On the move

The country has entered a critical phase, as the people wait for the 12-point understanding between the Maoists and political parties to kick in and yield the twin fruits of peace and democracy. At the village level, the parties continue to mobilise support, as in this rally in Kalikot (above). The two most important issues ahead are: how King Gyanendra will react to this rebel-party combine as he returns to the country on Friday after his African air safari and whether the rebel leadership can take their cadre and fighters along on the road to peace. Besides the king, the parties and the rebels, the other players who will play a defining role in the weeks ahead include the Royal Nepali Army and the international community, including the United Nations, India, the western embassies, the judiciary and civil society.

(Turn to Analysis on page 4.)
DEC 2005 #275

LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE

The silent majority wants neither to dismantle the royal apparatus nor a powerful monarchy

A

or we, at last, observing some real political activity from our political parties? The goings on in New Delhi might have resembled a circus but there is a strange euphoria about them. If there is no hidden agenda and no recrudescence of bad behaviour, then this must be taken as the beginning of something positive on the political horizon. According to some of the leaders involved in the Delhi dispute, the Maoists are willing to lay down their arms in return for elections too constitute a settlement. Unfortunately, the published 12-point understanding between the parties and the Maoists gives a different picture and, most importantly, maintains an ambiguous position about the monarchy.

The royal government's plans have already been initiated by premiership and parliamentary elections. After rejecting outright polls under this regime, the seven-party alliance has been urged to negotiate with the Maoists. If—and it is a big if—the Maoists are not placated with the negotiators and there indeed is an offer to give up the armed insurgency then this is a great achievement. What are the pitfalls? The same as they have always been: the monarchists don't want to give up their hold on power and the rest of the polity wants to dismantle the royal apparatus. But the silent majority there is support for neither camp. They would like the king to have an important constitutional role in the future of the nation. After all, he is the descendant of a ruling system entrenched in the Nepali psyche and as such has a useful place as a symbol of unity in an ethnically diverse society. A chartered political leadership should give up the unrealistic and vindictive demand for the demise of the monarchy and formulate a plan to include it in a benign but positive role in a multi-party democracy.

There is no place in the 21st Century for the type of royal actions we have been subjected to in recent times. The result for the monarchy has also been dismal, having been spurned by everyone who matters, the king has been reduced to visiting middling countries, basing his relatively few reported visits to African countries. What sense do these visits make anyway?

But who should decide? The people. They should be given a chance to decide how they wish to be ruled. After all, democracy is for the people, of the people and by the people. How do we determine what the people want when there are no representative elections and no opinion polls with an ideal demographic reach? We still have that magical option called a referendum. It is, however, a sad fact that the 1990 referendum was a disaster, failed to be ruled. After all, democracy is for the people, of the people and by the people. How do we determine what the people want when there are no representative elections and no opinion polls with an ideal demographic reach? We still have that magical option called a referendum. It is, however, a sad fact that the 1990 referendum was a disaster, failed to

Precursors to peace

What does it matter that the pact was done in Delhi and not Ngorongoro?

A

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MASTIG MOUTH

The deal between the parties and the rebels is all very fine as you say in your editorial (Ten years is enough’, #274). But can we trust these political parties after what they have done to democracy since 1990? It was during their watch that we saw the beginning of the civil war. They couldn’t establish a proper democracy during those years and hypocritically they now demand full democracy. And how can we now trust the Maoists, who killed thousands of people? Is it possible that the alliance was a result of Indian and American instigation? They might establish a puppet government of their choice to further their own geopolitical interest. We and you shouldn’t jump to conclusions without thinking through this alliance of corrupt leaders, mass murderers and outside powers. We definitely need democracy but educated wise people should run the country and not a bunch of thugs.

Praveesh Sena, email

DISINFORMATION

...As a journalist in Nepal I had many opportunities to talk to political activists. Even our young leaders who sound so promising from outside are hollow up close. Subintra Bogati has portrayed them as they are. Gagan Thapa and other student leaders always said that we could make a better Nepal. They repeated the same mantra for many years and became good orators. The reason we are silent, they are still being watched critically as well.

Sandesh Thapa, London

REPAIR BRIDGE

I often visit Bardia on the east-west highway and have watched the bridge over the Surai Khola (about 10 km east of Bhulabari) grow more and more frighteningly dangerous. It appears to be deteriorating more each time I cross it. If this bridge fails, there could be not only terrible loss of life but, as it covers a highway and have watched the bridge recently, only half of the traffic to the far west. When I went over the bridge recently, only half of the surface could still be driven on and less than half of the remaining support beam was left, so time is running out. On behalf of all the people who travel on this busy route, I would like to request the Roads Department to take some action fast.

Marco Peter, Asha Clinic, Pokhara

DISAPORA

I completely agree with Subindra Bogati (‘Some old Nepal’, #273) that the best Nepali minds are leaving Nepal when they are desperately needed there. He is also right that we have had many meetings here in London that political figures from Nepal have addressed. But I have noticed that successful Nepalis rarely attend these meetings.

It really ticks me off when I see trivial stuff from the diaspora making headline news in mainstream media back home. Nepalis who seem active in political activities here are the same type of people who are active in Nepal. In fact, they seem to be in activism not because they want to help bring change but because it is a platform for their own self-interest. It is time that we start looking at diaspora Nepalis critically as well.

D. Mahat, Baltimore, USA

JAZZMANDU

Here is my response to ‘Mandu Jazz’ (Letters, #274).

1. Jazzmandu goes on for nine days and there are a variety of shows at a variety of prices—there are even free shows. If you wanted to see jazz for real cheap, you could have watched Solid (a renowned jazz band from Norway) perform for FREE in Patan Durbar Square on 8 November.

2. Sorry you missed the free show and found Gokarna so outrageously priced for an evening featuring live music by more than five bands. Gokarna is one venue where we feature our own Nepal classical and traditional musicians and dancers, since one of the festival’s aims is to respect and recognise our own traditional music. This is a well-known fact that was adequately covered by Nepal Times and other media sources throughout the four years the festival has been going on. I have to ask: is it so painful for our own people to give a little respect to our own music?

3. What is jazz for you? Do we all perceive it in the same way? Is it somebody playing a saxophone? If that is jazz for you, then surely you will enjoy the wedding season: you’ll hear a lot of that on the streets and it will be free.

4. You should try to appreciate the sincere and intense effort put in by fellow Nepalis and other music lovers who are trying to bring some quality music to this country, whether it is rock, pop, fusion or jazz. Last but not least, stop whining about everything.

A Jazzmandu Volunteer, email

HEADLINES

The recent news headlines speak for themselves about the state of the country: ‘Government Hospitals Closing Down Essential Services Due To Financial Crunch’ and ‘Rs 300 million Being Spent on Essential Services’.

S Hamal, Lalitpur

HARDY FURER

Thanks to Barbara Adams for her poignant remembrance of Hardy Furer (‘Last bypass for Hardy’, #274) which made me sad as a Nepali citizen. The government’s apathetic mindset towards people like Hardy who have done so much for this country is shocking. If Barbara hadn’t dared to write, nobody might have known about Hardy and his contribution to Nepal’s remotest regions like Bajhang, Humla and Jumla.

Meanwhile, our despotic leaders never go there. Instead of granting him a visa they granted him frustration. It is not the first time that Hardy was disappointed in Nepal and there are many other Hardys who have been abandoned by the government of the country they loved. Hardy is mourned and we must remember what he did selflessly for the country. In the end it was the government’s apathy that killed Hardy. Hardy, you are no longer here but people living in remote areas will always keep you in their hearts. May you rest in peace.

Deepak S Ayer, Balladri

BEING WATCHED

Congratulations for Jemima Sherpa’s excellent Guest Column (’Biggish brother’, #274). Being a Sydney resident for four years, I feel very much the same way. You always know that other people are watching us and our Nepalese brothers and sisters. I would like to plead with our king, the Maoists and the army all to realise this and to act in a way that does not give our Nepal a bad image. They must realise that even though people in Nepal are silent, they are still being watched from outside of the country.

Nitaj Thapa, Sydney, Australia.

1. Jemima, Go and put that ‘offending’ poster back! It has a more serious purpose than seeking to embarrass you personally. By removing that poster, you are not removing the problems.

Susila, by email

LETTERS

Nepal 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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Short or Long

Take your hair to the clinic everyday

Dust and pollution have damaging effects on hair, making it look dirty, dry and rough. The longer the hair, the worse the problem can be. Use Clinic Plus with Milk proteins to keep your hair clean, healthy and problem-free.

Has your hair been to the Clinic today?
Country at the crossroads

The peace train has started its journey in Nepal with the 12-point pact between the political parties and the rebels announced on 17 November. The understanding resulted in part from the decision taken by the CPM (Maoist) a couple of weeks earlier in the Rolpa highlands. There is danger, however, that the train will be derailed by the cumulative reaction of the royal right wing, an angry army unwilling to concede political resolution and western ambassadors remote from the humdrum of the Nepali political process and disinterested in the outcome. This transition to peace is credible because, this time, the Maoists have been forced to seek a sustainable abeyance (safe landing) due to the people's will, national circumstance and regional geopolitics. Seeing the impossibility of taking over the state by force of arms, the rebels announced on 17 November that they, too, had reached the 12-point political accord. There is a large number of citizens who have been maimed by the Maoists rebels over the last decade whose justifiable anger must be countered with the argument that the death and destruction of the past cannot justify a further descent into the pit. This wrath, officials say, is countrywide and runs deep, may be smoothed by the right way to turn the page on the pit. The train can also accelerate if the process gets overwhelming support from the rest of the world and if it is sold to the people. The Maoists at least need to talk peace, not war, on this last chance of the 12-point accord. This has yet to be seen. The parties agreed to join competitive, open multiparty democracy. This decision registers a 180-degree turnaround at the policy level. Conveyed to the political leadership in face-to-face meetings in New Delhi, it is a dramatic reversal, to be welcomed with appropriate caution but without scepticism. There will be a large number of citizens who have been maimed by the Maoists rebels over the last decade...
Fear of flying
Nepal’s airports are hurting, not helping, tourism and economic growth

It is good to see that tourist arrivals have increased and the Nepali tourism industry is just waiting for elusive peace to return. However, are we prepared to hand over the increasing number of tourists to our airports?

ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed

Globally, efficient airports are becoming pre-requisites for tourism as well as for healthy economies. China is the forerunner, building more airports than any other country in the world. Singapore, Thailand and Hong Kong are proud to have the most efficient airports in the region. In Heathrow, one can exit the airport less than 15 minutes after leaving the aircraft. Globally, airports are competing with each other to provide the best services to airlines and passengers. But the inefficient, crowded and delayed airports of Delhi and Mumbai demonstrate too clearly how airports can hinder tourism and economic growth.

Nepal’s airports have always been unique. We take pride in our mediocrity. While we collect one of the highest airport taxes in the region, we have not invested that money into making the airports efficient. (We should exclude from discussions the airports outside Kathmandu—a series of them should be kept in their present unbelievable states so that they might enter a record book someday.)

Our only international airport has always been a subject of ridicule, be it in travel memoirs or on today’s internet travel blogs. In the name of security we have made the airport customer-unfriendly. While hordes of security personnel inside make the lives of travellers miserable, this flight observed quite a few people begging in the parking lot! It may or may not be a security hazard but it is likely not the first and best thing for a visitor to see.

While globally, travellers are pampered with pre-check-in facilities, city check-in and many more fast-track services, the people working at our airports look upon travellers as more privileged than themselves, therefore fair game for harassment. TIA is one of the few airports in the world that does not believe in different classes of travel so priority baggage comes out last and partitioned cubicles serve as lounges. Elsewhere, travellers have the freedom to pay extra and demand extra, be it fast-track services at check-in or a real swanky limousine to whisk them away from the airport. The flight cannot stop repeating the need to replace TIA’s sticky, pre-referendum taxis that give the place such an ugly look and the arriving flyer who is unfortunate enough to hire one a harrowing experience.

Passengers who travel through the domestic airport want to hang their heads in shame at its condition, which perhaps also reflects the current state of our nation. The conveyer belt at baggage-x-ray has to be manually pushed by the passenger, who still receives what can only be termed disgusting treatment from the personnel. How can we even talk about flying more people to Lukla, Ilam or Jomsom as any tourist who makes the trip would never want to repeat it?

There is no other option but to point the finger at the government and institutions like the Nepal Tourism Board and then call for private management of the airports. However, looking at the performance of Nepal’s private airlines gives little hope to airlines and passengers. But the situation at TIA is a complete disaster, which perhaps also reflects the current state of our nation. The government and institutions like the Nepal Tourism Board have always been unique. We take pride in our mediocrity.

Creating enduring value through a proud ‘Made in Nepal’ label.

Surya Nepal is inspired by a vision to create enduring value for all stakeholders - investors, consumers and most importantly, for society at large. We create value through our unswerving commitment to quality and excellence, a culture of innovation and our use of research and cutting-edge technology. Our recent venture of creating a mega-brand offering the most contemporary sports and lifestyle products to youth at affordable price. John Players is today a leading ‘Nepal in Brand’ brand that understands, anticipates and reaches out to exciting and emerging fashion needs and offers a stylish range of garments tailored to work, leisure and party occasions.

A brand that stands for international quality, perfection and excellence. Our small contribution towards creating enduring value for society.

Surya Nepal
Made in Nepal

MOBILE MEMORY: Base International is now distributing the Phonebook Backup, a device that allows you to save the phonebook data from your mobile’s SIM card with the push of one button. You can also copy from the Backup to a SIM card. Designed as a key ring, the product is available for Rs 700.

HEALTHY DOGS: Effem India is launching the Pedigree range of pet foods in Nepal. Initially the company will offer one variety for adult dogs and one for puppies, both developed to meet the nutritional needs of dogs in the Indian subcontinent. The products will be distributed through the Mount Everest Kennel Club. Pedigree was launched in India three years ago after research found that more than 80 percent of dogs in the region suffer from skin and coat problems.
Radio raid

Radio Sagarmatha is the latest victim of state terror, after Kantipur FM. By attacking the only community radio in South Asia and arresting five employees from the station, the government has challenged Nepal’s journalism and democratic communities. In the same way that Radio Sagarmatha was attacked, the state raided Kantipur FM on 21 October and seized its equipment, which is yet to be returned. After those attacks, civil society and journalists joined hands to protest against state terror and the government moved further away from the people. We understand these raids as not just attacks on the stations but on the entire journalism community, listeners and all Nepalis. The attack on Radio Sagarmatha has proven this analysis. The lawsuits against the state’s attack on the FM stations and the illegal Media Ordinance are still awaiting consideration at the Supreme Court. We are all aware of the Nepal Bar Association’s decision to boycott the jury in protest of the Supreme Court refusing to issue an interim order on the writ against the Ordinance. However, the agreement between the Bar and the Supreme Court, when the former agreed to cease its protest and the latter promised to abide by the law, has also rendered the Court’s unwillingness to grant an interim order more controversial. The government attacked Radio Sagarmatha with the excuse that the Supreme Court is yet to issue an interim order. These attacks help us understand the mindset of the people who run the state today. Although Maoist leader Prachanda’s interview had not been broadcast by Radio Sagarmatha, the government used that as an excuse to attack it. This proves that those at the policy making level are blabbering without intelligence and knowledge. The unique way in which those in the media and the rest of Nepal have come together to protest these attacks on media houses is commendable. The way in which Nepal’s gathered in the middle of the night to protect the attacks proves that the media enjoys strong support. And the positive response of Nepali civil society and the international community proves the Nepal media is not alone and is heading in the right direction. The government understands this and is often threatened by our strength. It does not want a free press, it wants a propaganda machine. Therefore, to protect this thinking and future acts of terror by the government is the responsibility not just of the journalism community but also of civil society, the democratic community and every individual.

‘Mature Maoists’

UML general secretary Martyal Kumar Nepal in Deshantar, 27 November

The Maoists have arrived at two conclusions. First, they believe they can go on fighting for a long time and that they can’t be finished by any military might. The second is that they can’t capture state power through the barrel of the gun. So the conclusion they have reached is that state power won through the barrel of gun can’t be sustainable. They know the international situation is not in their favour. Neighbouring countries are not supportive of their cause. Past international experiences have shown that the absence of a favourable international setting, such a regime can’t last. The Maoists have considered all these ground realities and developed a new maturity. The seven-party alliance thinks people power can overcome guns. That is why we will never resort to violence. If the well-equipped Shal of Inca were chased by unarmed people, there is no reason why it can’t happen in Nepal. If the Maoists resort to arms again, those in power will have to take the blame. Everyone will point fingers at the monarchy for forcing the Maoists to look for arms once again and for sending them back to the jungle. If the government doesn’t have the moral courage to provoke the Maoists at a time when we have been trying to bring them into peaceful politics, it will be clear that it is the people in power today who are the real obstacle for peace. Until yesterday, people were criticising the Maoists for taking up arms. If they are forced back to violence, they will win the people’s sympathy this time.

The Maoists, however, know that they have no choice but to go for a people’s republic while acknowledging the existence of other political parties.

Forlorn foreigners

The foreign powers that had been supporting the seven parties’ movement are now in a state of shock having learned that Maoist leaders who had held talks with the parties’ chiefs in New Delhi were none other than Mohan Baidy, alias Kiran, and CP Gajurel, alias Gaurab, who have been in Indian jails for a while. How could Kiran, who had been jailed in Siligudi and Gaurab, who was kept in a jail in Chennai, meet the parties’ leaders in New Delhi? This is something that has left even some Indian leaders flabbergasted. The international community is disappointed that the seven parties are now following the Maoists’ agenda. The fact has made the foreign powers feel that the parties are not interested in sustainable peace and democracy but for state power. What has made them more suspicious about the parties is the way the issue of the reinstatement of the House of Representatives has been treated in the understanding with the Maoists. House reinstatement was one issue that had drawn the international community’s sympathy toward the parties’ movement but the agreement only lists it as a matter for further discussion.

Strong start

Conflict expert Bishnu Uprety in Deshantar, 28 November

Most of the world’s rebel forces do not talk about giving up arms in the beginning of a ceasefire process but Nepal’s Maoists have done just that. This decision must be taken positively. However, the 12-point understanding between the parties and the Maoists is a complete document in itself but a basis for additional understanding through dialogue. There remains a danger that the state might not take the understanding positively.

If the government decides to treat the parties like the Maoists, as terrorists, the conflict will intensify. Any rebellion forced to give up arms just like that, it requires a long process. The dialogue between the Maoists and the government, which had been the genesis for a deal and must be taken positively. If there is an election for a constituent assembly, it should not be held under any kind of pressure from the Maoists or government forces. Such an election will only take place only if there is an understanding with the state power. If the state refuses, it won’t happen. For now, the Maoists need to extend the ceasefire if they wish to implement the understanding with the parties.

People’s choice

Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) politburo member Sitaram Yechuri in Hisnurad, 1 December

India wants to see peace and prosperity in Nepal. We also believe that a stable democracy and human rights. If Nepal has peace, India too will benefit. Nepal is a sovereign nation therefore what is good for India is something for Nepalis to decide. India fully supports those forces that work together for the reinstatement of democracy in Nepal. It is for the people and the political forces of Nepal to decide what they want. All India can do is support such a decision. When I recently visited Nepal, I met leaders of political parties and civil society and this is what I said in an interaction program: when people associated with the Shiv Sena and World Hindu Federation visit Nepal and speak in support of the king, the government (of Nepal) does not call it foreign interference. But whenever we...
The Maoists' expansion accelerates their recruiting of youths. The Maoists plan to cover by increase of 13,000 fighters, a hike in guerillas. Now the seven divisions had 5,000 fighters each. That means an overall goal is to bring uniformity to the capital. A member of the central advisory committee said that the Maoists have been unable to mobilise their armed force at short notice, that they have not slowed their expansion responds to the fact that funds were embezzled. Ananta (Barshman Pun) and the eastern command by similar attack was made east of its eastern counterpart when a division had been covering areas of Kathmandu, the central working headquarters and only six classrooms have been built in and around the district. There is a problem, says principal Nirmal Tamang, that the Maoists have been unable to mobilise their armed force at different places at the same time. Until recently, the western command was led by Prabhakar (Janardan Sharma), the central by Pasang (Nakha Kihore Pun) and the eastern command by Ananta (Bhanubhakta Pun). The Maoists may have reached an understanding with the parties for what they call total democracy but they have not slowed their project of consolidating their military strength. At a meeting in Rukum and Rolpa between Dassin and Tihat, the central working committee decided to expand the Maoists' three-division army into seven divisions. Before the expansion plan, the three divisions were known as western, central and eastern commands. The western command was led by Prabhakar (Janardan Sharma), the central by Pasang (Nakha Kihore Pun) and the eastern command by Ananta (Bhanubhakta Pun). The expansion responds to the fact that the Maoists have been unable to mobilise their armed force at different places at the same time. Until recently, the eastern command had been operating east of Kathmandu, the central division west of Kathmandu and east of Rapti zone and the western division had been covering areas west of Rapti. Although the western and central divisions jointly launched an attack west of the capital some time ago, the western command failed to exploit its eastern counterpart when a similar attack was made east of the capital. A member of the central advisory committee said the goal is to bring uniformity to all the commands. Each of the original three divisions had 5,000 guerrillas. Now the seven divisions will contain 4,000 rebels each. That means an overall increase of 13,000 fighters, a hike the Maoists plan to cover by accelerating their recruiting of youths. The Maoists’ expansion comes at a time when the Royal Nepal Army has been recruiting more soldiers in order to increase the number of its divisions to seven.

COUNTRY DIRECTOR

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The position is based in Kathmandu and will involve extensive travel both in Nepal and overseas. The job contract will be initially for five years. Salary and terms and conditions are as per the organisation’s policy, more details are available in the application pack.

For further information on this job please send an e-mail to: recruitment@practicalaction.org.uk

The closing date for applications is: Friday 16 December 2005, interviews in early January 2006.

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COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Practical Action (formerly ITDG) is an International NGO, with its UK office in Rugby, England. Practical Action works for poverty alleviation through the development and use of appropriate technologies in South Asia, Southern and East Africa and Latin America. In its current strategy for the period 2003-07, it aims to become the leading international authority on the use of technology to reduce poverty in developing countries—by demonstrating results, sharing knowledge and influencing others. Practical Action seeks to achieve this by implementing work under four International Aims. The aims are: Reducing Vulnerability, Making Markets Work for the Poor, Improving Access to Infrastructure Services, and Responding to New Technologies.

We are seeking to recruit a Country Director for our work in Nepal.

As the Nepal Country Director you will have overall responsibility for Practical Action’s work in Nepal. As a member of Practical Action’s international management team, you will share responsibility for developing Practical Action’s international strategies and policies and will report to the International Director based in the UK.

You will have at least ten years relevant experience and be able to demonstrate leadership, fundraising and strategic planning skills. You will have good academic qualifications, probably to post-degree level. You will have substantial management experience, including financial management and an ability to develop a highly motivated and creative multidisciplinary team. You will have a broad knowledge of regional and international development issues and commitment to equitable treatment of all people. You will have good communication skills in English and be able to work in Nepali.

The position is based in Kathmandu and will involve extensive travel both in Nepal and overseas. The job contract will be initially for five years. Salary and terms and conditions are as per the organisation’s policy, more details are available in the application pack.

For further information on this job please send an e-mail to: recruitment@practicalaction.org.uk

The closing date for applications is: Friday 16 December 2005, interviews in early January 2006.

Practical Action Nepal
P. O. Box 15135
Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
E-mail: practicalaction@practicalaction.org.np
They have fled poverty and joblessness at home in Nepal. Most have been cheated by Nepali recruiters and some have been exploited by their Malaysian employers.

Government ministers describe them as modern Nepali ‘heroes’: migrant workers whose remittances sent home prop up Nepal’s tottering economy. But they are not treated as heroes by some rapacious agents and immigration and customs officials at the airport.

At the royal Nepali Embassy in Kuala Lumpur on the 16th floor of an office building on Jalan Ampang in the city centre, it’s just another day for Debilal Kandel, officer at the embassy, trying to calm dozens of agitated Nepali workers not paid as per contract or who have been mistreated by employers.

“I feel their pain and it really depresses me to think how they were tricked into coming here,” says Kandel as he tried to assist workers in the embassy’s reception area last week. Some were raising their voices and they told two visiting journalists from Nepal that the embassy was no help at all. “I’m so fed up, I just want to go home,” one of them told us.

The workers have good reason to be angry. Most of them were deceived by their recruiters in Kathmandu, who had promised hundreds of dollars a month in salary, benefits and easy work. After they arrived in Malaysia they earned less than half the amount stated in their contracts. Most are working in Chinese plastic, food and chemical factories for just Rs 5,000-7,000 a month—after paying hundreds of thousands of rupees to agents back home.

“When we asked the companies to pay as per our contracts, they just threatened to hit and kill us,” says Dipendra Timilsina, who arrived here two months ago. Timilsina and 18 other fellow Nepali workers organised a strike at Penk Duck Food Industry on 14 November. The strike spread to two other companies, Kelan Behram Beratsu in Kedah and Hip Hong Plastic Company at Muar Johor.

According to the workers, employers paid Vietnamese and Bangladeshi migrant workers to control the Nepali strikers. “We were caned and beaten up severely so we ran away—we can’t go back,” says 23-year-old Sundar Kumar Yadab of Dhamasa. Yadab and 23 other Nepalis escaped into the jungle to hide from their attackers. Then they travelled six hours to Kuala Lumpur to seek help from the embassy. But it looks like they came in vain. There isn’t much the embassy can do.

Most of the workers have no choice but to rejoin their work. To date, some 13 have returned but 11 others have disappeared. Yadab says he is worried about them and about himself because he thinks his employer regards him as the ringleader of the group. Some workers at the embassy tried desperately to contact their recruiters in Kathmandu but in vain. They had all provided fake names and telephone numbers.

The plight of Nepali workers abroad is not new and many recruiters and employers in Malaysia continue to get away with exploitation because the workers have nowhere to turn. Malaysia is drafting a new law that will protect migrant workers from cruel employers and guarantee a minimum wage. The secretary-general of Malaysia’s Ministry of Human Resources is visiting Kathmandu this week and it’s believed he will be discussing the new law as well as recent incidents concerning Nepali workers in his country.

Ironically, it seems the Malaysian government is more concerned about the welfare of Nepali workers than the Nepali government.

The Star newspaper is working on an investigative report on Nepalis being underpaid, exploited and their passports held up by their employers after the celebrated case of Mangal Bahadur Gurung. The former porter was caned and...
Daya Ram Chaudhary has just entered the departure area at Kathmandu airport when his small backpack breaks open. He ties it up with a piece of rope so the biscuits, toothbrush, a T-shirt and trousers won’t fall out. This is all he is taking with him to Malaysia, where he will work for the next three years.

“I’m nervous,” admits 26-year-old Daya Ram. “I’ve never been abroad.” He has just Rs 500 in his pocket and a one-way ticket on Air Nepal. He doesn’t know who will come to fetch him at Kuala Lumpur airport and doesn’t even know the name of the company where he’ll work or the kind of job he is going to do. All that his recruiter told him was that he was going to Malaysia. He paid his agent Rs 100,000 after borrowing money from a village moneylender in Kanchanpur at an interest rate of three percent. “They didn’t tell me anything,” he says but brightens up as he adds, “I hope to return with lot of money.”

Clueless in KL

Not all Nepalis suffer, many especially those working in consumer electronic, plastic, furniture or computer factories, are interviewed and recruited by their employers in Kathmandu itself. But the horror stories are hard to ignore. “I don’t know why they keep on coming. I strongly urge Nepalis not to apply for work here unless they go through good manpower agents,” says Nabin KC, who has been working here for the last five years. The last two years he has been illegal and has even been jailed but he is taking the risk to prolong his stay as he now has a good job that pays Rs 20,000 a month.

Daya Ram has heard of Nepalis like him being duped by their agents, not being paid as much as promised and having to do back-breaking work. “I’ll just have to take that risk,” he says as his flight is announced.

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Ashok Kumar Shah is going back to his home village in Morung in January. The New Global manpower agency in Kalanki sent him here promising a good salary but after three years he has only saved about Rs 10,000 because he was paid less than his contract guaranteed. “I don’t know how I’m going to explain this to my father who works so hard in the farm but at least I’ll be with my wife and children again,” he told us. When we tried to contact New Global M anpower in Kalanki it no longer existed.

Striking it rich

Subash Shrestha from Jhapa is a typical Newari trader. Three years ago, when he came to Malaysia to work as a security guard, he saw that most Nepalis were working in small restaurants and hotels. He made a plan with his brother to start a mini-market stocking the kind of things Nepalis need: Nepali magazines and newspapers, books, Nepali folk music in CDs, novels, pens, clothes. His Fishtail Shop was a hit. On Sundays, Shrestha serves up to 10,000 Nepali customers. He is now making Rs 200,000 a month but has not left his night security guard job as it pays well.
A Himalayan meltdown

Climate change and development in the Himalaya threaten water supply for nearly half the world’s population

The mountains of Asia, including the Himalaya, are facing accelerating threats from a rapid rise in roads, settlements, overgrazing and deforestation that could worsen the impact of climate change and threaten water supply in China, southeast Asia and northern India.

The region’s water supplies, fed by glaciers and the monsoons and vital for around half the world’s population, may be harmed along with the area’s abundant and rich wildlife.

The new report points to a critical gap in water security to billions of people in Asia and the crucial role of sound environmental management for sustained development.

The report, The Fall of Water, was published by the IUCN and UNEP with support from the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The study is based on a new way of assessing the direct and cumulative impacts of infrastructure development called Global Methodology for Mapping Human Impacts on the Biosphere (GLOBIO). It has been developed by UNEP’s GRID Arendal centre in Norway, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre in the UK and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.

Comparing satellite images from the 1960s to today reveals that deforestation and unsustainable land use practices make the region’s rivers carry the largest sediment loads in the world causing increased flood-related disasters in China and India.

Researchers say Himalayan countries like China and Nepal are now acting to develop parks and protected areas aimed at conserving the Asian region’s water supplies and wildlife but they warn that far more effort is needed to extend protection right across the region in both lowland and mountain areas.

The water from the Himalaya and the Tibetan Plateau flows down to half of the world’s population, but less than three percent of the watersheds are protected. Many have become deforested and overgrazed. Improvised people often have to settle in the most exposed flood-risk areas, and when the forest is gone further upstream, the floods will hit them severely.

Rivers that originate in the Himalayan region like the Huang De, Indus, Amu Darya, Ganges and Salween, have on average of just 2.5 per cent of their basins protected.

The report argues that climate change is likely to aggravate problems with water supplies. Studies by ICIMOD and UNEP have shown that some 50 lakes have formed in Nepal, Bhutan and China as a result of melting glaciers. There is concern that these lakes hold back by soil and stones could burst their banks sending flash floods down densely populated valleys.

New calculations by the Chinese Academy of Sciences show seven percent of the country’s lakes are vanishing annually and that, by 2050, as many as 64 percent of China’s glaciers will have disappeared. Close to half of the Asia’s mountain region is affected by infrastructure development and that, by 2050, this could rise to over 70 percent.

The hotspots are along the Karakoram highway in Pakistan, the southern slopes of the Himalaya and in south-eastern Tibet, Yunnan and Sichuan provinces of south-western China. All countries in the region are likely to see a decline in the abundance of wildlife over the next three decades focused on current trends of infrastructure development.

There is in particular concern over remaining fragile populations of species like the snow leopard, the Black-necked crane, Przewalski’s hare and the Whooper Swan.

“Most serious is the situation in Pakistan, northern India, Bangladesh where human population pressures together with unchecked piece meal development have great impacts on biodiversity and the ability of water bodies to handle monsoon floods,” says Surendra Shrestha, director of UNEP’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok.

The Fall of Water: Emerging threats to the water resources and biodiversity of the roof of the world to Asia’s lowlands from changes associated with large-scale settlement and piece meal development.


www.unep.org

Changing climate change

Plenty of carbon dioxide was emitted as the world’s climate negotiators flew to and from the Montreal meeting this week.

The 10 warmest years on record have all occurred since 1990, and 2005 is likely to be the warmest ever. This year, we’ve gotten a taste of the many kinds of disasters that lie ahead: more extreme heatwaves, massive droughts, fire storms, spreading infectious diseases, and floods. The climate is changing, and more is yet to come.

The world’s governments met in Montreal this week to plot the next steps, including specific measures that the world could adopt if the Bush administration abandoned its willful neglect of this critical issue.

Climate change is equated with global warming, but much more than warming is involved. The rising concentration of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are leading to more extreme storms, higher-intensity hurricanes, rising ocean levels, melting glaciers and ice sheets, droughts, floods and other climate changes. Even the chemistry of the land and ocean is changing, with the ocean becoming more acidic – thus threatening coral reefs – as a result of higher carbon dioxide.

The specific patterns of change are not known precisely, but the risks of continuing on our current global course are widely appreciated. Yet the United States has refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol, which does little to change the long-term course of events on the planet, since it calls for only small steps up to the year 2012.

The actions that are needed are difficult to introduce, because they go to the heart of the world’s use of energy, particularly its use of fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas), which, when burned, release carbon dioxide – the key source of rising greenhouse gases – into the atmosphere.

Yet the world economy depends on fossil fuels, and developing countries will need to use more, not less as their economies grow. Even if the world runs out of oil and gas in the coming years, coal will prove to be plentiful, and solid coal can be converted at relatively low cost to liquid fuels for automobiles and other uses.

Unfortunately fossil fuels are plentiful, but harmful, renewable sources like wind are good for the climate but not plentiful.

Solar power is plentiful but not cheap.

Nuclear power is plentiful but not safe.

Greenhouse gases are good for the climate but not plentiful.

Improved technologies can offer a way out of this bind, but only if we think and act ahead. There are two main kinds of technologies that look most promising. The first is energy conservation through more fuel-efficient vehicles. The other is called ‘carbon capture and storage’. The idea is to capture the carbon dioxide that is emitted in power plants and other big factories when fossil fuels are burned, thereby preventing it from entering the atmosphere.

The captured carbon is then pumped into underground storage sites such as empty oil fields and other suitable locations.

The problem is timing. The changeover of the world’s vehicles to hybrid and other efficient technologies will take decades, not years. So will the changeover of power plants to carbon capture and storage. If we procrastinate, the dangers posed by climate change will confront us as we talk, debate, and plan. The world needs to start acting soon – very soon – if it is to head off major threats.

Plenty of carbon dioxide will be emitted into the atmosphere as the world’s climate negotiators fly to and from the Montreal meeting this week.

The governments need to act ahead. More and more of us are using technologies that look most promising. The first is energy conservation through more fuel-efficient vehicles. The other is called ‘carbon capture and storage’. The idea is to capture the carbon dioxide that is emitted in power plants and other big factories when fossil fuels are burned, thereby preventing it from entering the atmosphere.

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Without being able to take the specimens out for further analysis there was no point.

The Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation appears to have been at the root of the permit cancellation. But CI also did not have all the permission in writing and yet it arrogantly went ahead with its studies in the field. All the Mountain Institute (TMI) in Kathmandu coordinated the visit and had written to the Department seeking permission for specimen collection in August. The Ministry sought a four-point clarification from TMI including a query on the anthropological and intellectual property rights on the final report and filming.

“Dying to the Daini holidays, processing of the letter took time because the RAP team was arriving on 27 October,” explains TMI’s Himal Project Director, Brian Peniston. The visit was an activity of CI’s Rapid Assessment Program (RAP), an innovative biological inventory program designed to use scientific information to catalyse innovative biological inventory Assessment Program (RAP), an innovative biological inventory program designed to use scientific information to catalyse biodiversity hotspots around the world, including Peru, Bolivia, Guyana and Papua New Guinea and this is the first time it’s had a problem like this.

While the CI team continued its work in the park, TMI was furiously writing to the President’s Ministry’s response on a request that sample collections be allowed. Peniston learnt it was a “no” only one day before the team left the park. “Needless to say, they were disappointed and depressed. They carried back no samples with them at all,” he says.

CI and TMI say they did everything in good faith and went through proper channels to get permission. Says Leanne Alonso of CI: “When the team received word in the field via satellite telephone that the collecting permits had not been granted, they went ahead but this did not affect their visit since they had already been doing observation.”

In the end, it was Nepal that was the ultimate loser: we lost the publicity that would have gone with the publicity and our scientists would have gained from future collaboration. Said one senior official at the Department: “It could have been a win-win situation, it turned out to be a lose-lose one.”
On his path

THOMAS BELL
in BARA DISTRICT

The cult of Ram Bomjon, whom some are calling the "new Buddha" of the Bara district, has spread far beyond the villages of the terai. An internet search on the 15-year-old produces thousands of results from every continent.

In the jungle where the young man has been silently meditating beneath a pipal tree for the last six months, reportedly without food or water, pilgrims still flock to see him.

The CDO's office has tried to discourage visitors with announcements on local radio and in newspapers but for the time being the phenomenon continues. Official disapproval and demands that the young mystic submit to scientific tests to verify the claims being made, mean that it may not continue for much longer.

The best time to visit Ram is at around 10AM. That’s when his devotees say strange lights glow in his body. "If you just sit and watch, the light will come," says Prem Lama, the 16-year-old monk who guards the fence around Ram’s tree. "Do you see a white light coming from his hands?"

A crowd of pilgrims murmured, squinted and pointed, trying to discover the supernatural glow. "Do you see it? Do you see the blue light from the back of his head?" said one. Other miracles are attributed to the boy. He is said to have survived two snakebites without medical treatment. The giant roots of his chosen tree are said to be growing faster than usual, slowly enveloping him as he meditates between them.

No one knows how many people have been to see him but the number is certainly great. On the full moon before the Dasain festival, the local committee managing the site counted 296 vehicles in their improvised parking area, ranging from overcrowded buses and tractor-trailers to ox carts.

Last week Amit Bartola, a bus driver from Hetauda, said he had 80 people on his 36-seater bus. "We stop from village to village and people are really keen to come," he said. Suman Raisoj, a driver from Sarlahi district, added, "there’s about 10 busloads a day from where I come from."

The CDO’s office was forced to turn to Kathmandu for scientific assistance and to the Lumbini Development Trust for religious advice. They demand that witnesses be allowed to watch Ram through the night, when the attraction is closed to visitors and, they suspect, Ram might break his fast.

Ram’s brother, Ganga Jeet Bomjon, 26, rejects any idea his brother is cheating by eating at night. "We’ve told them, either you need to let people see everything that’s going on or if this is a fraud you need to close it down," says Hari Har Dahal, an administrative officer.

 Officials have also demanded the organising committee submit an account of the money they have raised. According to a fax received by the CDO, it totals over eight lakh in donations and offerings (there is no entrance charge) and about half has been spent on managing the site.

The feeling now is that the group of enthusiastic youngsters who have run this sensation are getting out of their depth. The stakes are high.

"He HAS been drinking, he HAS to eat," says the guard outside the District Administration Office in Kalaya. "If we find out he’s lying, he and the rest of them are going to jail."

"He HASN’t been eating for 26 days but because his team was not permitted to observe Ram from a distance they could not come to any firm conclusion."

"He is human, and he is alive, that much we can say," says Dr Kushvaha. He says that physical tests are needed to discover more.

The CDO’s office, which now seems unlikely to give up, says it is medically impossible to live without food for more than 20 days but because his team was only permitted to observe Ram from a distance they could not come to any firm conclusion.

"Although physical tests are needed to discover more, the feeling now is that the group of enthusiastic youngsters who have run this sensation are getting out of their depth. The stakes are high," says the guard outside the District Administration Office in Kalaya. "If we find out he’s lying, he and the rest of them are going to jail."
Hit for all you’re worth

Tips for playing competitive tennis, no matter your level

The best part of tennis for me is the competition. Although I no longer play tournaments, I still find time to play a set or two every week with my friends and students. This keeps my competitive juices flowing and allows me to coach better. I am in touch with the emotions of the game and can relate to the frustrations of my players. Trust me: tennis can be very challenging mentally.

How can you become a better competitor?

Focus on preparation

Repetition = consistency = confidence = execution. There is no substitution for this model. You have to put in the time on the court, in the gym and on the track. Easier said than done, right? It takes dedication and sacrifice to hit an extra basket of serves, run that second mile or do one more set of squats. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

Sweat the small stuff

Take care of the little things because they all add up. Getting enough sleep, eating healthy, being well hydrated and having your playing gear ready before a match or tournament are some examples.

Attention to detail is what separates the great players from the good ones.

Be mentally tough

At all levels of play, what separates the winners from the losers is mental toughness. When you compete, expect to feel pressure. Yes, there could be extrinsic pressure such as the expectations of your parents or coaches, but really, 90 percent of the pressure is internally generated. If you enjoy competing, you want to win and that enhances tension. Being mentally tough means embracing this pressure and using it to your advantage.

Deal with pressure

When you are nervous, a couple of things occur. You stop breathing and that means you are short of oxygen. When that happens, you are incoherent and cannot make good decisions. You also stop moving your feet. Take deep breaths between points and exhale when you strike the ball. The grunts you hear when you strike the ball.

Relaxed. Move your feet when you are feeling tight because this helps with blood circulation. Plus, you will be alert to react quickly on the court.

Talk positively to yourself

It is natural to get down on yourself when things are not going your way. Be aware of your emotions and make sure you convert them into positive energy. The way you do this is by having a positive ‘self-talk’ internally, or for some of us vocally. It is ok to be frustrated and release your emotions once in a while. Use positive words and ‘self-talk’ internally, or for some of us vocally. It is ok to be frustrated and release your emotions once in a while. Use positive words and

Use good rituals

We all have routines. They give us a sense of stability and comfort. While competing, you want to fall back on your rituals. These can be such things as examining your racquet’s strings after a point or bouncing the ball three times before you serve. One of my favourite rituals is to walk and touch the fence whenever I lose a point. It slows me down and I am able to focus better for the next point.

Fake it till you make it

No matter how bad you are playing or how well your opponent is playing, act like you are in command. You do not want your opponent to know you are frustrated or flustered. Adversity is part of the game and life. Take the challenge and enjoy the battle.

December sky

Coming soon: winter solstice and Orion the hunter

The December sky is dominated by Orion (M42), birthplace of young stars.

Like any successful hunter, Orion is accompanied in the sky by faithful ‘dogs’ Canis Major and Canis Minor. Canis Major is the home of Sirius, the brightest star in the sky. Other celestial highlights in December:

The Sun

The sun is ‘traveling’ eastwards through the constellation of Ophiuchus and crosses the border into Sagittarius on the 18th.

The Earth

The earliest sunset of the year is on the 12th and the latest sunrise is on the 31st. Between them lies the Winter Solstice, which this year occurs on 22 December at 0620, making it the shortest day of the year in the northern hemisphere.

The Moon

There are two new moons this month, on 1 and 31 December. On 5 December, the moon is at perigee, the closest point to earth in its monthly orbit, at a distance of 367,365 km. On the day of the winter solstice, the moon reaches apogee, at its greatest distance from the earth (405,014 km).

Mercury

Mercury appears before dawn during the first half of the month. This quick moving planet reaches its greatest elongation west of the sun on the 12th, at an angular distance of 21°. At this time, it rises a full two hours before the sun. Jupiter will be ahead of Mercury at a distance of 20°.

Venus

Venus will grab our attention after sunset as the ‘Evening Star’ just above the western horizon. It will pair dramatically with the moon on 4 December and reach its greatest brilliancy on 9 December when it will outshine everything in the sky.

Saturn

Jupiter is a bright ‘Morning Star’ pulling away rapidly from the sun so that by the end of December, it rises almost five hours before the sun. Just after Mercury all month, it enters the heliacal rise on the 26th, at an angular distance of 6°. On the 12th, at an angular distance of 21°. At this time, it rises a full two hours before the sun. Jupiter will be ahead of Mercury at a distance of

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Sunny Mahatra is writer who has carved a name for himself writing for the Times of Hindustan. A hit of a lyric, he believes he is a self-made man. However, Michael Burnett, 51, is a simple man and an optimist. Burnett has recently landed a job as a pizza delivery boy at Mummy’s Pizza. On the eve of Diwali, Sunny has loads of stuff to do and very little time. He has to meet his deadline and has a date with Maya, a South Indian superstar who he has been in love with since as long as he can remember. In this confusion, Sunny forgets that there nothing to eat and orders a pizza that Michael delivers. But what Michael delivers to Sunny is so much more than just a pizza.

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Voice of the voiceless

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Bakhundole, Lalitpur, Nepal

MAUSAM BEED

Good riddance to November, when the Valley saw nothing but cold days and not a drop of rain. The latest satellite pictures show a chain of two emerging cyclones over the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea with a shallow westerly front hanging over Kashmir. Early this week the cyclones sucked out everything from our sky, including the recently formed layer of heat over the plains, thus paving the way for bright sunny days and clear nights. As a result, we saw a sudden drop in morning temperatures and lots of fluctuations in humidity levels. With no clear signs of rain on the horizon, there is a strong possibility that sunny days will continue throughout this weekend. Bundle up in the mornings as the temperature expected to go well below five degrees.
I would probably sound rather ambitious for a rising American rock band to claim that it’s out to save the world. But for three-year-old Hooch from Minnesota state, it’s the little differences their small contributions make that gives them a special zing.

Although none of them had ever stepped foot on Nepali soil before this year, the members of this roots-rock reggae ensemble decided they would make their contribution to humanity by helping underprivileged children in Nepal, donating the money they made at their concerts to schools in Nepal. “What is so little for us in the States can go so far here and the idea was always to tie the music with a cause. It’s not just about partying,” said Marcus Glodell, 28, Hooch’s bassist and vocalist.

Their contribution may seem small to some people but the little that the band has given was enough to see 25 primary school kids through two years of schooling in a village in Jhapa and to buy musical instruments for Sankhu Palubari Community School in Sankhu.

After making friends with Nepalis living in the US, Hooch became hooked on this country. They not only donate for schools and charities like Hoste Haisain but have also tied up with Training For Development and the Kathmandu Trading Company (KTC) to have their merchandise, such as T-shirts, cards and bags, produced in Nepal. Jesse Schultz, managing partner of KTC and the band’s manager, is ecstatic. “Demand for Hooch merchandise manufactured in Nepal is growing. 2005 was amazing and 2006 is going to be even bigger.”

The five-member band has released two albums. Their first, Kick the Dog, was a home production recorded in a record six days and released in March 2004. Their music is a mix of classic rock, reggae and psychedelic combined with a bit of funky jazz and a touch of new age alternative vibe. The rock influence is unmistakable. The second album, titled after the band itself, has already been released locally in the US. Hooch will play in Nepal next spring.

Music for Nepal
Interview with Comrade Awesome

The interview last week by Comrade Awesome on the British Bombastic Corporation (BBC) was a cowardly and craven attempt to garner cheap publicity and the nation can heave a sigh of relief that his unspeakable utterances did not defile our ears, thanks to some quick thinking by the vigilant folks at the Ministry of Lip Service and Tongue Lashing.

However, it is only now becoming clear what a close shave we all had. The dramatic behind-the-scenes sequence of events that led to us being within a hare’s breath of having to listen to The Fierce One’s propaganda can now finally be revealed because our intrepid investigative reporters went underground to dig up a blow-by-blow account of how the nefarious plan was foiled.

It was prompt and courageous intervention by alert security personnel that thwarted the interview from being aired just in the nick of time. All you members of the Special Forces Rapid Reaction Team who took part in the daring raid on Radio Sagarmatha on Sunday night in an audacious counter-terrorism commando operation please stand up. A round of applause, ladies and gentlemen, to those brave men who marched straight into the jaws of certain death with scant regard for life and/or limb in a perfectly coordinated attack against a heavily fortified radio station in Bakhundol defended by deadly and battle-hardened RJs.

At precisely 2100hrs the commandos synchronised their watches to GMT and stealthily scaled the outer perimeter of the target area and neutralised two guards from the Kalinchok Security Agency who were clad in pyjamas and heavily armed with a nightstick and a torch. By 2103hrs they had stormed the building in a three-pronged pincer movement. There was hand-to-hand combat in the downstairs corridor where the commandos successfully wrested lethal hardware like tape recorders and ballpoint pens from enemy radio announcers.

At that very moment, another crack unit equipped with night-vision goggles was able to breach the defences of the studio room where it successfully deactivated booby-traps shaped like microphones and some explosive radio active material in the satellite relay room. Four hard-core journalists were captured, Radio Sagarmatha was liberated and the nation rescued from certain doom.

Now that we have it all behind us, we can finally reveal the full text of that interview with Comrade Shock and Awe making it clear why it couldn’t be allowed to go on air:

BBC: So, Mr Awesome, you are one cool dude. How does it feel to give your first radio interview?
Comrade Awesome: So very kind of you to give us the air time so that it will be the government that will be seen as an enemy of free press and not us. It’s great to have them do the dirty work for us.

BBC: And how is the revolution going these days?
CA: As long as I have you on the line, Rabindraji, can I ask you a question?
BBC: Shoot.
CA: Since the national anthem has the word ‘Prachanda’ in it, don’t you think the government should ban it as well?