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Desk Editor: Marty Logan  
Design: Kiran Maharjan Web: Bhushan Shilpakar  
Vicepresident Corporate Affairs: Sneh Sayami  
Advertising: Sambhu Guragain advertising@himalmedia.com  
Subscription: subscription@himalmedia.com  
Hatiban, Godavari Road, Lalitpur  
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## TURN DOWN THE VOLUME

Conflict resolution is an art. It has to start with the political will for peace on both sides, a willingness to reconcile differences, confidence-building and trust. Only after that can a monitored ceasefire lead to demobilisation and decommissioning of weapons right up to rehabilitation and reconciliation.

Experience of peace processes elsewhere show that these interventions must be carefully sequenced. Disarming a rebel group can be a serious hurdle. If you insist on it too soon, you risk breakdown. If you leave it for too late, future elections may be tainted. You have to get the timing right, and a neutral third party can be of help.

Despite Maoist grandstanding, we can be fairly certain there is political will on the part of the leadership to join peaceful competitive politics. The pace at which this happens is dictated by the internal dynamics within the Maoist party and the comrades want to be careful their rebellion doesn't unravel.

But even if the Maoists hadn't mired this country in 10 years of war, our democracy needed to be fixed to make it more meaningful and inclusive. The peace process is a good opportunity to address these structural issues. However, the fact that the Maoists are joining mainstream politics doesn't automatically guarantee that democracy will be protected or that marginalised groups will have a voice. In fact, recent inflammatory statements by Maoist leaders give reason to doubt their sincerity, commitment to democracy and the protection of fundamental rights.

The peace process and the constituent assembly election is a project that aims at more equitable power-sharing. It seeks to change 237 years of status quo and allow a mechanism for Nepalis who were left out of decision-making a future share in it. The present haggling is about who is to decide on this mechanism and how.

Now that we've come this far there are some self-evident truths:

- a state can't have two rival armies
- the paramilitary group needs to be disbanded within an agreed timeframe
- a caretaker government can't include a party that still espouses violence
- a hardline split within the rebel movement has to be prevented
- elections can't be held without first decommissioning an armed group's weapons

So far, our transition from conflict to ceasefire to a new constitution has happened relatively smoothly. But the road ahead is treacherous because post-conflict elections, if they aren't properly handled, can re-ignite violence. Worse, polarised campaigning for such polls can turn a comparatively tame class-based struggle into a much more vicious ethnic or separatist conflict.



SAGAR SHRESTHA

# Hint, hint, wink, wink

## Decompressing the Maoists can't be done with ambiguous private guarantees

The eight-point agreement has heightened optimism for peace as well as raised concern about what many have termed to be an ill thought-out appeasement plan.

The main concern is that the sudden dissolution of the hard-fought and newly restored

**GUEST COLUMN**  
**Alok K Bohara**



parliament and the incorporation of the Maoists into the interim government is happening without any resolution to the issue of Maoist arms. But then, other politicians have gone as far as to term it a peaceful transfer of power to the Maoists.

Granted, a perfectly drawn out plan is not a guarantor of peace, as the renewed fighting in Sri Lanka and East Timor have shown. Similarly, keeping a loophole in the agreement can also spell disaster as in the case of Angola, where the rebels with their arms intact renewed fighting after losing in elections and plunged the country back into civil war.

That said, much can happen, behind the scenes between Prachanda and Koirala. Some claim there is a sincere verbal

commitment from Pushpa Kamal Dahal to the seven party leadership about disarmament and multiparty competitive parliamentary system. Thus the ambiguity in the 8-point agreement has been defended as being necessary.

The idea of a privately conducted privileged conversation is a necessary element in a negotiation, and any such exchanges between Dahal and Koirala are perfectly understandable. But an excessive reliance on ambiguity can also backfire. Too much of an open space for the Maoists can strengthen their hand in carrying out Dahal's "October Revolution".

The more we engage the Maoists the harder it is for them to pull out. This is both a good thing, and wishful thinking. But, if the negotiation fails amid such high expectations and fanfare, it would be easier for Dahal to once more mobilise his troops and carry out his October Revolution. The likelihood of such a revolution will be high, especially if he is allowed to continue with his current high-octane proletariat rhetoric sometimes laden with gratuitous remarks. Should he not be forced to break the bad news to his troops starting right about now?

At some point, we need to put some onus on Dahal & Co to deliver too. To convince his cadres to abide by some of our expectations should be 'his problem'. Any supposed private guarantee (hint, hint, wink, wink) to some of our leaders and civil society members should not be taken as proof of a Maoist commitment. What matters is public accountability both in words and deeds.

At least, we should allow an

open debate and public expression from all sides, and those who participate should not be branded "conspirators" (Dahal's language), nor should they be called naysayers. In a democracy, public debate and criticism are essential to generate pressure to form better public policy.

This may not be too obvious to someone like Dahal who has been underground for so long. Similarly, forcing five-year militia training on Nepali people can't come through fiat. Policies like this and others such as our international trade and treaties, economic policies, and the rule of law must be debated and deliberated in public and voted by an elected parliament.

Local Maoists must also learn that in free society, people have a right to property. Recent coverage of a militia handing over keys of a house to its rightful owner is as blatant as honouring a husband for not beating his wife.

Decompression of the Maoist cadres to face such realities in a new Nepal should begin in earnest. This is now Dahal's responsibility. Civil society and the media have so far been very patient with the Maoist leadership and given them an unprecedented platform to articulate their position. The post-summit press conference at Baluwatar impressed some of our own civil society members so much they even declared him to be a visionary and dynamic leader comparable to B P Koirala. Well, let history judge that.

For now, disarmament before the elections is the single most vital issue. Creating a government with two armies will be a colossal mistake. ●

Alok K Bohara, Ph D, is professor of economics at the University of New Mexico, USA.

# Higher they go, further they fall

## We need a stop-gap statute for checks and balances during this political interregnum

- On 25 June, two sons of the once all-powerful honorary ADC to the king, Gen Bharat Keshar Simha, tendered an official apology to Ang Dawa Sherpa, the motorcyclist they beat up in the middle of the road at Lainchaur last week. They also agreed to compensate him for the costs involved in treatment and repairs.
- This week, Tulsi Giri deposed before the High-level Investigation Commission

headed by former Supreme Court Justice Krishna Jung Rayamajhi. Giri told reporters he had full respect for the rule of law.

- Media reported that the finance ministry had asked Narayanhi to show sources of funds that will be used to import a SUV costing about Rs 5 million. The royal family will no longer be tax exempted.

There is a common thread running

through these occurrences. It will be a long haul before the king and commoners will be governed by the same laws, but an irreversible process has begun.

Just a year ago, Gen Simha had thundered in public that the authority of a Hindu king couldn't be confined by any constitution. Giri had similarly argued in a tv interview that the king acquired legitimacy to rule from the loyalty of his subjects who anointed him at the time of his ascension to the throne.

This was the divine right theory that justified the supremacy of the king which in turn was used to create special privileges for royal lackeys. Simha and Giri were notable beneficiaries of royal munificence. They appear to have reconciled themselves to the changed circumstances of the country.

Now it's the turn of the Maoists to pledge that they too will be bound by the laws of the land. Feudal lords, military juntas, and armed revolutionaries have identical views on the law: it is what they in

their infinite wisdom decree.

This is the reason the Maoists leadership's promise to abide by the decisions of a constituent assembly has given rise to optimism. It implies that they are ready to discard the logic of the gun. Like monarchists, someday the Maoists will also be held accountable for their deeds. Their loyalists too will be asked to testify, depose, and accept responsibility at investigation, truth or reconciliation commissions that will be formed by the constituent assembly or subsequent parliaments.

Meanwhile, excesses that may be committed in the name of the supremacy of the parliament also must be kept in check. As it happens, the restored house has declared itself sovereign at a time when there is no institutional mechanism to ensure the checks and balances so essential for the healthy functioning of a democracy.

To conduct the affairs of the state according to the rule of law, all officials

must be bound not by the oath taken inside parliament but by the provisions of a commonly agreed statute. All that parliamentary supremacy implies is a regime run by the laws. The distinction between these two different concepts of legal supremacy shows that all forms of governments are equally likely to degenerate into tyranny if not kept constantly on their toes by a watchful and informed public.

An urgent promulgation of an interim constitution is thus not just a concession to the Maoists but a legal necessity to institutionalise democracy during this political interregnum.

The job of the Rayamajhi Commission will be a lot easier if Laxman Prasad Aryal and his team succeed in making its recommendations binding upon the interim government. If that happens, the commission will have no hesitation in summoning the chairman of the royal council of ministers for questioning. The dream of one nation under one law looks tantalisingly close. ●

**STATE OF THE STATE**

**C K Lal**



headed by former Supreme Court



## LETTERS

## TRUST

'Mainstreaming the Maoists' seems to be the buzzword these days and your editorials are not immune. But what does it mean? Changes to Nepal's political landscape require ownership by the Maoists, the political parties, civil society and the Nepali people-at-large, as victory in their own terms. It even requires recognition from Nepal's right-of-centre that the attainment of lasting peace, is a win as well. As you note in 'Why should we trust you?' (Editorial, #303) concessions to the Maoists have to be tailored to meet their leadership's challenge of assuaging the Maoist cadre-base. Similarly, what the Maoists offer in return must also qualify as substantive reciprocity to allay the concerns of political and apolitical actors in Nepal and abroad. This is why rhetoric requires responsible moderation. Writing off inflammatory language as necessary to alleviate the concerns of radicals, as you seem to imply in your leader, is akin to condoning the escalation of counter-rhetoric for the sake of equilibrium. It would be most unfortunate to equate the process of mainstreaming the Maoists with the act of *defining* the mainstream itself.

I agree that during the run up to the constituent assembly, it is very important for the Maoists to publicly renounce violence and educate their cadre on the generally accepted version of liberal democracy. This is just as paramount as it is for advocates of a liberal democratic set-up in Nepal to extend flexibility to the Maoist leadership's plight.

The onus of rectifying the over-inflated expectations they set for their own cadre-base, is primarily the Maoists'. The idea here is to mainstream not just the Maoist leaders and a segment of sympathetic elements but the entire Maoist mass.

**Dipak Singh, email**

- I was surprised by how the government and our political leaders took the army's reaction to the statement from

Pushpa Kamal Dahal. In the SPA-M democracy everyone except the army seems to get the right to express an opinion. It seems that the army can't defend its image even when it is being singled out for attack. Prachanda had the right to give his opinion and the army had the right of reply. So why all the fuss? Our politicians are just hardwired to make a mountain out of a molehill every time.

**Evan Shrestha, email**

- As usual, your editorial ('Why should we trust you') is balanced and persuasive. Just as the state needs to accept the notion of including the Maoists in the power



apparatus, the Maoists also have to accept that their integration requires a behaviour shift. Negotiating with the government on one hand while trying to 'talk tough' to their cadre with unrealistic aspirations is not helpful to anyone. Issuing provocative statements against the state's security forces that detract debate from substantive issues and drive a wedge amongst the seven party alliance is counterproductive. Soon, the Maoists will learn the consequences of making empty promises. It is as critical for the Maoist organisation to remain intact as it is for the seven party alliance to hold. This is in the best interests of all Nepalis. Civil society leaders who advocate the Maoist position and tolerate inflammatory rhetoric as a necessary evil must also realise the consequences.

**Dev Sharma, email**

- Keeping in view the present elasticity and fluidity of politics, as an ordinary citizen

allow me to pose the following challenge: The prime minister, ministers and deputy prime ministers should replace their soldier bodyguards with Pushpa Kamal Dahal's weaponless henchmen. Will the concerned authorities take up the challenge?

**J Basnyat, email**

- I don't agree with your editorial (#303) that we should ignore Maoist rhetoric because they are talking tough to placate their cadre. Concessions from all political actors can only happen in an atmosphere of moderate rhetoric, which by way of public record will define the mainstream going into constituent assembly elections.

A peace process means compromise. An equitable and sustainable political solution depends as much on including Maoist demands as it does on ensuring that every voice in Nepal has adequate political representation. This includes the right-of-centre (without royal liability), the centre, the left-of-centre, the Maoist army (or militia) and members of the state's security forces. A peace agenda that is premised on meeting unconditional demands from one party runs the risk of undermining the entire process. While the exhibition of willingness on the part of the Maoists to enter the mainstream is a realistic pre-condition to peace, it is also a concession that serves their legitimisation just as much as it serves the national interest.

**Name withheld, email**

- Re: Guest Column by Dipta Shah (Why, when and how? #303) How exactly did ranting such as this one even get the exclusive op-ed space on *Nepali Times*? I have never read such an appalling article in your paper. Am I out of the loop or was it just plain bad writing?

**Sabeena Shree Rana, email**

## A DOG'S LIFE-3

Andrew Steele (#303) misses the point, which is a NIMBY (not in my back yard) attitude. By all means, shoot street dogs in the head, at least they would die quickly,

unlike now. But just who is going to organise this? The effectiveness of dog sterilisation has, of course, been proved by various programs throughout the world, including the one in Jaipur. 'Lobbing a rock or two' is merely an effective and cruel way to move them to someone else's back yard. Great! Yes, there are always more pressing things to deal with—what is your community doing about these?

**Helen Palmer, Kathmandu**

## GOAL!

I'm a New Zealander living in Nepal, and I read with empathy Kunda Dixit's dismay at the appallingly low scores of the current round of soccer matches (Under My Hat, 'Moving the goalposts', #303). Excluding his points 3, 4 and 8, might I suggest that his final 8-point agreement with Sepp Blatter beautifully describes a game called rugby. In rugby, you have 30 huffing and heaving men (in dreads or crew-cuts) slogging it out for 80 minutes. High scores are usually evident when the New Zealand team (the All Blacks) step onto the field to thrash their opponents senseless. All good, mindless fun, with no sissy-boys prancing around after scoring goals. If at all possible, do you think that the cable tv poachers could perhaps extend their reach beyond Myanmar and further into Australia or New Zealand to steal air time for some of the major rugby games? I'll pay an extra Rs 5 per month as my share.

**Maurice Lee, email**

## LETTERS

*Nepali Times* welcomes 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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# Including the excluded

Janjati leaders say that sharing powers will fortify Nepal

MARTY LOGAN

For more than a decade Sitaram Tamang and his colleagues have discussed how they would revive their ancestral lands: Tamsaling. Now they believe the time has come.

In the wake of the people's movement, Nepal's indigenous people finally believe they will have proportional representation in their country's governance.

That means "in 10 years we will have the majority of seats in parliament," predicts Tamang of the Nepal Tamang Ghedung, "but we have no time—we have to join with Dalits, Madhesis and women to pressure the government."

While almost all agree it's time to restructure Nepal so that Janjatis and other 'disadvantaged' groups need a larger say in running the state, there's no consensus on how to achieve that. Conservative voices argue that political parties themselves should first start having members from excluded groups. Once they are elected, this logic goes, these individuals will make decisions that favour their own.

"The parties should ensure representation within themselves," KB Gurung, NC general secretary told us, "Janjatis must be provided their language, religion and traditions. That must be given by the government and parties."

Many outspoken, senior leaders of



DANDA GURUNG

Janjatis and other excluded sectors argue that the time has passed when their people should depend on the largesse of the ruling 'upper' caste elite. Not only do they want to mould the country into a federal state with a central government and provinces, they say that those smaller units should be based on ethnicity/language and should be autonomous. The Maoists go even a step further, saying that autonomous regions should have the right to become independent countries (*see interview*).

"The whole nation is talking about a new constitution...it is the proper time to discuss all the national problems, of the ethnic people, the tarai people," says rights

activist Padma Ratna Tuladhar. "Ethnic groups want their own regions so they can have their own language, education in their mother tongue, their own culture."

But Tuladhar says even the Maoists don't understand this. Among the tens of thousands of posters that the party printed to advertise its recent giant rally in Kathmandu, none was in Newari, he points out.

Academics like Krishna Bhattachan argue that Nepal wasn't so much unified by King Prithibi Narayan Shah but various regions were given autonomy under a federal structure. "The king's idea of internal autonomy (was) to bind the

different ethnic groups into a single territorial nation-state, or into a multi-ethnic nation-state," Bhattachan writes.

If so, federalism shouldn't be such an alien concept for Nepal.

However, rulers since Nepal's formation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century have twisted the notion to ensure domination of the Bahun-Chhetri elite, Bhattachan says.

Not all Janjatis are convinced that autonomy, or even a restructured state, are priorities. "Yes we need more rights but first you need to have a vision of what to do with those rights. And before we can develop that, the Newars all need to come together, stop fighting among themselves," says one Newar restaurant owner.

But it's not only Janjati leaders who think it's time to share power. "We think that more freedom will make a stronger Nepal," says the UML's Amrit Bohara, "but we have to make sure we don't go against our own national interest."

Civil society leader Devendra Raj Panday sees autonomy for Janjatis creating a threat from within. "The biggest faultline is how we handle the question of ethnicity. The challenge is to create a federal state that addresses, ethnicity, geography and development issues," he adds.

But Sitaram Tamang is matter-of-fact: "We don't want to take over, we're demanding only our fair share. We think that's democracy." ●



## "From feudalism to federalism"

The Maoists shocked the nation when they redrew the map of Nepal in 2004 basing it mainly on ethnicity. Their senior leader Deb Gurung talked to us about exactly how these autonomous regions would function.

**Nepali Times:** Under the autonomy that you propose would each region be allocated complete political powers or would it be like a federal system where the regions get some powers and the centre other ones?

**Deb Gurung:** We have practised both systems in our own way. The autonomous regions have a constitution, judiciary and other state organs. Foreign affairs, national defence and money matters are vested in the federal government. Other powers, like schools, language, culture, natural resources and many other things are vested in the autonomous regions.

**Then how do federal and autonomous systems differ?**

We have guaranteed the right of secession to the autonomous regions. If they feel oppressed they can detach themselves from the central government.

**So it's possible that the country could split apart?**

They have the right to secession but nowadays the trend of globalisation is that strength is found in unity.

**Where would the resources come from for each region to run its own affairs, particularly in the west, the poorest part of the country?**

The main resources are people's capability and hard work. But Nepal's feudal economic system

has made the society dependent on others. Due to the misuse of local resources by the centre, local production has not developed nor have markets. Proper management of those resources would solve this problem.



KIRAN PANDAY

**Although your party has now agreed to participate in multi-party politics, your ultimate aim is a socialist or Marxist state, which is a centralised one. How can you reconcile that vision with autonomy?**

In our evaluation of the history of states, including Vietnam, China and Cuba, we have observed certain problems they had, concerning state power, the army and other entities. Prachandapath, or democracy of the 21st century, is the outcome of this deep study with a view to matching form with reality.

Only on the basis of full democracy do you produce a unified state, not on the basis of dictatorship.

**Many Janajatis and other oppressed peoples died for your vision of liberation via an armed struggle. Now you are telling them to put the gun aside and use the political process to achieve liberation.**

When the people's war started that was also a political process, war is a continuation of politics through other means. The Nepali people are ready to participate no matter what form of struggle we choose.



# How we can make it to the World Cup

## ANFA must recast it role to invest on three critical priorities

An article in the latest issue of *Himal Khabarpatrika* asks: If the war-torn African nation Angola could be a contender in this year's World Cup soccer tournament in Germany, why not Nepal?

But what it neglects to mention is how Angola became a contender in the first place. Angolan national football squad members have been playing professionally for clubs in

STRICTLY BUSINESS

Ashutosh Tiwari



countries such as Kuwait, Spain and the UK. Last year, Angola gathered their talented but internationally scattered players, and fielded a team which played successfully in the qualifying matches. Indeed, to any narrative about their World Cup debut, Angola's war-driven political history serves only as a poignant backdrop. It's the individually skilled players with international exposure who have provided the dazzle to Team Angola.

How can Nepal too aim to produce a team for a World Cup debut? For answers, it's worth suggesting that All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) recast its role

to invest resources on three critical priorities.

**Hunt for talents:** If you visit the ANFA's ill-updated web site, it's clear that the organization's focus is not really on promoting football. There are no photos of players or matches. Nor are there web links to the sites related to the present World Cup. Instead, ANFA's emphases are on spending years on erecting half-finished buildings (hostels, office complexes, etc) and sustaining its own committee-swollen bureaucracy.

That leaves room open for any Nepali football fan to worry that the deeper ANFA sinks into the business of creating infrastructure itself—instead of having it completed within deadlines by third parties—it's going to find it hard to concentrate on its number one priority: Identifying young football talents at grassroots matches all over Nepal. In this context, it helps if ANFA officials think of themselves as talent scouts—and not bureaucrats wasting time on procurement issues and internal quarrels.

**Market the talents:** To cater to the rising global demand for top football talents, ANFA can adopt a two-pronged strategy: Domestically, it can raise the



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extent of its partnerships with corporate houses, event management firms, municipalities, youth clubs and schools. Doing so will help it increase the number of local, regional and national tournaments. In this, it should build up on the success of some Nepali clubs that are now being professionally managed and whose players are actually starting to make money from playing football.

Internationally, it's time to develop and deepen relations with Asian, African and European clubs, no matter how daunting such tasks look at the present. Unless our sports leaders see that

the road to mastering World Cup-calibre confidence starts from playing with, for and against international clubs and coaches in and out of Nepal, it'll be difficult for our players to gain the physical, technical, tactical and psychological strengths that the game demands in the global arena. After all, scoring goals only at the Dashrat Stadium—*sans* international exposure—will continue to consign our players to the dustbin of global mediocrity.

**Lead the talents:** ANFA's core business of promoting football has many interlocking elements. Putting politics and quarrels aside, it needs to start

providing credible public leadership on matters related to football. It can do that by reordering its priorities, reaching out to partners, getting the right people on board (instead of old sportsmen who know little about working effectively with differently-skilled professionals), and completing activities one by one.

Doing so consistently well for a number of years will help take Nepal closer to the goal of playing and winning qualifying matches in 2014 and 2018 before, who knows, bringing home the World Cup trophy in 2022—100 years after this beautiful game was first played in this country. ●

### Jumla crash probe

Even while a CAAN investigation team begins its probe of the crash of a Yeti Airlines Twin Otter crash in Jumla on 22 June that killed nine people, aviation experts have called for stricter flying codes. Eye-witnesses said the Twin Otter was trying to be ahead of a Sita Air Dornier also flying into Jumla, but found its air speed too high for a landing. The pilot then flew on to the other end of the runway for another approach. The plane stalled and crashed while making what eye-witnesses said was an excessively tight turn. Preliminary findings of the Jumla crash point to several possibilities: crew fatigue, movement of cabin cargo during tight turn, inexperience of one of the pilots. There have been seven Twin Otter crashes since 1998 in Nepal killing 85 passengers and crew, nearly all have been due to pilots flying into mountains in bad weather. CAAN said this week it was investigating two other pilots for reckless flying.

### Single-digit poverty

Attracting more investment and boosting workers' productivity could help South Asian nations cut poverty rates to single digits in less than a decade, says the World Bank in *Economic Growth in South Asia*, released on Tuesday. But governments must ensure that the cut is not accompanied by a growing gulf between nations' haves and have-nots, warns the bank. Accelerating growth to 10 percent a year until 2015 would reduce poverty rates to single digits and also reduce the number of South Asians living in poverty by two-third. In Nepal, 10 percent growth would produce a 9.4 poverty rate by 2015. In 2003 poverty here was estimated at 31 percent, said the Bank.

### Hyundai to hike prices

Hyundai Motor India (HMIL) recently announced that it will hike prices of all Hyundai models, including the flagship 'Santro Xing', this month due to surge in the oil prices which has lead to increase in freight and logistical costs. Prices of raw materials like plastic and rubber have also risen in the recent past, pushing up production costs.

The increase will be in a range of 1-2% of the most entry-level compact cars. This price hike will also affect the prices of Hyundai vehicles in Nepal.

#### NEW PRODUCTS

YAMAHA GLADIATOR: is the latest 125 cc bike from Yamaha. Morang Auto Works (MAW), the authorised distributor unveils the 5-speed 'next generation fun bike'. Developed as a next generation fun bike, Gladiator brings with it better performance, new styling, greater handling and comfort. Morang has a promo price of Rs 109,900 for Gladiator normal and Rs 120,900 for Gladiator DX.



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KIRAN PANDAY

Interview with Baburam Bhattarai, chairman of the Maoist United Revolutionary Peoples Council, Radio Sagarmatha Ajaka Kura, 17 June

**Radio Sagarmatha: Is it now confirmed that your party will be joining the interim government?**

**Baburam Bhattarai:** This is more about the interim constitution rather than just about just joining the interim government. We will join the interim government, but other things need to happen: date for the constituent assembly elections, dissolving parliament.

**Can we expect a tussle about who will join the government?**

# “90 percent are for a

We haven't yet reached that stage. It will be decided on the basis of a mutual agreement between the parties and civil society in the same manner in which the movement was made successful by the three powers after the 12-point agreement.

**You've argued for a leadership role for your party.**

That is the usual practice. The ground reality is that people believe a full-fledged democracy, peace and progress will only be possible if the leadership is in the hands of the Maoists. But we don't want to make this the major issue and argue about it.

**What place will the king have in the interim constitution?**

We feel there is no need for the king to have a place because the Nepali people have already abandoned the monarchy. The movement was proof of that. Likewise, the parliamentary parties have made proclamations which are proof that they want to head the same way. What we have proposed is to declare a democratic peoples republic when forming the interim constitution and to give it a structure through the constituent assembly.

**Looks like the NC doesn't want to go along with this.**

That will be clear during the process. We feel there is a strong faction within the NC which is for a republic. Other major parties are also going for a republic. Our proposal is not to keep the king as head of state.

**The national political convention that you had been demanding will not take place now?**

After the dissolution of parliament and the creation of a representative system by the constituent assembly, the issue will arise of where do sovereign and ruling powers lie. We feel that an interim structure must be created, which is why we have put forth a proposal for a national political convention that includes the seven parties, us, civil society and various fronts representing regions, ethnicities and castes.

**The interim government will be a division of powers that will take us to the constituent assembly?**

It should not be taken as a division of power. The movement has given its mandate to the political and organised powers, those who were active during the movement including civil society. We should move forward using these powers. Instead of calling it a division of power it should be better understood as a provisional administration.

**Thirteen thousand people have died, how will there be a republic?**

The people's movement which happened based on the support of the peoples' war and with the support of the 12-point agreement, brought the country towards a republic. Had the political parties not given in to pressure from the king and foreign powers we would have had a republic by now. Still, instead of heading directly into a republic we will go through an interim system. There is no way to stop the republic now. Ninety percent of the people are for a republic. If you can't even accept that, then there is no use calling yourself a democrat.

**Will your cadres accept this bourgeois republic? Or is there dissatisfaction within the ranks?**

That is our program. There is no question of not accepting it. That is the constitution of our party and the revolution. Our constitution and programs are clear: that the bourgeois republic will be formed under the leadership and participation of the proletariat.

**Couldn't you have worked with the 1990 constitution?**

You have to understand that a democratic republic is not a parliamentary republic. Our understanding is that a democratic republic is an interim provision slightly above a parliamentary republic but which has not reached the level of people's republic. This could not happen through the 1990 constitution. It will be brought





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# republic”

by the present struggle and movement for formation of new laws from the constituent assembly.

**There is a rumour that your party will be excluded from communist organisations like RIM and COMPOSA if you join the government?**

No. RIM and COMPOSA are our participatory organisations so there is no question of us being excluded from them. Different parties have their own programs and differences in opinion will exist. We are in various committees of RIM and COMPOSA and no one can take us out of them.

**What is the nature of your democratic republic?**

In a democratic republic there will be no monarchy and the people will have complete power. Second, the army which has been loyal to the monarchy for 237 years, must be democratised, restructured and a new force raised. Third, the present form of government is feudalistic and Brahminised. A government that represents everyone, the exploited, the ethnic castes, various regions will be formed. Basic democratic norms such as competitive state system, rule of law and human rights will be an integral part of this system. The rights of women, Dalits and basic rights to education, health and employment will be secured. In the economic front revolutionary land reforms will take place. For a long time, Indian investments in Nepal have been under a semi-colonial style monopoly. This will end and, Nepal will be developed as an independent democratic republic.

**You say you are against personality cults, yet you glorify Prachandapath.**

It's not about not keeping Prachandapath. I was the one who proposed Prachandapath. It was natural for us to name the ideology after the chairman of the party. I have never been against Prachanda's leadership or Prachandapath itself.

## Bhutani refugees

Editorial in *Samaya*, 30 June

World Refugee Day came and went this week, and it was just a formality. For the 100,000 plus Bhutani refugees who have been living in camps for the past 14 years in Jhapa and Morang there is no hope of any positive developments this year.

The UNHCR which has been trying to get the refugees repatriated to Bhutan or assimilated in the host country Nepal is now also working on third country resettlement. For the refugees, this can be a good option but not the best one. The UNHCR blames mainly Nepal for opposing resettlement in third countries. Nepal's position is that Bhutan needs to take back some of its people as per the bilateral agreement. The Bhutani refugee leadership agrees with this.

Obviously, the issue of refugees is closely linked to the protection of human rights and democracy in Bhutan. A royal dictatorship can perhaps heap injustices on a minority for some time. But ultimately the people will be victorious, and this has been proven by the recent events in the refugees' host country. Unfortunately, the lack of an organised pro-democracy movement has bolstered the harsh crackdowns by the Bhutani regime. Neighbouring democratic country India and the UN have been indirectly helping the anti-human rights and anti-democratic crackdowns by the Bhutani king against his own minority peoples.

It may appear to be in the short-term interest of some of the refugees, especially women and children, to be resettled in third countries. But to be forever torn apart from their country, community, culture and families can only be a last resort. It is important to restart the bilateral ministerial-level talks between Nepal and Bhutan to resolve the issue. Nepal must also remind New Delhi that its neutrality has helped the Bhutan king to continue with his activities against the refugees. Such repressive behaviour will be a challenge in efforts to fight terrorism in South Asia. It is also a test for King Jigme who seems to want to devolve his power and usher in democracy. He must remember that democracy isn't possible by violating the basic human rights of his minority population. That will just set back democracy.



MIN BAJRACHARYA



KIRAN PANDAY



KIRAN PANDAY

# Girija, Gyanendra and Prachanda

*Disanirdesh*, 25 June

There are so many reasons why the parties and people feel skeptical about the Maoists: Prachanda's often insulting remarks against other political leaders, his utter arrogance unsuitable for a senior leader like him, his clever attempts to opt out seven parties from decision making process, and the continued violence, abduction and extortions at the hands of his cadres, abductions and lack of guilt about the past mistakes.

Many questions are being raised about the intentions of the Maoists: are they really serious about giving up their one-party stance and joining the multiparty system or is it just their political diplomacy to win the hearts of the mass? Is their alliance with the seven parties genuine or merely a way to use them? The Maoists had not organised any political struggle during the Panchayat regime. They took up arms only when the communist party formed a government following general elections and had started to undertake new progressive activities. There would have been a lot of progress if all the leftist parties had formed a majority in the government. But it seems very clear now that there were very close relations between the

Maoist leadership and King Birendra. During that time, efforts were being made through Gyanendra and Dharendra to unite with the Maoists and destroy the leading parties like Nepali Congress and UML. Soon after the royal massacre, Prachanda and Baburam had praised kings from Prithbi Narayan Shah to Birendra. They started the extortions and killings of hundreds of leaders, workers, teachers, journalists and many police and army personnel while during off duty and visiting their families. After this, the Maoists took refuge in India and mobilised their militia and then came to the country to start destruction of public and private properties.

The whole country and the people had been suffering at the hands of the palace in the cities and Maoists in the jungle. Thousands were killed for extortion and not supporting the rebels. The properties of tens and thousands of families were looted and over 100,000 displaced. The Maoists believed that the whole country was under their control. But it was only after their alliance with the parties especially NC and UML that led to huge assemblies of the mass. But Baburam now says this was possible due to the Maoists. He added that only few supported the parties.

How many Maoists really got martyred during Janandolan II? How many of their cadres really got injured? When Gyanendra assumed direct rule, the Maoists said that he betrayed them. Until then, the Maoists had still not had any serious talks or reached an understanding. On the other hand, the parties were criticised for not showing courage to organise mass protest against the king.

By the time, the Maoists had been attacking many districts, brutally destroying the infrastructure and buildings in the cities and towns. But when they realised that it was not possible to capture Kathmandu and win a decisive war in the capital, the Maoist leaders eventually thought of the proposal for talks by the parties. It was only after the janandolan got stronger that they started the drama of trying to have talks. Now Prachanda is saying that the parties did not have much to do with the 12-point understanding.

It's good that he has started to talk a lot about the Buddha. But it's time that he started sounding like a responsible leader, wholeheartedly accepting multiparty system, publicly admitting the past mistakes and liberating from old stereotyped thinking.



Peak: Summit talks  
Men: Seven-party map  
The talks over! Return!

Abin Shrestha in *Samaya*, 29 June

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“ Who will take the responsibility of the killings of 13,000 people if you want to talk about killing? ”

- Nikshya SJB Rana , former royalist minister on Nepal One, 27 June





**GREETING:** “*Namaste, aram?*” That is how Sankule Lati, 77, greets strangers with a namaste and a quick tilt to her head.



**LAUGHING:** Til Kumari Khatri, 71, and Yadongba Tamang, 70, laugh and play like children. Til Kumari has been here since 1998. Her daughter-in-law brought her to the shelter one day and left saying: “I’ll be back soon.” She never came back.



**BATHING:** Dhana Kumari Ranabhat, 99, takes a bath with the help of her husband Dil Bahadur Ranabhat, 90. The couple is lucky, few here still have their spouses. Dhana Kumari was forced here after her husband died but married Dil Bahadur, a retired soldier.



**CHATTING:** Tirtha Maya Thapa, 75 and Man Kumari Thapa, 75, sit and chat. Tirtha Maya was so busy taking care of her parents, she never married. But after they died, her relatives evicted her from her house. Man Kumari’s long lost son came and took her home a few months ago.



**EATING:** Bishnumaya Lati, 72, takes her evening meal with her two favourite dogs in attendance. She lives here with her husband.



**COOKING:** Kanchi Khatri cooks food in the shelter. She was the maid servant at the home of an astrologer and when she was no longer able to work nine years ago, her employer brought her here.



**PRAYING:** Laxmi Thapa, 68, prays to a wall full of pictures of the gods she was married very young. Laxmi worked as a domestic all her life. One day, her employer abandoned her so she came here. Now she prays, “There is no one to help me.”

# These seniors are family

PHOTOS and TEXT BY [Name]

**M**ost people find shelters for senior citizens depressing and avoid visiting them. But working on this photo feature at the Pashupati Bridhashram over the past six months, I have been inexplicably uplifted. I forget the stress of living in Kathmandu and my homesickness for my native Bangladesh. I feel fortunate that I have a family, as many of the senior citizens once had. But what gives me hope is that even though they have lost families and possessions, they still care. They care for each other and they retain a deep sense of humanity. The story of how they landed up





**CHANTING:** Every morning and evening residents gather for bhajans. Those who can't walk to the prayer room chant from their own beds.

# strangers ily now

by **SHEBAB UDDIN**

**here is almost always the same: in their old age they became a burden on their families who dumped them at Pashupati. For the elderly, it's sometimes a relief that they are in such a holy place and don't have to bear the taunts of a home where they are no longer welcome. None of them came here willingly and no one has anywhere to go. The Pashupati Bridhashram is run by the government so its budget is limited, it is congested, short-staffed and shows signs of mismanagement. There are 230 residents, 140 of them women.**



**RECITING:** Shanti Tuladhar recites a poem from her book, *Unko Samjhana*. She loves poetry and is still writing. Married at 30, her husband was in the army and when he died 12 years ago, she was sent here. Shanti doesn't like to talk about her son. She reads us her favourite poem:

## बृद्धको बाध्यता

शान्ति तुलाधर

अब त छोराहरू ठुला भए  
पाल्ने पोल्ने आशा भए  
कुप्रा घरहरू अग्ला भए  
एक एक गर्दै तल्ला बडे

जति जति घरका तल्ला बडे  
बुढा-बुढी ऊन्-ऊन् तल ऊरे  
चिसो छेडी कुनै पन्यो  
छोरा बडेर खोई के गन्यो ?

छोराहरूलाई भारी भएर  
बृद्धाश्रममा छोडे ल्याएर  
पराई भईगए सन्तान आफ्नै  
परदेश भईगयो घरबार आफ्नै

## In my old age

Shanti Tuladhar

My sons have grown up  
Huts have turned into high-rises  
They're adding floors one by one  
For me, there is just the pyre left

As the house grew taller  
We were pushed lower  
Lower than the staircase dark and dank  
My son has grown up but what has he done?

I became a burden and he brought me here  
My family is foreign forever,  
These strangers are family now.



**FEEDING:** Dipa Thapa, 75, has two pet cats in the shelter. They are her only friends. She used to sell flowers in Pashupati and when her husband died, she came here.



**COMBING:** Ratna Maya Katiwada, 68, has kept to herself since she came here three years ago. No one knows the whereabouts of her family or where she is from.



**COMBING:** Ratna Maya Katiwada, 68, has kept to herself since she came here three years ago. No one knows the whereabouts of her family or where she is from.



# Why the hurry?

Even ministers are unhappy at the haste with which the government and Maoists are drafting an interim constitution



KIRAN PANDAY

**NARESH NEWAR**

The Maoists felt left out and demanded the dissolution of parliament on 16 June, but this has brought flak from the seven party alliance.

Leaders of the SPA are getting increasingly frustrated with Maoist stubbornness and are saying so openly. The level of mistrust and scepticism is growing and the parties blame this on the arrogance of Maoist cadres who don't seem to know how to make the transition from

armed struggle to peaceful politics.

While senior rebel leaders are going around the capital constantly criticising the parties and underlining what they say was their crucial role in the movement, local commanders in the villages are intimidating party workers, especially of the NC and UML.

"We are working really hard towards building a positive political environment and the Maoists should reciprocate," says Sushil Koirala of the NC. With their belligerent talk, the Maoists

have been violating the 25-code of conduct agreed in Gokarna last month to tone down the rhetoric, party leaders say.

The Maoists, meanwhile, are on a public relations offensive meeting party leaders and Kathmandu-based diplomats.

"We hope that the Maoists will live up to their commitments, which we reminded their leaders of again recently," explained Koirala, who met Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Baburam Bhattarai on Tuesday in the capital.

The Maoists have not returned property they seized and have refused to allow party workers back to their villages. "In several places, our cadres have been constantly bullied and threatened by local Maoist cadre who are also not ready to return the property looted in the past even of poor people," said Pradeep Nepal of the UML, who has been sharply critical of Maoist behaviour.

But citizens groups claim that the situation is not so dire as to jeopardise the understanding between the parties and the Maoists.

"There is no misunderstanding at all but merely an internal competition

## South African model

So far, the South African model for a constituent assembly seems to fit the Nepali situation best. Seats in this type of assembly are elected by a system of proportional representation and allocated on the basis of the percentage of votes that each party gets. Each party appearing on the ballot will submit a rank-ordered list of candidates.

The assembly will then replace the parliament and have the dual role of framing a new constitution and governing the country until a government is formed.

"We have to decide on three crucial things: methods of representation, electoral areas to be determined and methods of election," explains Bhimarjun Acharya, a constitutional lawyer working on proposals for the best model of a constituent assembly.

"If we go by general parliamentary election style, there will definitely be a tussle for power," explains Acharya.

So far, the parties and the Maoists are reported to be positive about the South African model and indigenous groups are also said to be onboard. "There should be proportional representation by 50 percent women candidates and 38 percent *adivasis* without any conditions," says Malla K Sundar, president of the Newar National Organisation.

But people we talked to caution it shouldn't be done in a hurry like the interim constitution. South Africa took five years to pass its new constitution.

between the eight parties," said political analyst Krishna Khanal.

Both the parties and Maoists are disseminating their own propaganda and naturally there are differences in opinions.

In addition, the party cadres are not really going to the people in the remote villages so it is a false claim that the Maoists are posing a threat to them.

Maoist leaders say the peace process is moving too slowly and the government is dragging its feet on the setting up of an interim government but the parties say the pace is more than

expected. At a time when both sides are supposed to focus on the key issue of making a clear road map and finalising the modalities of a constituent assembly election, there has been little homework (*see box*).

Women's groups are enraged that there are no women in the committee made up to draft an interim constitution. Party leaders, even from within the cabinet, have started to criticise both the government and the Maoists for rushing to dissolve parliament and go for the interim constitution. ●

# Gross national distress

However much it tries, Bhutan will never be able to brush its refugee crisis under the carpet

In the late 1980s, King Jigme Singye Wangchuck decreed that Gross National Happiness (GNH) was more important to his country than Gross National Product (GNP).

He then promptly started evicting Nepali-speaking Lhotsampas in a ruthless campaign that can only be described as ethnic cleansing. So far, because of complicit India and the international community, he has got away with it.

His regime has used every trick in the book of predatory diplomacy to detract international attention from the very existence of the refugees—more than 110,000 of its citizens in makeshift camps in eastern Nepal. This glossy *bhutan national human development report 2005* (lower case from the original) pretends the refugees don't even exist. Which is quite convenient because if you reduce your population by one-sixth, obviously your per capita parameters suddenly look much rosier.

Like its celebrated postage-stamps, publications of the Royal Government of Bhutan are meant for display. This report is not an exception. It is crafted, designed, and produced in bleached chlorinated paper to impress. The text bristles with contemporary catch phrases: environmental sustainability, good governance, cultural heritage. But like all police states, the more the regime tries to convince readers that the government is doing great, the more you doubt its real intentions.

Bhutan has notched notable successes in rural development, hydropower, package tourism and public health. It is the only country so far to have become tobacco-free



KIRAN PANDAY

by government edict. Aidocrats and journalists extol the virtues of this virgin land. Learning from their hosts, they love to say how great Bhutan is by pointing out what a mess Nepal is. The hypocrisy of New Delhi-based diplomats is breathtaking: they will not tolerate dictatorship, press curbs, ethnic cleansing or chauvinistic politics anywhere else in the world. But because Bhutan is so cute, it's ok.

To get the true picture of Bhutan, you have to visit the camps in Jhapa or spend time with the refugees camped out last week at the UN in Kathmandu. Just as North Korea has the Juche Idea, Bhutan has GNH. It comes out of the same dangerous ideology that sees itself as a superior and

somewhat special race.

Compared to the dispirited diplomacy of poor democracies, dictators in the Third World manage to attract the best and brightest to push their agenda. Democracy is defined by private sector excellence and public sector mediocrity. It's the other way round in well-entrenched autocracies where a combination of hope and fear keeps some outstanding professionals tied with the regime. The Bhutani government has managed to project itself as the *likely* victim and has succeeded in hiding its crime against humanity of evicting over one-sixth of its population.

Instead of working for resettlement of Lhotsampas in their homeland, even international bureaucrats have now begun

to let Thimphu scot free by resettling them in third countries. As Tek Nath Rijal, the indomitable Bhutani freedom fighter rightly insists, such a move is tantamount to surrender and will imperil other minority communities in similar situations elsewhere.

The NHD Report 2005 needs to be read as an account of potential rather than the reality of a country that wants the world to see it in soft focus with rose-tinted glasses. If an honourable settlement of the refugee issue is made, Bhutan still has the prospect of emerging as an inclusive and prosperous nation. If it doesn't, King Jigme will go down in history as someone who needlessly alienated a large segment of his people because of racial paranoia.

On 20 June when the rest of the world was celebrating Refugee Day the Lhotsampa in Nepal marked their 14th year away from their country and yet another Black Day in their unending saga of displacement and despair. ●

CK Lal



*bhutan national human development report 2005*  
ISBN 99936-675-0-1  
Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimpu





**JOSH LUSTIG** in DANG

As the bus hurtled down the East-West Highway I tried desperately to apply some semblance of order to my racing thoughts. As we entered Rapti Zone and passed the barren landscape of the inner tarai, involuntary memories swarmed around my head. The scent of ripening mangos and the luminous green of the rice fields. Suddenly the name of the eldest daughter of the family that I lived with, a name I had been trying to remember ever since arriving again in Nepal, came back to me: Sumila. Images and feelings long dormant came back to life.

Dang is not the first place that comes to most people's mind when they think of Nepal. It has been a Maoist stronghold and Ghorahi was the first place where the Maoists attacked the army in November 2001.

That was when I was here last, volunteering with Student Partnership Worldwide teaching English and environmental education. The people and culture of this part of the country would leave an indelible impression on me. The family that I lived with for five months and the school and community in which I worked, are what brought me back.

After three years of university and two years struggling in London as a freelance photographer, I've finally made it back to Dang. Back to the heat and the parched terrain, back to the vibrant colours and the most generous people on the planet.

I didn't know what to expect as the bus pulled into Ghorahi. As I checked into my room at the Rapti Super Lodge, I was both relieved and a little disappointed to find it in the same state as when I used to stay here occasionally five years ago. My room is like a sauna, fully equipped with a painfully slow-moving fan whose motor generates more heat than the cooling power of the blades.

About 20 minutes out of Ghorahi is the Tharu community of Syani Ammapur. The Tharus are landless, and looked down upon by neighbouring communities. When I ask Geg Bahadur Thapa, the community leader, to tell me about the problems the families here face everyone laughs. "We have all the problems," he says, "We have no water, no toilet, not enough food to eat, none to sell, we cannot clothe ourselves or our children and we cannot send them to school."

The adults are uneducated but acutely aware of the need for education. The thought that their children will be no better off than

them is clearly very painful. I ask them about the Maoists. These are the people, after all, that the Maoists are fighting for. I am met with a surly silence and some harsh looks. "We don't know anything about the Maoists," says Geg Bahadur.

Five years ago I had stumbled across a Maoist meeting and was forced to stay there all day in case I notified the

authorities. Nowadays in Dang you don't stumble upon a Maoist meeting, you follow crowds of thousands. On the third day of my stay last month, the Maoists held a program attended by up to 200,000 people.

I ask some of the young people there what their feelings are towards the Maoists and am met with surprising indifference. "We are here because it's

# In search of lost time

## "My heart belongs to Dang"

something to do," says 23-year-old Raju Panthi. "I don't support everything that the Maoists say, but at least they are saying something," he adds. Sankalp from Ghorahi refused to come with me to the rally and is far less enthusiastic. "I hate them," he says, "they are terrorists. They have done nothing good for our people, only killed them."

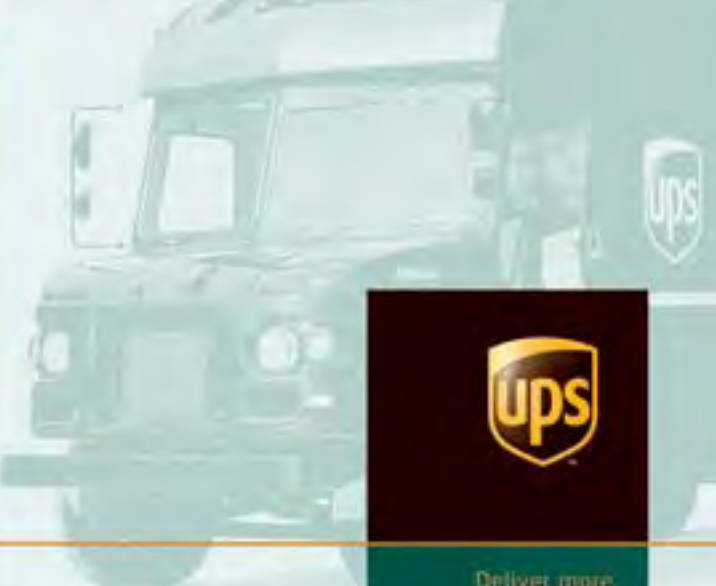


I wish I could say that loktantra has brought new hope to the people of Dang. But I couldn't see it. All the people I spoke to gave me a funny smile when I suggested that things now are really going to change. The young people especially seemed sceptical, with no faith in their politicians or the mechanics of

democracy. Older businessmen also didn't foresee things changing for the better. Everyone is focused on the here-and-now, deeply suspicious of anything the Maoists have to say.

Seeing the family I lived with again and visiting the school that I taught at after so many years brought back a whole string of highly charged feelings. The vibrancy, warmth and generosity of both the people and the place have stayed the same.

The mountains are what bring people to Nepal and I love the mountains. They are where my head belongs. But my heart? My heart belongs to Dang. ●


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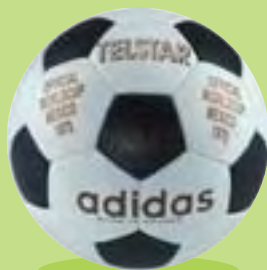


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Despite the goalies' grumbles, the new Adidas world Cup ball is setting new sales records

# Having a ball at



**Alice Rawsthorn**

Things did not bode well. The German goalkeeper Jens Lehmann complained it was 'unpredictable'. His counterpart from England's team, Paul Robinson, dismissed it as 'goalkeeper unfriendly'. Brazil's strikers found it so tricky that they scheduled extra training sessions. Even before the World Cup had started, players were

voicing concerns about the official ball, Adidas's multimillion dollar +Teamgeist.

Burdened by a pompous name (the German word for team spirit) with a silly + as a prefix and Adidas's lofty claims that it was the smoothest, roundest and most accurate soccer ball ever, the +Teamgeist seemed set to become the joke of the 2006 World Cup. Its prospects were not helped by the fact that many of the

correspondents flocking to Germany remembered that Adidas made startlingly similar statements four years ago when it unveiled the Fevertova ball for the 2002 tournament.

How has the +Teamgeist performed since the World Cup started? Is it living up to Adidas's claims? Goalies are still grumbling but to the surprise of cynics, the new ball does seem to be livening up the game.

"It's always tempting to dismiss innovations in ball design as marketing hype but this one is creating more excitement," said Jack Huckel, director of museum and archives at the National Soccer Hall of Fame in Oneonta, New York. "It can be shot from longer distances with greater impact and bent at greater speed. You see it exploding off the players' feet. As a former goalkeeper, I understand why they don't like it."

The commercial importance of the World Cup ball to Adidas is obvious. Adidas pays millions of dollars to be the official ball supplier to the World Cup in the hope of creating a bestseller. Having sold a record six million of the Fevertova ball of 2002, it

has even higher expectations of the +Teamgeist.

It is harder to understand why designing a soccer ball should be so daunting. After all, it is a ball. How hard can it be to design a round object of a specific size and weight? The challenge is to produce a ball in so robust a form that it enhances, rather than inhibits, the quality of play by behaving in exactly the same way wherever and whenever it is kicked.

From the late 1800s to 1970, soccer balls consisted of 18 hand-stitched brown leather panels. During the 1966 World Cup, viewers complained they could not follow the ball on their black-and-white television screens, and FIFA commissioned Adidas to design a television-friendly alternative. The result was the Telstar with 32 leather panels - 12 black pentagons and 20 white hexagons. Launched at the 1970 World Cup in Mexico, it has been the default design for soccer balls ever since.

"After so many years of 32 panels, we decided to try something completely different for 2006, and chose a 14-panel structure," said Hans-Peter

Nürnberg, who led the +Teamgeist design team for Adidas as senior development engineer.

The new ball has two layers, inner and outer, with a new thermal bonding technology used to create a seamless surface. Adidas's rationale is that this makes the ball more consistent because the impact of the player's foot will be the same wherever it strikes the surface. As there are no seams, the ball does not absorb moisture during the game and thereby stays the same weight.

Adidas subjected the +Teamgeist to intensive laboratory and field tests before putting the ball into production last July. Nürnberg said it exceeded expectations in the tests, which included repeated kicking by a robotic leg to replicate the 2,000 kicks it would endure in a typical World Cup match and rotating the ball 250 times under water. Even so, the toughest test for a soccer ball is its performance in a match.

After the first stage of the World Cup, observers are convinced that the +Teamgeist can be kicked more powerfully from longer distances. Similarly, the swerve of the ball is

## World Cup watchers revolt

Citizens are finding innovative ways to bypass FIFA's tv monopoly

**Ahmad Humeid**  
in JORDAN

The 2006 World Cup in Germany is the first time that people in the Arab world have felt the overwhelming power of FIFA and its absolute control of tv images from the world's greatest sporting event.

Want to watch the World Cup? Then you'd better pay something like \$300 to get a satellite dish and receiver from the Arab Radio and tv Network (ART). And you can't just buy a month's access to watch the games. You'll have to get a full year of access to ART's 'bouquet' of channels whether you want it or not.

In a country like Jordan, where many people are barely able to make ends meet, charging them to watch their favorite global sporting event has created a lot of bitterness. That's why King Abdullah ordered the setting up of 30 public viewing screens across the country for people who cannot afford PayTV.



Those screens are not the only solution. Many Jordanians have become experts in satellite receiver hacking. Everyone, including the country's top cartoonist Hajjaj, is talking about breaking the codes for certain European satellite channels. Even with the codes changing daily, people are flocking to the

internet where they find satellite hacker forums that provide the latest codes.

In Palestine, local TV channels are re-broadcasting the games on terrestrial waves. ART has assured these broadcasters that they will not be sued. Amongst all the negativity directed at ART, the company's tolerance of the Palestinian

TV stations' 'piracy' of their broadcasts was a good PR move.

On the popular Arab news channel *Al Arabiyah*, only freeze frames of the games are being shown during sports news bulletins.

Normal people using the net to hack satellite feeds is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to what people can do to circumvent the monopolistic powers of mainstream media. User generated content in the form of pictures and videos shared on the web is starting to become a more visible media byproduct of the tournament.

I can easily imagine a situation in the near future where people in the stadium would be shooting the live event with their camera phones and 'webcasting' them to friends, family or even a wider audience. Of course such video stream would be no match for the 'official' professional, multi-angle, professionally directed video. But in an age where the organisers of major, popular, global events are so aggressive in protecting their broadcasts, this form of citizen media might become a viable alternative.

Traditional media companies will not disappear overnight because of the power of people to generate content. But user-generated content is a factor that no one can afford to ignore anymore. ●

Excerpted from Ahmad Humeid's weblog



1994

1998

2002

2006



the World Cup



**BALLS THROUGH THE AGES:** During the 1966 World Cup, viewers complained they could not follow the ball on their black-and-white television screens, and FIFA commissioned Adidas to design a television-friendly alternative. The result was the Telstar with 32 leather panels: 12 black pentagons and 20 white hexagons. Launched at the 1970 World Cup in Mexico, it has been the default design for soccer balls ever since. The 2006 ball (left) has two layers, inner and outer, with a new thermal bonding technology used to create a seamless surface.

accentuated as it bends to the left or right. “The bend is more dramatic,” affirmed David James of Sheffield Hallam University’s sports engineering department. “This ball is great for players like David Beckham, at least it should be.” Another factor, analyzed by his colleagues, is the +Teamgeist’s tendency to swerve from side to side before hitting the back of the net when it is kicked straight without spin.

All of this makes life tougher for goalkeepers, as they face stronger shots and unexpected swerves. As matches progress, these problems are aggravated by

the +Teamgeist’s lightness, which makes it harder to catch. “It’s so light that it slips out of your hands,” Huckel noted.

The +Teamgeist also has a tendency to confuse goalies by wavering as it hurtles towards them. James attributes this to the aerodynamic complexity of its shape. “We’re at the cutting edge of science here because we understand more about the aerodynamics of airplanes and Formula One cars than of spheres,” he said. “A perfect sphere moves through the air with considerable difficulty, which is why sports balls tend to

have rough surfaces. The felt on tennis balls and dimples on golf balls improves their aerodynamics and helps them to move faster.”

Despite the goalies’ grumbles, the +Teamgeist has proved even more popular than Adidas expected, setting a new sales record of 15 million balls so far. Nürnberg’s design team is already working on its successor. “We need to erase the imperfections in its structure,” he said. “Although we can’t expect to produce something as revolutionary as the +Teamgeist for every World Cup.” ●

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# Starry-eyed

## Learning the night sky is just like getting to know a new city

If you are new to astronomy, perhaps one of the most difficult and daunting parts about beginning is learning all those stars. Relax! It’s a lot easier than you think. Just like moving to a new city, everything will be unfamiliar at first but with a little help from some maps, you’ll soon be finding your way around like a pro. Once you become familiar with the constellations and how they appear to move across the night sky, the rest is easy.

STAR GAZING

Kedar S Badu



And what better time to learn it than in the monsoon. It may be usually cloudy, but clear monsoon nights are dust-free and clear enough to see the

milky way if you’re lucky. Anyone even vaguely interested in the night sky should own a pair of binoculars. While they will never reveal the heavens in quite as much detail as even a small telescope, their availability, ease of use and portability make them the perfect night sky companion.

Now is the perfect time to try out those new binoculars because as if to celebrate the change of the seasons, four of our solar system’s bright planets are putting on a parade at dusk during the last week of June. One of them — giant Jupiter — gleams brilliantly overhead as it gets dark. You can’t miss it; it’s the brightest point of light in the sky these evenings. You might easily overlook the other three worlds — Mercury, Mars, and Saturn — which are much fainter and setting in the west during twilight. Thankfully the waxing crescent Moon comes to the rescue, pointing the way to the planetary trio. And your eyes are all you need to enjoy the spectacle — no telescope required!

Mars currently shares Cancer with Saturn. Hope you enjoyed the **Mars-Saturn conjunction** in mid June as Mars approached very close to the ringed-planet.



Among constellations, Scorpius is now highest near the end of evening twilight. This magnificent constellation is a favourite of serious sky watchers. You might wish to see the bright reddish star Antares at the heart of the scorpion. Another prominent star, Spica, of the constellation Virgo, lies close to an imaginary line through the zodiac known as the ecliptic which represents the plane of the Earth’s orbit projected against the stars.

Late July, after evening twilight, the Milky Way Galaxy bubbles up from the southern horizon, traverses high across the eastern sky and dips down in the north. Look south and you stare into the Sagittarius Spiral Arm and the centre of our galaxy.



Don’t Miss the Great Hercules Star Cluster (M13) through binoculars on 29 July after the moon sets.

### Other July highlights:

- The Sun & the Earth:** The Sun is in the constellation of Gemini at the start of July, moving into Cancer on the 20th. On 4 July, Earth reaches aphelion, ie, the point farthest from the Sun, at about 94,512,000 miles. If you still hold the notion that summer occurs because the sun is closest to us, this is the perfect occasion to revise that idea.
- Mercury:** Mercury is moving closer to the Sun and on 18 July it will go through inferior conjunction (in front of the Sun) to become a morning object, visible early August.
- Venus:** Venus is a brilliant morning star, coming up about two hours before sunrise. It is easy to pick out even in the dawn twilight.
- Mars:** Mars may be seen low in the western sky at sunset but it slips steadily downwards into the evening twilight.
- Jupiter:** The giant planet Jupiter is overhead at dusk and sets after midnight. On 5 July, the gibbous Moon will appear directly below Jupiter.
- Saturn:** Saturn is almost behind the Sun, and won’t be visible this month.
- Meteors:** For meteor enthusiasts, the Delta Aquarid meteor shower reaches its peak on 29 July, producing a meteor every 4 or 5 minutes on average. But its peak is broad, lasting a week or so and overlapping with the beginning of the well-known Perseid shower.



“Criminals are exploiting football fans in the most despicable way and we urge all travelling fans to learn how to spot a fake ticket, then get the police involved immediately” - FIFA



KE GARNE? WHATEVER. But be careful of wolves wearing sheepskin. "Some people believe football is a matter of life and death. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that." -- Bill Shankly, Manchester United Coach, considered one of football's greatest managers. NEXT CHANGE: Enter Herojig's World Cup Lottery! Chance to win fake VISA and fake TICKETS to see Germany beat Brazil in the Final Game on July 9th - all expenses paid to Berlin. #129- © 2063 by jigme gaton - read. love. write.


ABOUT TOWN

- EXHIBITIONS**
- ❖ **Journey to Nan Guinin** by Krishna Thing and Siddhant Thapa from 27 June at Gallery Nine, Lajimpat. 4428694
  - ❖ **Sarangi Exhibition** by master Sarangi maker Purna Nepali 28 June- 4 July at Arto Muse Creation, Putalisadak.
  - ❖ **Pillars of Hope** paintings by Gobinda Prasad Sah 'Azad' at Siddhartha Art Gallery 30 June- 20 July. 4218018
  - ❖ **Innovative Art** by Sri Lankan painter Deneth at New Orleans Café, Thamel. 8-20 July. 9803002631
  - ❖ **Bagmati River** a photo exhibition at Gallery Café, Lajimpat till 11 July.
- EVENTS**
- ❖ **Movies** at Gallery Café, Lajimpat, Oliver Twist 4 July and The Curse of the Were Rabbit 6 July.
  - ❖ **Japanese Tanabata (Wish ) Festival** food, activities for the kids, live music and more at U Café, 2 July, 12PM. 5524202
  - ❖ **Soccer Night** partying the football way at Megha Malhar, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 7 July 7.30 PM
  - ❖ **World Population Day** 11 July.
  - ❖ **Travelling Film South Asia '06, Kathmandu** fifteen outstanding documentaries from the Subcontinent, 14-16 July at Yalamaya Kendra, Patan Dhoka. 5537408
  - ❖ **World Cup Action** at Soaltee Crowne Plaza, Rodi bar 9 June- 9 July. 4273999
  - ❖ **Bagmati River Festival** till 20 August. 5011013
  - ❖ **Sunsilk Nepal Fashion Week** at Hyatt Regency 10-14 August.
  - ❖ **Alcoholics Anonymous** problems with alcohol? 9851016079
- MUSIC**
- ❖ **Heartbreakers** live every Friday at Rum Doodle Bar & Restaurant
  - ❖ **Cadenza Collective** live every Wednesday and Saturday 8PM at Upstairs, Lazimpat.
  - ❖ **Live Music** at New Orleans Café. 4700311
  - ❖ **Uncork the good times** with Ciney and Par-e-jat playing every Friday from 7PM o at Fusion bar at Dwarika's Hotel. 4479448
  - ❖ **Jatra Friday** nights, live music by Siron. 4256622
  - ❖ **Unplugged** sessions with Strings, Jatra Saturday nights. 4256622
- DINING**
- ❖ **Floats and Fantasies** mocktails and desserts at Juneli Bar till 24 June.
  - ❖ **Brunch from the east** weekend brunch till 29 July.
  - ❖ **World Cup at K-too!** All matches available and a free Irish coffee with every main course. 4470043
  - ❖ **Mezza and Margarita** at Dwarika's Fusion- the bar every Wednesday, Rs 555
  - ❖ **Mango Masti** at all restaurants in Soaltee Crowne Plaza. 4273999
  - ❖ **Wet & Wild Summer Splash** at Godavari Village Resort, a special package of Swimming & Lunch. 5560675
  - ❖ **Breakfast** at Singma Restaurant. 8.30 – 11.00AM daily. 5009092.
- GETAWAYS**
- ❖ **Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge**, relaxation and massages in Pokhara. 4361500
  - ❖ **Junglewalks** rafting, elephant rides all at Jungle Base Camp Lodge, Bardia. junglebasecamp@yahoo.com
  - ❖ **Park Village**, Budhanilkantha, Full room Rs 1,600. 4375280
  - ❖ **Nature Retreat** at Park Village Resorts & Spa. 4375280
  - ❖ **Escape Kathmandu** at Shivapuri Heights Cottage. 9841371927

**Quest Entertainment**

Sean Boswell is a loner whose only connection to the world around him is through illegal street racing — which has made him unpopular with the local authorities. To avoid jail time, Sean is sent out of the country to live in a cramped apartment in a low-rent section of Tokyo. There a simple street race has been replaced with drift racing, a deadly combination of brutal speed on heart stopping courses of hairpin turns and switchbacks. For his first unsuccessful foray in drift racing, Sean unknowingly takes on the 'Drift King,' with ties to the Yakuza, the Japanese crime machine. The only way he can pay off the debt of his loss is to venture into the deadly realm of the Tokyo underworld.

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**NEPALI WEATHER** by MAUSAM BEED



Looking at this satellite picture of the subcontinent taken on Wednesday afternoon, it is clear that the monsoon is now clearly established across the region. This week Kathmandu got as much rain as the whole monthly quota, so the rain gods are making up for lost time. The Bay of Bengal arm of southwest monsoon is now mature and strong. The pressure gradient chart confirms a line of trough in place along the southern Himalaya and implies that the country is getting a substantial amount of rainfall this weekend, mostly during night. This system has several monsoon pulses that could bring cloud bursts along the foothills.

**KATHMANDU VALLEY**

Fri ☀️☁️ 29-19	Sat ☀️☁️ 28-18	Sun ☀️☁️ 29-19	Mon ☀️☁️ 30-20	Tue ☀️☁️ 30-20
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नेपाल कृषिप्रधान मुलुक हो ।  
यहाँका ८० प्रतिशतभन्दा बढी जनता कृषि पेसामा आधारित छन् । कूल राष्ट्रिय आयको झन्डै ४० प्रतिशत हिस्सा अहिले पनि कृषि क्षेत्रले नै ओगटेको छ । सिङ्गो मुलुकको आर्थिक, सामाजिक मेरुदण्डको रुपमा रहेको कृषिक्षेत्र उपेक्षित हुनु हुँदैन । कृषकहरू देशका वास्तविक नायक हुन् । उनीहरूलाई सम्मान र कदर गर्नुपर्छ । कृषकहरूले पनि आफ्नो पसिनामाथि विश्वास गर्नुपर्छ । नयाँ नयाँ कृषि प्रणाली अवलम्बन गर्नुपर्छ । पढ्दैमा खेती गर्नु नहुने होइन । कृषिक्षेत्रलाई आधुनिकीकरण गर्न शिक्षित र सचेत कृषकको खाचो छ । त्यसैले कृषि पेसालाई आदर गरौं, कृषकलाई सम्मान गरौं ।

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KIRAN PANDAY

TO HIS MEMORY: Deputy Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli gets refreshed during a program at City Hall to mark the fifth anniversary of the Madan Bhandari College on Wednesday.



KIRAN PANDAY

SHOOT IT LIKE THIS: Singer Ani Choying Dolma poses for a picture during the release of her new album *Inner Peace* at Everest Hotel on Tuesday. Proceeds will go to the Nuns Welfare Foundation of Nepal's Arya Tara School.



KIRAN PANDAY

LADIES ON THE TOWN: Sneha Rana chats (left) with two of her friends at the Midnight Ruby Ladies Night at the Radisson Hotel on Wednesday.



KIRAN PANDAY

RIDING THE WAVE: The Media team poses with the Wave Kickoff Cup after defeating the Celebrity team 7-4 at their match at Dashrat Stadium on Saturday. Funds raised were donated to Mayadebi Orphanage.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

# A school for Kristi

On 22 August 2002, 19 people died when a Twin Otter flight from Jomsom with 16 German tourists on board crashed just before landing near Pokhara airport. Among the dead were Renate Rockstroh and her husband Rainer, both teachers and on their first trip to Nepal. Renate's brother Marcos travelled here to take home the bodies and met Pokhara tourism entrepreneur Laxman Subedi. The two discussed ways to commemorate the deaths and lives, of the Rockstrohs and thought of helping the local community in the village of Kristi where the crash took place. Marcos went back to Germany and threw around some ideas with friends, including Rolf Schmelzer,

a German journalist who has been visiting Nepal for the past 15 years. They decided to combine a memorial for the victims with a long-term project to help the village. Subedi contacted the villagers of Kristi to find out what they needed the most. Although it is five km outside Pokhara with stunning views of the city below and the Annapurnas beyond, the road to Kristi is rough and it's common to see locals pushing and pulling stuck vehicles out of giant potholes or from the river bed. Kristi's 5,000 inhabitants are a self-sufficient lot with a relatively high standard of living because of cash crops like oranges. They willingly embrace new ideas and many have biogas to fuel

their kitchens. In the end, the villagers decided what they needed was a primary school so their children would no longer have to make a two hour roundtrip every day. The Social English School opened in 2002 with 15 students and now counts 111 pupils up to Class 3. One of its buildings is the Gunter Hauser Memorial School Building, supported by Dentists Without Limits and German journalists led by Schmelzer who visit Kristi every year. "The people are very happy with the school and with the help they get from the Germans every year," says Subedi, "they never expected that sometimes such a good thing come out of such a horrible tragedy." ● Min Bajracharya

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# 2050 World Cup in Kathmandu

Given the rapid pace of renovation and beautification taking place in the nation’s capital these days, we can be fairly certain that Nepal can make a successful bid to host the 2050 Football World Cup.

One of the most important criteria that FIFA attaches to cities applying to organise the games is whether or not the host metropolis is self-sufficient in crazy hats. And as the world’s major supplier of lunatic hats for the last three World Cups, the city has assured FIFA’s Site Selection Committee that there is no danger of Kathmandu running out of headgear in the run-up to the 2050 games. There is, however, one small problem: Nepal may cease to exist by then. But we’ll cross that bridge when we get to it.

So that just leaves us with the knotty question of ensuring that the multi-billion rupee Tinkune Intersection Reconstruction Project will see completion by January 2050. The Transportation Sub-Committee of the World Cup Organising Central Committee (Unfed Marxist-Leninist-

Stalinist) is optimistic that this should be possible, given the breakneck speed at which the Metropolitan Authorities are turning the intersection into a lake during this current monsoon



season. It should be able to accumulate enough water by 2050, it is hoped.

Similarly, Rani Pokhari, Ratna Park and the Khula Munch are being unified into a single park-cum-parking lot to accommodate World Cup fans. Since pedestrians have refused to use both the overhead walkway and the underground passageway at Asan intersection, Kathmandu Metropolitan City will put up a booby-trapped barbed wire fence so no pedestrian from Bag Bajar can cross the road to Asan and vice versa. The work is expected to be completed in the next 44 years.

According to a timetable made available to mediapersons this week, potholes of diameter 1m and more along Sat Dobato, Balkhu, Lajimpat, Jorpati and Bhaisepati are scheduled for repairs by 2010. All zebra crossings will be repainted by 2025, field trials and simulation exercises to untangle gridlocks at major bottlenecks are expected to be completed in late 2032 and the traffic light synchronisation will go into effect by 2049 in time for the big event.

Asked if Nepal had enough stadiums for the qualifying and knockout rounds of the 2050 games the Organising Committee said: “Ummm, hadn’t thought of that. But we’ll have plenty of pubs and they’ll be allowed to remain open after 10PM.”

Kathmandu and Patan have traditionally had healthy competition ever since the Malla period when the two kingdoms fought vicious wars over which one had tastier buff momos. Today, this competition is manifested in the way in which the Patan Sub-Municipality has made sure that not a single halogen street lamp installed during the 2000 SAARC Summit is in working condition. And once Kathmandu Metropolitan City found out that Patan streets were dark, it decided to be one up by switching off all street lights between Babar Mahal and Min Bhaban until further notice.

This sense of camaraderie and healthy competition will be carried into the World Cup when Patan co-hosts the 2050 games by which time, the mayor’s office has assured us, tree stumps along Pulchok will be finally removed and replaced with hoarding boards. Going by the speed of past reconstruction, we have no reason to doubt that the work will be completed in time. ●

#98