, whose creativity and productivity are the innovations that businesses everywhere need today.

Drucker saw ambitious, highly educated and competent young people becoming partners of law or consulting firms at the age of 35 and then getting thoroughly bored with the work they do, while remaining too scared to leave work to find their true calling in life. He suggested that they spend several hours a week volunteering at non-profit entities—schools, museums, hospitals, theatre groups, music ensembles—so that they could share their expertise with organisations that desperately need management skills but could afford them.

Indeed, all of Drucker’s writings point to one conclusion: that the art of management, regardless of where it is applied, has the power to do much good for humankind. May his soul rest in peace.
The 12-point agreement between the Maoists and the seven-party alliance as listed in statement by Pushpa Kamal Dahal on Tuesday.

1. Today, the main desire of most Nepalis is to have democracy, peace, prosperity, social upliftment and an independent and sovereign Nepal. Toward that end, we fully agree that the main obstacle is an autocratic monarchy. Without an end to the autocratic monarchy and establishment of complete democracy we are clear that there will be no peace, progress, and prosperity in the country. Therefore, we have reached an agreement that all forces against autocratic monarchy will step up their movement to end the autocratic monarchy and establish complete democracy.

2. The agitating seven political parties are fully committed to the plan to reinstate parliament whose decision will lead to the formation of an all-party government, hold talks with the Maoists and go for an election in a constitutional assembly. They identify this as the way to end the present conflict and restore sovereignty to the people. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has made the commitment to organise a national political convention of democratic forces. The meet should decide on the formation of an interim government and hold elections for a constituent assembly to achieve the agreed goal. The seven political parties and the CPN (Maoist) will engage in a continuous dialogue and explore a consensus on procedural matters. It has been agreed that People’s power is the only alternative to meet the goals.

3. The country wants a positive solution and a permanent peace. That is why we are committed to these goals in an end to the conflict through the end of autocratic monarchy, elections for the constituent assembly and the establishment of absolute democracy. The CPN (Maoist) expresses its commitment to move ahead in a peaceful new political current through this process. There has been an understanding on keeping the Maoists’ armed forces and the Royal Nepal Army under the supervision of the limitations during the elections of the constituent assembly, conduct elections in free and fair manner, and accept the results of the elections— all these after an end of the autocratic monarchy. We also expect the involvement of reliable international interlocutors in our mutual process.

4. The CPN (Maoist) makes public its commitment to clearly institutionalise the values of competitive multiparty system, civil and fundamental rights, human rights and the rule of the law.

5. The CPN (Maoist) has made the commitment to let the leaders, activists, and the people who were displaced during the armed conflict to be resettled in their homes. It has also committed that all land, houses and property seized unjustly will be returned. This will create an environment where people will be allowed to freely conduct their political activities.

6. Through self-criticism and self-evaluation of the past mistakes and shortcomings, the CPN (Maoist) is committed not to repeat those mistakes.

7. The seven political parties have realised they made mistakes when they were in parliament and in government and have committed that they will not repeat those mistakes.

8. Human rights and press freedom will be respected while moving the peace process ahead.

9. The talk of municipal elections and parliamentary polls is to trick the people and the international community and to legitimise the illegitimate and autocratic rule of the king. We will boycott these polls in our separate ways and urge the people to make such elections unsuccessful.

10. The people and their representative political parties are the real guards of nationalism. We are fully committed on the self-reliance, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity. It is our common duty to have friendly relations on the basis of the principle of peaceful co-existence with all the countries of the world, especially with our neighbours India and China. We urge all patriotic people to remain alert about Mandarin nationalism that the king and the monarchists are preaching to the people. We also appeal to international powers to support the democratic movement against autocratic monarchy through all possible ways.

11. We urge civil society, professionals, people of all caste, communities and areas, the media, intellectuals and general Nepalis to actively participate in the people’s movement that will be conducted on the basis of our agreement that has democracy, peace, prosperity, social change, freedom, sovereignty and integrity of the country as the cornerstone.

12. Misbehaviour of the parties will be investigated, and action taken against those found guilty and the findings made public. Any problems arising will be sorted out at the concerned level or through discussion at the leadership level.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Embassy of Denmark, Kathmandu invites applications from suitably qualified Nepalese Citizens for the position of Programme Assistant.

Main Tasks:
- Assistance to the development staff responsible for energy and agrarian sector at the Embassy.
- Facilitate review missions to and from the Embassy.
- Maintain the Embassy’s contacts to relevant partners in Nepal (ministries, other donors, NGOs, private sectors etc.),
- Take initiatives and provide necessary assistance to the Embassy.
- Preparing documents, reports, workshops and meetings.

Qualification/Requirements:
- Master’s Degree preferably in Economics.
- Minimum 2 years of working experience in the environment and rural development field.
- Possess a good command of English and Nepali (Oral and written).
- Ability to develop, plan and manage programme activities, devise work plans, handle multiple tasks and work under time pressure.
- Positive and dynamic attitude.
- Proficiency in the use of office computer applications.
- Females candidates and individuals from ethnic minorities are encouraged to apply.

Conditions of Employment:
- 1 year contract with possibility of extension
- Competitive salary and benefits

Written application should reach the Embassy P.O Box: 6332 no later than 10th December 2005 and must include, education certificate and reference. Only short listed applicants will be contacted for the selection process.

Radio Sagarmatha, 18 November

More ceasefire?

The fast-paced undercurrents of the country’s politics have indicated that the Maoists may extend the ceasefire. The seven warring parties have been holding talks with the Maoists. On the other side, even if the king is on a lengthy overseas visit, the vice chairman of the ministers council Tulsi Ghimire and Kiriti Hindi are said to have held dialogue with Maoists’ point men. Since talks are on between all the forces of Nepali politics, sources say Maoists are in no mood to break the ceasefire now. The unilateral ceasefire of the Maoists comes to an end one day after the king returns from his foreign visit on 2 December. Sources also say the government is preparing to announce an unilateral ceasefire five days before the Maoists’ ceasefire ends this 1 December.

In solitary

Buddhabar, 23 November

While the World Summit on the Information Society was going on in Tunis last week, in the outskirts of midwestern Nepal in the middle of nowhere a mother sits in the darkness of the cowshed with her newborn baby. She is not allowed to eat nutritious food, drink milk or water. She is deemed ‘unclean’ and can’t come into the house, she is not allowed to look at the sun so her gaze will not defile the sun god. She is not allowed to touch anyone, no one is allowed to touch her. In the next house, a teenage girl having her first menstruation is in similar solitary confinement. At the time that she needs the most attention, when she needs to be told what is happening to her body and needs her family members she is locked up in the chahpadhi hut, the cell where her mother and mothers where her mother and mothers before her have spent four days every month. Despite laws being passed against it, even the wife of the headmaster of a school in Baitadi still had to spend her menstruation period in the cowshed. If that is the situation with her, how long will it take for hundreds of thousands of illiterate women? How is the WSIS in Tunis going to help these women? We may have internet and mobile phones but how is what we communicate going to bring justice to Nepali women.

QuotE OF ThE WEEk

“If why this hallucination about the party leaders visiting India when the king can travel anywhere he wants, even to a country with no diplomatic ties to Nepal?”

Former ambassador to India Professor Hans Namgyal Dhakhabhadel in Budhanilkantha, 23 November

Foreign handiwork

Academic Govinda Bhatta in Jana Bhasa, 21 November

If media reports are any indication, foreign powers are making Chinese military assistance to Nepal an excuse to intervene in Nepal’s internal affairs. Whereas, China has made no interference. Efforts are on to implicated Nepal in the international strategic campaign against China. Such campaigns have been saying that Nepal has tilted toward China and that there is increasing Chinese influence in Nepal. But, the fact remains that Nepal has not changed its foreign policy. We still believe on the policy of neutrality and non-alignment.

Yesther’s media reports that Nepal’s fate may be like that of Bhutan and Sikim. I think such things should not appear in the press. It only undermines the confidence of the people. Moreover, it would be quite unrealistic to think that Nepal will be transformed into Bhutan and Sikkim. If our country’s politics changes at the will of foreign powers, centers, that would be the most unfortunate thing.
Life in the time of ceasefire

Himal Khabarnatika, 16 November

As the three-month ceasefire period comes to an end, it is becoming apparent that the level of desertions and surrenders from the Maoists has increased in the period. In Parbat, the Vice-platoon commander of the Gandak Region Dhana Bahadur Chhetri (Comrade Dhana) and Jit Pun of the Magarat Freedom Front surrendered to the security forces.

Recently, the vice chairman of the district Maoist student union Gopal Bhandari deserted the movement. Comrade Dhana was in Wangal when he was impressed with Maoists’ song and dance performances and joined the insurgents. He received training even fought in famous battles in Weling, Tarkhung and Gulmi where he was wounded. Now, he has decided to leave the movement and go abroad to work. The Platoon Commander from Myagdi, Comrade Dil has also quit. Jit Pun says he was put off by the slaughter he witnessed during his tenure in Benti in March 2004 and says he will now go abroad to work. Student leader Ganesh Dhungana says, “If the Maoists wish to continue, they must be in charge of fund-raising for the party and appear to the party and appear in society rather than in the jungle.”

In Rukum, the Maoists have passed an edict that the Thanti location was ‘detrimental to the movement’ and go abroad to work. The Maoists say the Thanti location was a problem for the local villagers from Rukum, as it was located on the pre-determined rate. Not only that, but the Maoists have even forced the locals to give the Maoists a Rs 200,000 donation according to the party’s examinations.

Maoist Platoon vice-commander Dhana Bahadur Chhetri gives himself up to the district administrator in Parbat.

There are signs that local Maoists are degenerating into extortion gangs during the ceasefire. The Maoists always used to say they’d never harm trekkers and ask tourists for donations according to the party’s pre-determined rate. Not anymore. A group of tourists in Humla and Muju recently were extorted by Maoist groups and sub-groups in the two districts. Earlier, if they showed the receipt they didn’t have to pay the Maoist tax twice. In Thame of Khumbu, suspected Maoists in one recent night went house-to-house and extorted Rs 10,000 each from a dozen tourist lodges.

In some parts of central and mid-western Nepal, local Maoists are behaving as if they are a political party campaigning in elections. They arrange programs for local villagers in much the same way as political parties. “Our party wants a peaceful way out and we think a democratic republic is the only way out,” says Battalion Commisar Comrade Roshan at a public meeting in Ilam’s Ruma VDC on 29 October. But the people are confused, do the Maoists really mean it? Is this a ruse? Or do they now genuinely want to form a political front after the war?

There is no place for motherly love in a democracy. It doesn’t mean we have given up the struggle, we are just uniting with the anti-regressive forces of the parties.”

The rebels seem to have given up their long boring speeches and show a willingness to share the podium even with people they don’t agree. Comrade Roshan sounded conciliatory when he began his speech in Kathmandu by saying: “Please point out our weaknesses, be open, give us suggestions.”

The UML's Durga Sodari took the challenge: “We think you Maoists are dominant in the villages only because you have the gun. We don’t agree to this. Some party members still don’t trust the Maoists and think their recent softness is a trick. But ex-MP Maheswar Pathak says: “If the Maoists take part in peaceful meetings and rallies even the government should applaud.”

But Man Bahadur Oli does say they “don’t usually speak out against it.”

Mainali: his fault was to ask an explicit commitment from them that they are now on a peaceful democratic struggle, it will be difficult to trust them. But the Maoists here haven’t yet publicly announced that they have adopted the new strategy.

Despite the uncertainties, the Maoists seem to have having serious second thoughts about violence. Says in-charge of Palbari VDC in Kailali, Comrade Sangharsha says: “It took us 10 years to realise it’s wrong to kill people and took the Nepali Congress 61 years to realise it shouldn’t carry the king on its shoulders. Congress 61 years to realise it’s wrong to kill people and took the Nepali Congress 61 years to realise it’s wrong to kill people.”

In Argakhanchi and Pyuthan, however, there is a big gap between what the Maoists say and do. There is a lot of fear about what will happen after the ceasefire and the new Maoist graffiti on the walls says: “Let’s make the phased strategic counteroffensive a success.”

Locals have taken this to mean that the Maoists will retain the warpath after the ceasefire. Despite the threat from the Kinja district Maoists, the rebels are still targeting party workers. Najir Mainali returns to his village in Pali VDC because he couldn’t pay the Maoist the Rs 100,000 they demanded.

In Gulmi, the NC’s central committee member Sunil Kumar Bhandari has had his property confiscated. Ramji Ghimire of the UML hasn’t been able to go back to his village in Pali VDC. Narendra Dewan has been barred from going back to his village in Kathmandu. In Jhapa and the eastern districts Maoist brutality has not gone down since the ceasefire. On 8 November the Maoists killed mentally handicapped Chudamani Mainali; his fault was to ask an explicit commitment from them that they are now on a peaceful democratic struggle, it will be difficult to trust them. But the Maoists here haven’t yet publicly announced that they have adopted the new strategy.

The Maoists have not been able to bring up a new generation of political leaders and even their cadre are deserting in droves. The Maoist district secretariat ran away with Rs 2.8 million recently.

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The Sacred Sites Trail is a circular tourism trail created to encourage tourists to visit six lesser known sacred sites and villages in the Khumbu area. Initiated and implemented by the local people with financial support from The Mountain Institute (TMI) the program hopes to reinvigorate and enhance local cultural skills and traditions and distribute tourism benefits more widely by encouraging tourists to visit villages off the established trekking trails and to stay longer.

The route takes one to Thame, Gendukpa, Phortse, Pangboche and Debuche. The natural assets of these areas are spectacular and less well known. All along the trails, ancient gombas, mani walls, chortens and kanis give travellers a feeling of being in sacred surroundings giving a spiritual feel to the trail’s pristine mountain environment.

The trail passes through 12 monasteries and nunneries, passing clockwise from Namche visiting Thame, Gendukpa, Phortse, Pangboche and Debuche.

Trekking tourism has helped boost the local economy and standard of living with better health care, education and housing. But it has also degraded the region’s fragile ecology and cultural traditions. Moreover, the benefits of trekking tourism are not distributed equally throughout the parks as many areas remain culturally and economically isolated.

Trekking tourism has not led to the preservation of the region’s vibrant culture. Economic benefits have taken precedence over the conservation of natural and cultural sacred sites. Many groves, trees, water sources and caves that are regarded as holy are being neglected. The rich oral traditions, rituals,
several sites in the Thame Valley and ending at the Tengboche Monastery. The Sacred Sites Trail feeds into and complements existing trekking routes.

The trail builds on the notion of sustainability that entails maximum consideration to local communities, providing them with livelihood opportunities, involving them in the management and protection of cultural heritage and natural resources.

The confluence of religion, culture and environmental conservation invariably contributes and promotes tourism and development of the area therefore, ‘Sacred Sites Trails to Khumbu’ builds on the very rich religious and cultural heritage of the region to attract tourists also to isolated areas.

In 2003, a unique initiative called the ‘Sacred Sites Trail to Khumbu’ was launched. This community-based tourism initiative tries to integrate multi-thematic conservation needs, diversify tourism benefits and preserve cultural values and stages of development.

At a time when indigenous culture is under increasing threat from encroachment of modern civilisation, loss of livelihood opportunities and Maoist conflict, the hope lies in replicating strategies like the Sacred Sites Trail in other parts of Nepal as well. Already, a ‘Sacred Himalayan Landscape’ project encompassing national parks and biodiversity regions from Langtang north of Kathmandu to the eastern slopes of Kangchenjunga in Sikkim is being proposed to conserve the cultural, religious and environmental treasures of the eastern Himalayas.

At a ‘Sacred Himalayan Landscape in Nepal’ conference in April, participants said traditional conservation measures taken to safeguard biodiversity alone are inadequate, the goal should be to also preserve the cultures and traditions that nurture and revere nature.

And once local communities are mobilised to preserve traditional value systems, culture and religion, the environment is automatically protected. After all, only by strengthening society’s moorings can society benefit from protecting the environment and from tourism.

Sarah Subba and Ang Rita Sherpa work for The Mountain Institute’s Himal Program.
www.mountain.org
Jane Goodall loved animals even as a child. When she was just over a year old, her father gave her a toy chimpanzee which she named Jubilee. She carried Jubilee with her everywhere. Today, more than 65 years later, Jubilee—now completely bald from so many hugs—sits on Jane’s dresser in England.

In the summer of 1960, Jane arrived in Tanganyika (later to become Tanzania) to study chimpanzees. At first, the Gombe chimps fled whenever they saw Jane. But she persisted, watching from a distance with binoculars and gradually the chimps allowed her closer. One day in October 1960 she saw chimps David Greybeard and Golish strip leaves off twigs to make tools for fishing termites out of a termite mound. Up until this time, scientists thought humans were the only species to make tools but here was evidence to the contrary.

Jane Goodall, Institute, which she founded in 1977, has programs designed to benefit people who are living in poverty in Africa and to spread the word about the importance of conserving the forests and animal populations. The Institute also has the Roots & Shoots global youth program, which helps young people learn about problems in their communities and the world and then take action towards solving them.

Says Jane: “Young people, when informed and empowered, when they realise that what they do truly makes a difference, can indeed change the world. They are changing it already.” Jane is a dedicated scientist and has been designated by Kofi Annan as a UN Messenger of Peace.

While in Nepal, Jane Goodall will address a Public Forum at Patan Museum on Wednesday, 30 November 4 - 5.30 PM sponsored by Nepal Times and Resources Nepal in association with Roots and Shoots Nepal in Kathmandu.

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Jane will take part in a Candle Lighting Ceremony at the Peace Mandala in Maitighar organised by the Roots and Shoots youth group.

Public Forum: Reason for Hope: with Dr. Jane Goodall
Sponsored by the Nepal Times and Resources Nepal
Wednesday 30 November 4PM Patan Museum.
No admission charge but seating is limited to the first 250 people.

Jane Goodall loves animals even as a child. When she was just over a year old, her father gave her a toy chimpanzee which she named Jubilee. She carried Jubilee with her everywhere. Today, more than 65 years later, Jubilee—now completely bald from so many hugs—sits on Jane’s dresser in England.

In the summer of 1960, Jane arrived in Tanganyika (later to become Tanzania) to study chimpanzees. At first, the Gombe chimps fled whenever they saw Jane. But she persisted, watching from a distance with binoculars and gradually the chimps allowed her closer. One day in October 1960 she saw chimps David Greybeard and Golish strip leaves off twigs to make tools for fishing termites out of a termite mound. Up until this time, scientists thought humans were the only species to make tools but here was evidence to the contrary.

Jane Goodall, Institute, which she founded in 1977, has programs designed to benefit people who are living in poverty in Africa and to spread the word about the importance of conserving the forests and animal populations. The Institute also has the Roots & Shoots global youth program, which helps young people learn about problems in their communities and the world and then take action towards solving them.

Says Jane: “Young people, when informed and empowered, when they realise that what they do truly makes a difference, can indeed change the world. They are changing it already.” Jane is a dedicated scientist and has been designated by Kofi Annan as a UN Messenger of Peace.

While in Nepal, Jane Goodall will address a Public Forum at Patan Museum on Wednesday, 30 November 4 - 5.30 PM sponsored by Nepal Times and Resources Nepal in association with Roots and Shoots Nepal in Kathmandu.

Jane will take part in a Candle Lighting Ceremony at the Peace Mandala in Maitighar organised by the Roots and Shoots youth group.

Public Forum: Reason for Hope: with Dr. Jane Goodall
Sponsored by the Nepal Times and Resources Nepal
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An exhibition of Desmond Doig’s less-concrete kind of Kathmandu

DANIEL HABER in DARJEELING

Unlike earlier Darjeeling Carnivals, this year’s event seemed to have geared to the local Darjeeling crowd. It showcased local bands and musicians, with precious little for outside visitors. Darjeeling’s Mall, Chowrasta, was packed shoulder to shoulder and visitors couldn’t move much. Sponsors Reliance India Mobile and other phone companies erected their oversized billboards which marred the view. It is bad enough that certain fast food outlets have created an architectural eyesore next to the Victorian-style Chalet Hotel in what was once termed the ‘Queen of the Hills’.

It’s a shame, really, that Chowrasta had been turned into mini Calcutta. With all the boisterous Bengali tourists and crowds of local youth milling around, Chowrasta during the 10-day Carnival was not a pleasant place.

Carnival organiser, Ajay Edwards, better known as the man behind Glenary’s restaurants and bakeries, recently led a delegation of Darjeeling businessmen to meet India’s Minister of Civil Aviation, Praful Patel who promised to allow international airlines to land in Bagdogra for tourists heading up to Darjeeling and Sikkim. Sounds like a golden opportunity for regional carriers such as Cosmic, if they pay their fuel bills.

There was one redeeming feature of Carnival 2005 and it had nothing to do with mobile phones and the blaring music. It was the simple, humble game of chungi—that quintessential Nepali low-tech ‘time pass’.

No one knows the origin of chungi in Nepal. Some say it may have come from East Asia as it is related to the Thai and Burmese foot-kick, sticker-ball games. But when I first arrived in Kathmandu in the early 1980s—well before satellite TV and even televisions for most people—before FM radios, wide-screen movies and mobiles, before internet, before democracy, before democracy (and now chungi). Boys in the quiet, traffic-less streets idly kicking a small ball of rubber bands, sometimes it seemed for hours. There was nothing else to do. Monday afternoon after the ‘Games Day Out’ event in which the proud owners of dogs paraded their pets (the winner was a Saint Bernard owned by the proprietor of Mayfair Hotel) the chungi competition began.

For some reason it was all boys, all of them local youths who it seemed had a lot of practice. The NIC counted their kicks and disqualified them if they dropped the rubber band. The average count was about 40 or 50 kicks. Only two got over 100 but one 15-year-old dressed in a knit yellow, black and red Rasta cap and a Saint Bernard owned by the proprietor of Mayfair Hotel) the chungi competition began.

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The next event was a momo-eating contest. The carnival was supposed to close with fireworks and more loud music. But that’s not what I came to Darjeeling for. Call me quixotic, even old-fashioned but I prefer the soft whooshing sound of the chungi and the whispering of the cryptomnesia. I love is more about the tinkling temple bells of Mahakali Mandir atop the hill дубbed Darje Ling—the place of the thunderbolt—with its rustling prayer flags. And somewhere below, the rustle of pines punctuated by the steam-whistle shriek of the toy train.
Maps define the boundaries of our physical lives and give us inflexible notions of the spaces we inhabit. The national weather forecasts stop at our frontiers, the rivers flow into or out from terra incognita. Meanwhile, territory lost long ago remains in the schoolbooks out of wounded pride, giving the population a false notion of the shape of the realm. Especially in a region of fuzzy historical boundaries such as Southasia, maps feed national chauvinism. The map of Southasia has other peculiarities as well. The most distinctive aspect of the region is the protrusion of peninsular India, so that when you see Southasia you tend to see the outline of ‘India’. The parts of the seashore defined by Pakistan’s Makran coast westward from Karachi and the Sundarban delta of Bangladesh are non-descript by comparison.

For decades, the hands of cartographers have trembled as they traced the outer boundaries of historical Jammu and Kashmir, for fear of the disfiguring rubber stamp of some disdainful bureaucrat’s assistant declaring, ‘The boundaries as depicted in this map are neither correct nor authentic, by order of the Home Ministry of Blah’.

Our maps segregate not only the natural landscape (the Thar on that side and Thar on this side, Sundarban on that side and Sundarban on this) but more significantly the communities on the ground. The Sindhi speaker is separated from Sindhi speaker and the Bangla from Bangla. The Muslim is cut off from Muslim, the Vajrayana Buddhist from Vajrayana Buddhist. The fuzzy boundary that is the defining feature of Southasia since Gandharan times is anathema to the cartographers’ craft, which demands sharp lines in a region where all that history offers is a grey zone where the societies meet in a penumbra.

Himal Southasian, the bimonthly regional magazine which seeks to be occasionally irreverent, some years ago commissioned a map that would turn our assumptions downside-up. Artist Subhas Rai rotated the existing projections by 180 degrees so Sri Lanka came out on top and the Himalaya undermined. Rai spent three months meticulously working on the project, for it had to be accurate in all aspects, including place names, topographical features, transport networks and boundaries. (Download: www.himalmag.com/images/map_poster.jpg)

When the map went out, the instinctive reaction was for everyone to unfold it the usual way and stare at the upside-down place names. Open-minded teachers of geography and political science used it to shake up students’ worldviews. But the more common reaction was negative, as if the interpretation had dared challenge an article of faith. AJNU professor of international relations, no less, confronted one of the map’s perpetrators, demanding, “Why have you turned India upside down?!” Reply: “Arre madamji, dekh kei all of Southasia is upside down, not just your India.” At the Delhi Book Fair, in what were the days of post-Kargil ultra-nationalistic fervour, the map was perceived as a slight to the Hindu nation. The bookstall attendants felt intimidated enough by the public reaction to pull the offering from the racks.

Unlike the indigenous Delhi-wallah, the South Indian visitor to the book fair was more inclined to accept the map, for putting the peninsula on top. But it was the Sri Lankans who were most pleased, happy to be heading the heap rather than trailing the edge of the Subcontinent. Residents of the town of Matara at the tip of the island’s convexity welcomed a projection that put them at the uppermost tip.

Delhi’s denizens, so used to being in the centre of things, decided that the ‘right-side-up’ representation relegated them to the netherworld. The fact that even here the Indian peninsula remains the dominant feature seemed not to wash with this north-Indian audience. The Madras journalist who saw the map for the first time, on the other hand, had a gleam in his eye. All in all, the map has served to shake viewers’ moorings just enough for them to begin to think about another world, another Southasia. If upside-down can be right-side-up, then as Faiz Ahmed Faiz said, perhaps the day will dawn when the downtrodden will rule the territories. Or words to that effect.

Seagram’s

The down-side-up map
Not everyone likes it when the south comes on top

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Golf mega month
Lots of golf in coming weeks

I grew up playing golf at the Royal Nepal Golf Club and in those days, golf was about trying to win club level tournaments. The biggest accomplishment was to win the 'Club Championship', the most prestigious event of all, played off scratch (no handicap) in a matchplay format (one against one).

Back then, very rarely did anyone travel abroad to participate in international tournaments. Things changed in 1993 after Surya’s international tournament commenced in Kathmandu. After this, Nepal’s golf outlook changed dramatically for everyone involved with the sport, from professionals to general golfers, right up to those developing golfing facilities. Just over 20 golfers have made this sport their profession. Likewise, the number of golfers have multiplied five-fold, hand-in-hand many more golfing facilities are now available.

Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre Golf Tournament has certainly helped raise the level of golf in Nepal. We don’t have many professional tournaments, so every pro golfer and even weekend golfers, spend the whole year in anticipation. Some wait to participate, some just want to witness.

Even with such interest and enthusiasm, we have yet to see a Nepali winning. In my opinion, the lack of tournaments for professionals is a main reason that one of our own has not been able to come out tops. Pro golfers in Nepal have very few opportunities to compete– hardly five tournaments in a year. This is just not enough for a person to consider making golf their profession. Compare this to the Indian professionals who have almost 30 major events a year to play in.

The result is that Indian standard of golf has grown tremendously and their players have been performing better every year. As expected, the Indian pros dominate at the Surya Nepal Masters. To try and raise the Nepali professional from the position of the underdog to that of the contender, Surya Nepal Pvt. Ltd has sponsored two Nepali professionals to compete in four tournaments in the Indian PGA tour before the Surya Masters. Right now Pashupati Sharma and Sabin Sapkota are pitting their skills against fellow professionals on the golf circuit.

For the rest of the professionals quite a bit of golf will be played in the coming weeks. From 1 to 3 December, the Surya Nepal Western Open will be played at the picturesque Himalayan Golf Course in Pokhara. The following week the Mercantile Classic will be played at the venue of the Surya Nepal Masters, The Gokarna Golf Club.

We are hoping these tournaments will boost local players, help fine tune their game and give them that overall sharper edge to succeed. We may just be fortunate this year and see a local professional win the country’s biggest golfing event which will be played from 14-17 December 2005.

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

Vacancy Announcement
We are looking for career oriented, self motivated and dedicated professionals to work as Marketing Executives in our marketing department.

The incumbents will be working as a part of marketing team reporting directly to the Marketing Manager. He/She will need to co-ordinate with the advertisers and advertising agencies for business generation and servicing.

As a marketing personal, the candidates need to data collection/analysis, plan and implement marketing strategies and must to deliver growth based results in handling the diverse product portfolio.

Qualifications & Experiences
Minimum graduate with at least two years of experience in media marketing (Preference). Strong interpersonal and communication skills. Ability to write proposals and work under pressure and achieve targets. Media selling experience would be a definite advantage.

The interested candidates are requested to send their resume with covering letter by November 30 2005 in following address:

Nepal FM 91.8
Kanti Bazaar, Kathmandu
P.O. Box 10477
Dewane Huye Paagal begins as a sweet romance between cute boy-next-door Karan and the ravishing Tanya. Deewane Huye Paagal begins as a sweet romance between cute boy-next-door Karan and the ravishing Tanya. Tanya’s physically disabled friend Sanju also has a soft spot for her and tries thwarting Rocky’s attempts at getting close to Tanya. The plot thickens when yet another unexpected party falls in love with Tanya, thus setting up a hilarious love pentagon.

Call 4442225 for show timings www.jainepal.com

KATHMANDU VALLEY

NEPALI WEATHER

by MAUSAM BEED

Every winter, be thankful we have the Himalayas to stop the cold air blowing down from Siberia. But the mountains also form a barrier for the inversion haze from the Gangetic plains, damping the dust when the wind is from the southwest as it has been all this week. Winds associated with a cyclone over the Bay of Bengal are the reason for this. But the plummeting temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying winter fog over the tarai. Kathmandu Valley temperature has brought the first signs of winter fog over the tara. Kathmandu Valley will have less than 100 m visibility in the mornings till 9 AM next week, delaying...
FIRST CHILDREN’S BANK, UNLIMITED

Street children everywhere, including in Pokhara, live from their day-to-day earnings. Whatever they can scrounge, beg or earn they spend. There is nothing left for tomorrow.

Now, Pokhara’s street kids have set up their own Bal Bikash Bank, where they are depositing savings so that they have a tomorrow.

They are not just the depositors but also the owners, the board of directors and the CEO of this unique bank. The boys and girls convince other children to deposit money and maintain the accounts. Now, they are even thinking of paying interest and re-investing and giving out loans. All this gives a new meaning to microcredit: little credit for little people.

Two child rights groups, Balhitkari Pariyojana Nepal and Balshram Unmulan Karyakram, are supporting the venture and say the idea is to give the children something to work towards in the future.

Started in August with 26 depositors, the number has grown to 85 and the total capital deposited is Rs 24,000. Twelve-year-old Sunil KC, a depositor who also serves as bank manager, tells us: “We are thinking of investing the money in some worthwhile venture.”

“Some of the children earn more than Rs 100 a day working on the streets,” says Bina Silwal of the Balhit Pariyojana, “but we have guidelines so that children have to reveal where they got their money from.”

Most of the children earn their money scavenging plastic, paper and metal from garbage piles and selling it to recycling companies. Earlier, they used to buy cigarettes and fritter away the money. Says 14-year-old Milan Nepali: “This way I know my money is safe and no one will steal it.”

This Dussehra some of the children withdrew money and took their earnings home to their families. Marvels Parsuram Khawas of the Samayabaddha Karyakram: “When they know how much money they have in the bank, I have seen a new sense of purpose and a new hope in the children.”

Durga Humagain in Pokhara

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Durga Humagain in Pokhara
Being fair to the unfair sex

This week’s column is a Special Advertorial Supplement sponsored by Pale Face™ brand fairness cream for men. Registered Trade Mark. Imitators Will Be Prosecuted.

Now that multinational cosmetic companies have finally recognised the potentially lucrative market for their lotions and potions among Nepali maledom, we can safely say that this country is well on its way towards true gender equality that has eluded us for aeons. Finally, we men will not be discriminated against any more on grounds of sex—especially when one of us has a headache.

As our womenfolk become more and more empowered and self-reliant and less and less dependent on various beauty products, it is up to us boys to take up the cudgels to preserve our craggy good looks and sturdy masculine complexion from the ravages of time and the Earth’s gravitational pull. (Editor’s note: Make sure ‘cudgel’ isn’t a rude word and report back to me immediately.)

After fulfilling the onerous duty of holding up the sky for most of human history, we men can now safely bequeath to the womenfolk the responsibility of holding up not just their half of the sky, but also our half. This will free up our free time so we men can engage in various pursuits that we have previously neglected like powdering our noses and plucking our armpit hair.

Which is why it is a landmark event when a beauty product conglomerate decides after its astounding success in the challenging sub-Saharan African market that the Nepali male consumers are also mature enough to use its White Man’s Burden™ brand fairness cream.

After all, recent surveys have shown that 80 percent of the men in the subcontinent have had to sneak into their wives’ dressing tables to steal fairness creams meant for women. (The other 20 percent dressed up as women and bought the cream from their neighbourhood drug store, according to reliable reports.)

Bio-engineers who designed the cream said at a press conference in Kathmandu this week that since us men tend to be more thick-skinned and more hirsute, female creams were just not strong enough for us which is why the oinkment was not yielding desirable results.

Hence this new industrial-grade White Elephant™ brand skin bleacher and exfoliator designed especially for he-men like us. That is actually made up of a mixture of concentrated white enamel paint with a paraffin-based emulsion fixer. Directions for use: apply liberally on the affected dark areas twice a day after meals. And, voila, within just two days you won’t be dark and ugly anymore, you will be fair and handsome like Michael Jackson.

So, what are you waiting for? Visit your neighbourhood paint shop today and buy yourself a tube of our extra-strength male-only Albino Crème-de-la-Crème™. It’s only fair that society takes up the cudgels to be fair to the unfair sex.