The long queues at gas stations are a sure sign this country is broke.

Bankrupt

DAMBAR K SHRISTA

The long queues at gas stations in the capital this week mean only one thing: this country is bankrupt.

The latest crisis has been sparked off by Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) not having the money to pay for this month’s import of oil from India. It has stocks to last just two more days.

Thursday’s eight-party meeting is being held to decide on a date for the postponed constituent assembly elections. But the politicians should first figure out a way to resume imports.

“We’ve always sold low and bought high, and that’s no way to run a business,” says NOC spokesman Ichchha B Thapa, “either the government allows us to raise fuel prices or it pays Indian Oil. There is no other solution to this.”

Street protests last August forced the government to backtrack on a price hike. Ever since, NOC has amassed nearly Rs 6 billion in debt. Now, Indian Oil has refused to ship more oil unless it receives Rs 150 million a month. Indian Oil has been cutting back on supplies by 30 percent in past months to prod the NOC to clear its dues.

“The Petroleum Dealers’ Association says private pumps have not got supplies since Tuesday. “We’ll keep having these shortages until the government pays India,” says Sharad Bhandari of the dealers’ association. “And for that, the eight parties need to take a quick decision.”

There are long queues at government gas stations, and private pumps have run out of fuel.

NOC’s losses total Rs 250 million a month and there is rampant smuggling of petrol back into India because of a Rs 7 per litre price differential. In the short term there doesn’t seem to be any alternative but to raise gas prices, but this is a hot potato no politician wants to touch.

In the long term, given Nepal’s heavy dependence on imported oil and air pollution problems, there must be a move towards electric vehicles, says JA Goff at the renewable energy group Eco-Visions in Kathmandu. “It would be prudent for the government of Nepal to eliminate all import duties and taxes on electric vehicles like it did with Safa tempos,” he says.

For example, Japan has no tax on electric cars and instead offers a $2,500 rebate per electric car, which the country fully recoups in saved fuel bills and pollution reduction.
It was clear from the very outset that mainstreaming the Maoists wasn't going to be an easy task. For the Maoists as well as for the rest of the country. Every conflict leaves a legacy of bad blood and scores are settled. The Northern Ireland peace process took more than a decade to get over entrenched hostility finally agree on power sharing this week, Sri Lanka has slipped back into war after three years of ceasefire. Often in the past year's rollercoaster peace process we in Nepal have pushed to the brink. Maoist negotiators used the threat of a return to war as an effective bargaining tool in negotiations. The country is in a financial mess and there is a need for peace. But, such was our desire to see an end to conflict, that we went along with it. Hoped on three factors: Indian facilitation, UN monitoring and the watchdog role of civil society. And all had this to be a careful sequencing so that neither the Maoists nor the army generado it was a surrender. Pushpa Kamal Dahal has had to do a precarious high-wire act: balancing the fluctuations of the fighters' need to appear like a mature mainstream politician. Of all the leaders in the Group of Eight, Koirala is the most powerful. As the Eight meet this week, they should be reminding themselves that this is not about just the mechanics of conducting elections anymore. It is about how to address the ethnic fragmentation threatening us in the aftermath of the insurgency. Despite VCL guerrillas-in-civvies roughing up someone or criminal standards attacking someone or the Dahal is the moderate in this process. We need to help him conduct his hotheads in check and try to understand it when he completely contradicts himself from one day to the next. Last week in Dang, Baburam Bhattarai was heckled by his own party members who wanted to hang on to confined property. Now there are grumblings within the Maoists about the Dahal's formless leadership. The system of leaders who rose at an impending implication in the Maoist party have only to see what happened when the faro factions splintered off. The casualties of Dahals balancing act may be the two sharp corners on the Maoist map. The NC has been the main enemy of the Maoists and the Maoists have modernised the country in the context of the international Left. To lay the Preconditions for the second round of verification and for continued violence and intimidation, the Maoists crossed a threshold. It could have serious repercussions for the comrades and for the peace process. We as a nation need to be sensitised about the sources of the Maoists, the Maoists want an external enemy. So if it is the Maoists that seek power, it is a matter of republicanism, the reinstatement of the 'expansionist power label on India. But most of Nepal's coalitions are going to keep a part on the part of a force that operated out of Indian territory until recently. Then there are grumblings within the Maoists about the Dahal-Bhattarai stalemate and the status of the peace talks. The most of the coalitions have alienated just about everyone. Peaceful politics requires a certain level of maturity and tolerance. The Maoist leadership must do all it can to prevent the derailment of the peace train. This time they are its fellow passengers. This marriage of convenience between the Maoists and the NC could be more than that. Basically, Girija Prasad Koirala told his colleagues that the Maoists are its fellow passengers. Peaceful politics requires a certain level of maturity and tolerance. The Maoist leadership must do all it can to prevent the derailment of the peace train. This time they are its fellow passengers.

Koirala is stuck between royalists and his own party's republicans

There were no surprises at the four day-long conclaves of the Nepali Congress district unit chiefs. With no clear direction from the central leadership on republicanism, inclusion and socialism, this all in a year and a half, Nepal is going back home more confused than ever. Basically, Girija Prasad Koirala told his colleagues that the Maoists are its fellow passengers. Peaceful politics requires a certain level of maturity and tolerance. The Maoist leadership must do all it can to prevent the derailment of the peace train. This time they are its fellow passengers. This marriage of convenience between the Maoists and the NC could be more than that. Basically, Girija Prasad Koirala told his colleagues that the Maoists are its fellow passengers. Peaceful politics requires a certain level of maturity and tolerance. The Maoist leadership must do all it can to prevent the derailment of the peace train. This time they are its fellow passengers.
## LETTERS

**SPOT ON**

Kunda Dixit is right (‘On your marks’, #347). It’s high time politicians became responsible citizens and thought twice about throwing any old political agenda at their cadres. The Maoists are behaving like bullies. Sitaula did his job well as long as it was the Maoists who were the issue. That’s changed, and he needs to reconsider his position. As for grandpa, he has to show his commitment to at least democracy, if not... Sanjosth Dhungana, email

**MAVERICK**

It was wonderful to see CK Lal writing on a business personality (‘Death of a maverick’, State of the state, #347). Such pieces are encouraging and break the monotonous cycle of politics and dwelling on all the bad things around us. I would love to see more positive and business-centric news. I enjoyed the thought provoking article on currency pegging (‘Economy’s up’, Economic sense), and the interview with Vijay Vaidya (‘Business hasn’t grown as expected’). Thanks for brightening our Friday mornings.

Prakash Sharma, email

**TARAI TERROR**

Ajit Tiwari’s ‘Terror in the tarai’ (#347) was heartrending. One can only imagine how much worse the situation will become if it is not addressed promptly. Ethnic violence will destroy the harmony and dignity of the Nepali people. It’s a time for politicians to put this on top of their priority list, instead of the time-frame to the elections to the constituent assembly. That is by no means feasible in places where the government cannot even provide security or much-needed services like post offices, municipalities, and hospitals.

Sanjeev Karmacharya, Khusibun

**TOGETHERNESS**

Charles Havidan’s ‘Let’s stay together’ (Nepali pan, #346) is one of the best articles I’ve read in recent years. I hope its message reaches out and enlightens the country.

Udaya Kasaju, email

**SELF DEFENSE**

I agree with M Gurung’s comment that law and order in Nepal is at its lowest ebb and that no private citizen should have to resort to forming ‘neighbourhood police’ groups to protect their communities (‘Law and order’, letters, #347). But I think it is gravely injudicious to undermine patrol groups and to characterise them as an omnipotent and offensive ‘police force’, rather than a passive defensive force, as most ‘citizen’s security’ groups can be characterised. The 25’th May activities may well be an example of this.

Prasanna KC, Pokhara

**ASININE**

There might not be a Deep Throat at all (‘May Day! May Day!’, Ass, #347). For all we know what’s coming out of the palace could be information that is being intentionally leaked (for what purpose, don’t ask me). Ever heard of the term ‘disinformation’? I think we can be so sure that the ‘decent law-abiding citizens’ Gurung mentions are not compelled to resort to forming ‘neighbourhood police’ groups to protect themselves from the YCL? There’s a thought.

Chanda T, email

**THE ASS AT BACKSIDE**

It seems as if you are trying to convert it into another criminalised Bihar. The leaders of the MJF did not dare to oppose the policies of the erstwhile government. In fact, many were even part of the government responsible for leading our country into crisis. The people in the government are not interested in holding the elections. Not solving the problem in the tarai gives them a perfect excuse. What they don’t realise of course is that in playing these games they are merely making their own reign shorter.

Abbi, New Delhi
Being European

In the next six years the EU will nearly double its aid to Nepal

May 9th is another opportunity to celebrate our collective identity as Europeans and to reaffirm the longstanding partnership between the European Union and other individual EU member states with Nepal.

A very forward-looking and positively charged speech by the then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman laid the foundation stone for the European integration. The EU was created a few years later in 1957. Fifty years later, in 2007 as we celebrate our common history and values, Schuman’s idea of lasting peace continues to inspire countries and peoples to set aside their disputes and embark upon dialogue.

Eduardo Lechuga-Jimenez

Over the years the European Union has expanded from six to 27 member states making the continent the largest economic and political block. The integrated Europe houses approximately 450 million people and accession negotiation is already underway with five other countries—Croatia and Turkey. With continuous enlargement, the EU now has a global reach that enables us to facilitate trade and development to support human rights, rule of law, and democracy worldwide. I am proud to say that the EU has successfully been able to take on the responsibilities that come along the increased political influence it casts globally. Integrated Europe, today, is the largest development donor in the world.

Schuman proposed that Europeans commit themselves to democracy and should solve important political and economic issues among themselves through dialogue. These are the same values the EU continues to uphold, and those values are also reflected in the aid we provide to other countries.

Even though the European Commission opened its Delegation to Nepal in March 2002, its presence in Nepal is much older. It formally established diplomatic relations in 1975 and set up its Technical Office in 1992. An EU-Nepal Co-operation Agreement has existed since June 1996. Within this cooperation framework high-level consultation the so-called ‘Joint Commission’ takes place between the European Commission and the Government of Nepal on bi-annual basis. The most recent EC-Nepal Joint Commission was held on 14 February 2007.

We have continuously increased our presence in Nepal in the form of increased development aid. In the next six-year cooperation period of 2007-2013, the EU will nearly double its aid to Nepal to 160 million (NRs 11 billion). The huge boost in aid to Nepal is an indication of our trust and faith in the Nepal’s current process of transition to democracy and sustainable peace.

We assume a full backing to the current Nepal government and reassure our sincere support to the democratic process that will ultimately lead to lasting peace in the country. That is why the EU likes to focus its assistance on the Nepal government’s endeavours to improve literacy in the coming five years.

The EU likes to focus its assistance on the Nepal government’s endeavours to improve literacy in the coming five years.

We believe in helping Nepal develop and prosper and will continue to work not only with the government but also with other leaders from civil society and the general public.

During my research I exchanged notes with well-known management gurus Peter Senge and Marshall Goldsmith, and their positive responses motivated me further.

Why did you self-publish?

Many new and well-established writers are publishing their own books these days in the US. Self-publishing has created a brand new publishing model which gives control to the writers instead of the publishers.

I found no publisher who could represent the genre that is demanded by my book. There are publishers that specialise in either business or spirituality but there are none that specialise in handling both in a cohesive way.

Given these constraints, self-publishing has worked very well for me. I have a worldwide distribution through retailers like Amazon and Barnes & Noble, and major wholesalers like Ingram. I have been able to channel most of the proceeds to Save the Children programs.
Lordly lessons

The Gita can teach us about leadership

Business managers normally do not see the Gita as a how-to-guide for sorting out modern-day leadership issues. That’s because, at simplest, the Gita is an extended conversation between Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. The warrior Arjuna is hesitant about taking part in a war that requires him to kill his own cousins, most of whom are being harmed for his blood. Krishna, Arjuna’s friend and charioteer, dispels this confusion by teaching Arjuna how to fight this righteous war.

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Afraid of the royal shadow

Letter to the editor in Kathmandu, 6 May

On May Day at the Khula Manch, Prachanda delivered a fiery speech. In summary, he warned that if parliament didn’t declare Nepal a republic, his party would launch a typhoon of protests from the streets, parliament, and the cantonments. Then Matrika Yadav threatened not to allow cabinet meetings to go ahead. Strong words were received by strong applause from a sympathetic crowd.

The same day, Lena Sundh, representative of the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights, issued a statement in which she accused the Maoists of not living up to their commitment to allow internally displaced people to return to their homes and returning property seized during the conflict. That evening the UN secretary general’s special representative Ian Martin warned the Maoists not to put conditions that if parliament didn’t declare Nepal a republic, the government and interim parliament. The people have been attacks on a police post in Banke, and abductions have been heard saying Sujata was incompetent. They have different cliques in the central committee and in their wards. Joshi insisted that there is no bitterness between them and that their dealings are cordial, Poudel had almost decided to join Deuba’s faction, but then he defected Joshi in the NC central committee elections and decided to stay on.

The relationship between Joshi and Sudhi Koirala, never really good, has hit a new low as Joshi is becoming close to Sujata Koirala. Finance Minister Ram Sham Mahtab lates Arjan KC and their animosity often puts the prime minister in a tight spot.

Meanwhile, Khum Bahadur Khadka, Baldev Shurma Magiya, and Deepak Giri have had a cold war for over a decade. The NC in Kaski is divided into three groups, lead by former speaker Tara Nath Ramakhet, Mahadeb Gurung, and Surekha Raj Shastri. Before Jana Andolan II, Shastri and Gurung had formed an alliance against Ramakhet. They called him a royalist and did not allow him to return to his district. They still do not accept Ramakhet as an NC representative and he cannot go back to Kaski to visit his family. When Nona Koirala was alive, she and Shailaja Acharya agreed that Sujata was incompetent, Acharya is said to have stopped
Ghatana ra bichar, 9-15 May

Sashank Koirala—who, alliances with Shekhar and understood to be trying to form Sujata stronger and she is own weak health. This has made away from politics due to her has died and Acharya tries to keep central committee position. Nona Sujata from contesting for a stems from the popular sentiment citizens . The reluctance also private property seized from to wait until the Maoists return The government needs to give out its actions, assists in the process of holding elections to the constituent assembly, and returns captured property, the atmosphere around the country will remain negative. There is no official record of whose property the Maoists have confiscated during their 10 year- long, and the value of all the seized property, but the Nepali Congress central office has records of 129 politicians and party activists who have had property taken away from them. On the list are general secretary Kali Bahadur Gurung (Ilam), party leader Khum Bahadur Khadka (Dang), and central party members Binay Bihari Chaudhary (Baglung), Maheshwor Prasad Singh (Dhulanta-Mahottari), Gopal Raj Pahari (Sankhuwasabha), Saradra Prasad Chaudhary (Parsa), Purshotam Raamdas (Srukhumbha), Devkumar Gautam (Pasyth), Ananda Prasad Dhanraj (Dhanusa).


Right What about 21 June? Girija Prasad Koirala: “I know, the elections have to happen at any cost! Only the dates will change!”

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“People who are scared by the popularity of the Young Communist League and who envy their creativity are accusing the VCL of being an illegitimate organisation.” CPN-M chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal in an interview with Naya Patrika, 9 May

SELECTED MATERIAL TRANSLATED EVERY WEEK FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

“Anything is possible if the left parties unite”

Interview with Maoist leader Mohan Baidya in Budhanagar, 9 May

Why did this talk about not returning the property seized during the ‘people’s war’ start after you entered government?

We believe that we should first develop a long-term strategy for land distribution. Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal is clear when he says that if land has been seized unfairly, it needs to go back to the [original] owner. But if they are feudal, it will not. The eight parties need to sit together to form policies on land reform, and new laws can be made through interim legislature. There will be no redistribution or return until these issues are settled. We believe in giving land to the poor, and we have to be careful that seized property does not go back to the rich again.

Discussions about left party unification have pushed back the elections to the constituent assembly and prevented eight-party meetings.

If Girija (sic) and Deuba (sic) can talk about unification, why can’t we talk about a unified left? The left parties have a majority in parliament and feel that a united left will make the alliance stronger, though we can, of course, face the Nepali Congress as an independent entity. The NC is trying hard to disrupt the momentum we have created in our unification [plans].

What do you hope a unified left will achieve? Unity until the elections to the constituent assembly is most important, so we can work for equality and socialism. Right now, a republic is not possible either, without left party unification. Even the capitalists talk about a republic, but the NC is so influenced by foreign capitalist forces, that it refuses to join the discussion.

The left parties have contributed to the success of the two People’s Movements, and in forming the 12-point agreement. Together, the left parties can fight foreign interference and the royalist forces together. Anything is possible if the left parties unite. Due to ideological and political differences with the CPN-UML there can be no immediate unification with them, but we could settle our differences through discussion.

Your party’s central committee meeting also decided to talk about nationalism. Our political agendas have been hampered because of international interference. Look at what the Madhesi Janadhikar Forum is doing in the tarai; listen to [US ambassador] Moriarty’s speeches—it’s clear foreign forces do not want Nepal to be a republic. Who would call Nepal independent with all this interference? Nepal is being Sikkimised.

FROM THE NEPALI PRESS

Naya Patrika, 9 May

KIRAN PANDAY

Budhabar, 9 May

7

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Trikaal’s newest offering of ethnic electronic music hits some high notes

**The third ear**

**PRANAYA SJB RANA**

Trikaal’s latest offering, *Trikaal 3: Global Waves*, lives up to its name. The album’s nine ethnic electronic tracks are lush with the sounds of the Australian didgeridoo, the African djembe, the south Asian flute and sarangi, and the guitar. The record starts off with a steady beat, strumming. Tabla maestro Navaraj expertly playing off each others’ vocals. It doesn’t actually reach a peak, though, which makes for somewhat unsatisfying listening.

The album’s standout track is *Colors of East-West*, which stars Bijaya Vaidya, Sur Sudha’s virtuoso sitar player riffing with Bijaya Vaidya, Sur Sudha’s virtuoso sitar player. The track is a nod to cheekiness. It starts out instantly recognizable as an interpretation of *Arioso* by Monteverdi, and ishraj almost don’t work, but hints of Asian underground sounds, Thievery Corporation, and the odd blips of a speedy Mad Professor, but the end result is a sound unto itself. The electronic beats, didgeridoo, tabla, and ishraj almost don’t work, but various elements of surprise, like the harmonica cameo by Girish Subedi of the rock band Mukut, the scatting, and the densely textured sound come together after all. Trikaal Air refers to the earlier tracks and sounds like an homage to the entire album.

With this album, Trikaal manages to do something very transcend time, as they promise to reach a peak, though, which makes for somewhat unsatisfying listening.

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With this album, Trikaal manages to do something very transcend time, as they promise to reach a peak, though, which makes for somewhat unsatisfying listening.
Kathmandu’s first Jazzmandu in 2001 deserved the hype. The musicians, from Nepal and around the world, were excellent, and the atmosphere was energetic.

Six years later, the ‘Kathmandu’s phenomenal jazz scene’ line is starting to sound like a bromide, in part because it’s not entirely true. The sounds haven’t really matured—there’s still a lot of noodling, rock-tinged sounds, and staid chords that walk a fine line between clichéd and standard. Cadenza, which regularly expanded its range of styles, often goes into hibernation.

Sure, you can catch live shows in a number of clubs and bars by bands such as Inner Groove, the JCS quartet, and Cadenza, but the offerings can get predictable. Stupa’s Yuvaraj Chhetri argues that that is because “jazz is an acquired taste,” and that audiences in Nepal need some time before they can be hit with truly experimental sounds.

That attitude, ever-so-slightly patronising as it is, is the first line of reasoning most musicians we spoke with trotted out. But push the question, and you see another real barrier to regular, challenging performances—the lack of trained musicians exposed to a variety of sophisticated music. Jigmee Sherpa of the JCS quartet says this is why it is unreasonable to expect jazz to develop any faster in Kathmandu.

Mariano Abello, who plays with Cadenza and Stupa says he was shocked to find out that many talented jazz musicians here learn music by repeatedly listening to CDs and then imitating what they hear. Few would take the line that you absolutely cannot be a good jazz musician without formal training, but to raise the overall standard of performance and understanding of music, which in turn guides innovation, it’s important to have some kind of training.

Abello likens not having basic knowledge of music theory to knowing how to speak, but not being able to read or write.

This is why Abello and Nitinak Yakshumbha of Stupa and 1974AD are setting up the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, to provide professional music education for students at all levels. The school, which will be located in Gyanodaya College in BCharikot, will contain five practice rooms, two combo rooms, a percussion room, a classroom and a 200-seat auditorium. There will be state-of-the-art recording facilities and Yamaha instruments. The largely expat faculty will be chosen for their teaching and performing experiences. Lessons will focus on music theory, ear training, improvisation classes, arranging, and composition.

The school is slated to open in September this year. The promoters believe there is enough raw talent here. “In four years we will have Nepali musicians who can perform on the international circuit,” says Yakshumbha. The musicians in Kathmandu’s closely knit jazz community are holding their breath. So are audiences.

For more information on the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, go to www.kajazz.com.

Stupa performs at Moksh on Tuesdays and Fridays, Inner Groove at Dwarka’s on Wednesdays, JCS at Jazz Upstairs on Tuesdays and at Full Moon on Thursdays, and Cadenza at Jazz Upstairs Wednesdays and Saturdays.

A new conservatory aims for better jazz in the city

Future sounds

RAHUL GIRI
**Young Clueless League**

The YCL can’t give up its old habits and isn’t ready for its new role

![Image](image)

While their Maoist mentors warm their bottoms on ministerial seats, the Young Communist League is neither influenced by reason, intimidated by threats of police raids, nor worried by the damage it is inflicting on its mother party. Everybody, including Good Guy Ian Martin and his crowd of bluecoats, is helpless.

But if you were a neutralised Maoist conscript looking for ways to start a new life, would you rather join asexy named political outfit and brandish power in Kathmandu, or go back to your village to sow turings?

By offering its young cadres raw clout to rule the streets, the Maoist leadership has craftily brought together ex-guerrillas under a political umbrella. But if the YCL’s parental harness is not tightened, its freelancers and warlords can run amok in the countryside. Signs of this are already visible.

The YCL brand-building can’t be done just by staging exhibitions of smuggled computers at Tundikhel. Recently, they nabbed some burglars and delivered summary justice. The YCL also helped track down the culprits who leaked SLC question papers in Bhaktapur, and as we go to press, are helping direct traffic in Kathmandu and protecting tourists from touts at the airport. Yet, the YCL hasn’t been able to win the public trust in the capital.

One reason is that Kathmandu’s vocal natives have always been scornful of outsiders. The customary wisdom among ‘Manduites is that migrants are a strain on capital’s resources and they contribute to traffic congestion and the growth of slums.

Nepals are much more sympathetic to the police force. Underpaid and corrupt, the police at any rate are by the way we are clamouring to get their posts re-established all over the country. Forget the YCL, we want our loved and loathed cops back on the beat.

The YCL is not going to become extinct anytime soon and no state apparatus is able to tame them. They are not giving up on extortion and bullying because that is the only lifestyle to which they are accustomed. One way to tame them is to train them in various law enforcement efforts. The fellows in red aprons seem to be pretty good at traffic management. A week to bring them up to speed, and they could augment Kathmandu’s traffic police which is overstretched trying to manage an unmanageable situation.

Or maybe our INGO friends could start getting them as security guards. Neighbourhoods could pay the YCL to do anti-crime patrols. Civil society has lofty plans about security sector reform which so far has been a lot of hot air. But not a single one of them seems to be offering anything like employment or genuine opportunities to these ex-warriors to fall back on.

Re-integrating the YCL into a society sceptical of their methods will not be easy. The media hounds them as if they are sworn enemies of the state. Businesses see them as extortionists. It is clear that the going is getting tough for the YCL with plenty of testosterone but not much to do. How many games of volleyball can you play in a day?

Might is right may be the law of the jungle, but now they are out in the open the YCL needs to invest a little more in public relations. There is a danger that we will just be replacing one band of thugs with another. The League’s criminal justice system could degenerate into gangland violence.

Instead of playing cops and robbers, the YCL is better off listening to the genuine grievances of the people. When they do, they should try not to run foul of the government. After all, their parent is part of the government now.

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**Fleeing the politicisation of everything**

Living in Interesting Times takes its toll on all, even insensitive types like the Hand get worn down by the relentless flood of bad news and nagging uncertainty as to what comes next.

Reading the morning papers is often enough to skew the day irremediably, while staying one step ahead of manufling

Rhetoric Fatigue: Over-exposure to speeches, thrusts and ideological drivel can lead to irritability, sleep loss, and delirium. The victim feels harangued and bullied into tooting the party line by everyone he meets, while suspecting friends and family are actually undermining politicians out to ruin his life.

Obsessive Analysis Disorder: Reading between the lines of available newspaper becomes compulsive and time consuming. Symptoms include staring at books with news clippings to show cabdrivers and buttonholing strangers for their opinions on current events.

Neutralise with the sound of Radio Nepal’s hourly beep and when passing newsstands.

**Betrayal Rage**: Symptoms include cursing out authority figures on street corners and throwing objects at the television.

Sufferers feel tricked and manipulated by unseen forces for unknown, nefarious purposes.

**Chronic Lassitude**: Not wanting to get out of bed in the morning is a primary symptom, accompanied by an overwhelming sense of resignation that whatever you produce will be nationalised and we’ll all end up in re-education camps anyway, so why bother?

Upon recognising several of these symptoms recently, the Hand fled ahead of a cure. The whole world feels like a spa after this place, and it came as a huge relief to confirm that there is, in fact, life beyond bad politics.

Getting away is good—just ask the millions of Nepalis who have already left and unlike the Hand, aren’t coming back anytime soon.

While the politicians squabble and undermine each other, the economy stagnates, filling our boarding flights with young men desperate to work for minimum wage. More discretely, developed countries select the best educated and most qualified from among the mobs of visa applicants, funding the downward spiral. There is no blame in anyone searching elsewhere for a better harvest, but the longer this brain drain continues the worse off Nepal ends up.

The Hand fondly recalls a bygone era when politics played a marginal role in most people’s lives, the economy functioned normally, and everyone was allowed to go about their lives without hindrance. No extortions, donations, no angry rabble snarling traffic, no kamikaze trade unionism, and much less posturing to the backbeat of menacing rhetoric. This freedom from political stress and interference that is taken for granted in most countries would be highly politicised here after so much over-politicisation, and the very least we should demand from our rulers is to be left to our own devices.

Perhaps that’s all it would take to make fleeing less appealing and give Nepal the chance for a decent future.
Some Bhutani refugees in the UN-run camps in Jhapa and Morang are readying to leave for new homes in the US and Canada. But refugee leaders are worried about a possible second round of arrivals from Bhutan. Over 80,000 Bhutanis were not allowed to vote in the recent mock elections held ahead of the country’s first parliamentary elections next year. Most were Nepali-speaking Lhotsampas termed ‘foreign nationals’ in last year’s census.

Bhutanese refugee and democracy movement leader Tek Nath Rijal who sees a humanitarian crisis in the making. Rijal recently spoke to Bhutani national assembly members and village block heads, who told him that the mock voting was another reminder to Nepali-speaking Lhotsampas that they are not ‘real’ Bhutanis.

“They said that during the registration for mock voting, Nepali-speaking Bhutanis were told in a humiliating manner that they too now had a chance to settle in countries like the US, just like the Bhutani refugees in Nepal,” Rijal said. “They also told me they were threatened repeatedly that it was time for them to decide about resettling elsewhere.”

Another refugee leader told us that “Nepali speakers in southern Bhutan are being accused of having relatives in the refugee camps in Nepal and indulging in politics. They also report being constantly told that their names would not be included in the voters’ list and the census.”

Rijal says the village heads whose constituencies were not included in voters’ registration counted the number of Nepali speakers excluded from the mock voting. “They found that the number is close to 80,000.”

Bhutanese officials deny this. Bhutan’s chief election commissioner Kunjung Wangdi says refugee leaders in Nepal are spreading propaganda. “It is irresponsible on their part to do this. The royal government’s policy is of non-discrimination.” He did however indicate that some southern Bhutanis of Nepali origin were not allowed to vote in the mock polls last month. “If they did not have valid documents, only then it must have been so. As long as you are a citizen, there is no problem.”

Wangdi could not give us an exact number of Bhutanis who are not on the voters’ list. “We are still in the process of voter registration; it is difficult for me to say anything until that is completed.”

Refugee leaders believe the ‘non-Bhutani’ figure stands at around 82,000, 13 percent of Bhutan’s present population. This figure is the difference between those counted as Bhutani citizens and the total population (635,000) enumerated by Bhutan’s Population and Census Commission in 2005. Refugee sources say that last year’s census and the non-registration of voters this year, are indications that over 80,000 Nepali speakers in southern Bhutan are in the process of being made stateless.

One leader said, “All might not be made refugees at one go, like in the late ’80s but it will happen in several phases, and Nepal will again have to bear the consequences.”

The majority of Bhutani refugees living in the camps in east Nepal say they were forcibly evicted from Bhutan in the early 1990s. Thimphu has consistently termed the now over 105,000 Lhotsampa refugees illegal immigrants.

The joint refugee verification process carried out by Nepal and Bhutan has been through 16 rounds of ministerial level meetings and is regularly disrupted by disputes.
Dilli Raman Regmi’s massive history of Nepal from antiquity up to 1814 is itself of historic importance. Regmi was the first scholar to explore in elaborate detail the political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of Nepal in antiquity and medieval times and for modern times.

The four volumes of Medieval Nepal into two volumes and the two of Modern Nepal into one. Nepal’s changing political scenario has affected interpretive and analytical approaches to Nepal’s history. Today, historians can write frankly without fear of censorship or retribution and there are now new authoritative scholarly texts. But first there was DR Regmi.

Regmi started writing about Nepal’s history, politics, and economics in 1942. Most of his books were published by Firma K. Mukhopadhyaya, Calcutta. Ancient Nepal was first published in 1960 and enlarged in 1969. The author’s meticulous research results in a political history of the Licchavi period’s kings, polity, economy, and foreign policy, and society, and analytical descriptions of the culture, art, architecture, and sculpture of the time. Regmi’s assessment of the importance and utility of various source materials connected with this period of Nepal’s history remains valuable.

The two volumes of Medieval Nepal present a short history of kingdoms in the time covering the areas including and around present-day Nepal. Regmi details the Malla kingdom extending from Garhwal in present-day Indial to the west, to the Trisuli and Manasarovar and Taalikhar areas in present-day Tibet in the north, and the Tanai in the south.

The Karnata kingdom with Simranpanch as capital extended from the Mahabharat range in the north, to Bodb Gaya and the Ganga in the south, the Gandaki in the west, and the Kosi in the east. Also covered are the two principalities in the Karnali basin area, the chaubise in the Gomukhi basin area, and the three Sena kingdoms of the eastern Nepal.

Finally, there are the three Malla kingdoms that ruled from the three towns of Kathmandu Valley from the Trisuli in the west, the Durbar Kosi in the east, and the Kerong (present-day Tibet) in the north and to the Mahabharat range in the south.

Regmi writes in detail about the genealogical political history of the Malla dynasty of the Nepal Mandala and presents the first comprehensive assessment of its administrative, socio-cultural, and artistic systems. Regmi’s work is critiqued as Kathmandyu Valley-centric, a leaning he would not deny. He believed that the Valley, the original ‘Nepal’, was “the centre of learning” in medieval times. In 1961 Regmi wrote a brief volume on early modern Nepal, based on contemporary epigraphic evidence. Fourteen years later, he published the two volumes of Modern Nepal, covering political history up to 1854 with detailed explanations, exhaustive information, and comprehensive analytical assessments of specific events. The re-issue contains new information and analysis. The revised volumes bear testimony to Regmi’s extraordinary research but do not contain his trademark analysis of the social, economic, administrative, and cultural aspects of the era.

Nepal’s history was, until DR Regmi, written and interpreted by foreign scholars in terms of it being a small country sandwiched between two massive ones. In his histories, Regmi makes a strong case to counter that perception. Regmi’s academic contributions, in particular, his history books suffer from certain limitations. Since he was not an epigraphist, he had to depend upon the findings and interpretations of others. At the time that he was writing, there had been very limited archaeological excavations and explorations carried out to interpret Nepal’s history. Regmi’s political career has had positive and negative influences on his scholarly work. From the present day perspective, some of his views can seem obsolete or erroneous. Yet, it remains rewarding to consult these books as a product of their time—and of an indefatigable scholar.

The publishers of this welcome re-issue seem to have inexplicably omitted the fourth volume of Medieval Nepal, part IV. Also, a new edition, with corrections and updated by contemporary scholars would be much appreciated.
May is the day people from 27 different countries of the European Union (EU) celebrate their common reference as Europeans. The celebration of ‘Europe Day’ takes place the same day as the former French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman delivered a famous speech back in 1950 that laid the foundation stone for the European integration. Schuman proposed that Europeans committed themselves to democracy and increased dialogues should solve important political and economic issues among themselves. Schuman’s proposal came when Europe was trying recover from the devastation it suffered during the Second World War (1939-45). In 2007, as Europeans again celebrate their common history and values, Schuman’s idea of lasting peace continues to inspire countries and peoples to set aside their disputes and embark upon a dialogue.

Schuman envisaged that economic interdependence between European countries would make war a phenomenon of the past. It took less than a year before Schuman’s idea was translated into a binding legal document – the political commitment to peace was thus already a reality. On 18 April 1951, six countries signed the Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community. Soon thereafter, this proposal came when Europe was trying to recover from the political and economic issues among themselves. Schuman’s proposal laid the foundation stone for the European integration.

Continuous Enlargement

Over the years the European Community has expanded from 6 to 27 member states with the entry of Romania and Bulgaria on 1 January 2007. The initial 6 member states are Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined in 1973. Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986, Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995. The biggest ever enlargement took place in 2004 with 10 countries – Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The EU, its members, and institutions have a common flag that is used as a symbol of the European unity – the flag is dark blue with a circle of 12 yellow stars. It took less than a year before Schuman’s idea was translated into a binding legal document – the political commitment to peace was thus already a reality. On 18 April 1951, six countries signed the Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community. Soon thereafter, this proposal came when Europe was trying to recover from the political and economic issues among themselves. Schuman’s proposal laid the foundation stone for the European integration. The overall objectives of the project are to create a renewable energy infrastructure in rural areas which facilitates income generation, sustainable growth and delivery of social services, thus alleviating poverty. Furthermore, it aims to facilitate institutional strengthening to public agencies and policy reform, mainly to encourage the Government’s policy of democratization and decentralization.

EU and Nepal

Several EU member countries have long-standing development partners with Nepal and currently five member countries have established individual diplomatic missions in Kathmandu: Denmark, Finland, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. These five EU member countries share the responsibility for implementing the Renewable Energy Project since 2004. The overall objectives of the project are to create a renewable energy infrastructure in rural areas which facilitates income generation, sustainable growth and delivery of social services, thus alleviating poverty. Furthermore, it aims to facilitate institutional strengthening to public agencies and policy reform, mainly to encourage the Government’s policy of democratization and decentralization.

The EU Institutions

There are five main EU institutions, each playing a specific role:
- European Commission (driving force and executive body);
- Council of the European Union (representing the governments of the Member States);
- European Parliament (elected directly since 1979 by the citizens of the Member States);
- European Court of Justice (ensuring compliance with law);
- Court of Auditors (controlling sound and lawful management of the EU budget).

The EU in Nepal

Several other agencies and bodies complete the system, including the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Central Bank, the European Ombudsman and the European Investment Bank. The Presidency of the European Union rotates every 6 months among the 27 Member States. Every five years, European citizens elect new members to the European Parliament.

Human Rights

European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

The EIDHR is programmed for promoting core values of the European Union and serves as a means to promote these values by providing financial and moral support to civil society initiatives concerning human rights and democratization in third countries. The overall objectives of EIDHR are to respond rapidly to requests for small-scale financial supports for initiatives designed to promote and protect human rights and democratization as well as efforts aimed at conflict resolution. Nepal is one of the 68 focus countries for the EIDHR worldwide. Since Nepal became a focus country for EIDHR support in 2001, the European Commission has funded 27 EIDHR micro projects and 9 EIDHR Macro Projects in Nepal with the total contribution of 5,430,435.00. Project selection process is underway for the project selection under the EIDHR Micro Allocations for Nepal for 2008 (€375,000.00). The overall objectives of the project are to create a renewable energy infrastructure in rural areas which facilitates income generation, sustainable growth and delivery of social services, thus alleviating poverty. Furthermore, it aims to facilitate institutional strengthening to public agencies and policy reform, mainly to encourage the Government’s policy of democratization and decentralization.

Conflict Mitigation

Conflicts in Nepal have historically been rooted in the complex religious, cultural, and linguistic traditions of the country. The overarching goal of the “Conflict Mitigation Packages” is to address the root causes of conflict and promote peace and reconciliation in the country. Over the years, the EU has provided support through various packages aimed at mitigating conflicts and promoting dialogue and understanding.

Infrastructure and Rural Development

Renewal Energy Project Nepal

The European Commission has been funding Nepal’s Renewable Energy Project (REP) since 2004. The overall objectives of the project are to create a renewable energy infrastructure in rural areas which facilitates income generation, sustainable growth and delivery of social services, thus alleviating poverty. Furthermore, it aims to facilitate institutional strengthening to public agencies and policy reform, mainly to encourage the Government’s policy of democratization and decentralization.

Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration

The European Commission has allocated a budget of about 8 million EUR to support: a) Nepal WTO programme, access to finance for SMEs, and diversification of exports; b) SAARC in the context of standards and customs harmonization, helping the region to better integrate economically as the EC/EU has been invited as an observer at the 14th SAARC Summit in New Delhi.

Humanitarian Aid

The European Commission is one of the biggest sources of humanitarian aid to Nepal. Since 2001, the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) has provided close to €26 million aid for victims of these crises, including €12 million for the 100,000 Bruneian refugees in Nepal and nearly €14 million for victims of the armed conflict in 2006. ECHO’s funding to Nepal totalled €7.8 million (EUR 3 million for conflict-affected populations). In 2007, funding will be €6 million, relating the EC’s willingness to support Nepal in this time of transition where humanitarian needs are still high.

Europe has a global reach which enables us to facilitate trade and development to support human right, rule of law and democracy worldwide. In this proud moment the Delegation of the European Commission to Nepal would like to remember the special friendship between the EU and Nepal.

Eduardo LECHUGA-JIMENEZ

Chargé d’Affaires

Delegation of the European Commission to Nepal
EXHIBITIONS

- Colours of the sepals and petals: an exhibition of paintings based on botanical art by Neera Joshi Pradhan, 10:30 AM-6PM, except Saturdays at Park Gallery, Pulchok, until 15 May, 5522307
- Moments of passion: an exhibition of collage paintings by Gaurav Bresthita, until 15 May, 11AM-6PM daily at The Art Shop, Darbar Marg, 9841541810
- Sacred realms: mixed media works by Seema Sharma Shah at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, until 26 May, 11AM-6PM daily; 4218048

EVENTS

- Letters from Iwo Jima by Clint Eastwood, film, 11 May, 6:30 PM at the Lazzimt Gallery Cafe, 9841290619
- The Honest Thief: performed by Studio 7, opening weekend 4-6 May, further performances on 11-19 May and 18-20 May, 7.15 PM at the Nagar Theater, Hotel Vajra, 4271645
- Pilgrim’s Book Festival: 11-20 May, 10AM-8PM at Pilgrim’s Book House, Kupondole, 5521199
- Light of the Himalaya: an FSA Film Club and WAVE magazine presentation, 13 May, 5.30 PM at Yala Maya Kendra, Rs 50 entrance, all proceeds go to the Tilganga Eye Centre, 5542544
- The Alliance’s Brunch: Sunday brunch at the Alliance Française, 13 May,11AM in the AF garden, Rs 300. 4241163
- Yuva Chaital Shrinkhala: about contemporary discussions on FM Radio, Nepal, until 14 May, at Marlin Chautal, 4107999
- School bullying: a talk program by Nid Rana, 17 May at The New Era, Battisputali, 9851023958
- Pottery course: by Santosh Kumar from the Delhi Blue Pottery Trust, at Newa Art Ceramics in Madhyapur, Thimi, 25 May-24 June. 9841257968

MUSIC

- Stupa Live: at the Mokh Bar, 8.30 PM on 11 May, 5526212
- Kathmandu Choral: spring concert, 19 May, 3.30 PM and 6 PM, at The British School, Jamshikhel. Admission free, 5521818
- Jatra ma jay every Saturday by Inner Groove, 6:30 PM onwards, Jatra, Thamel, 4256266
- Open mic night: at Via Via Cafe, every Friday, 8PM onwards.
- Live music at the Red Orion Bar, Wednesdays from 8PM with Yanki and Zigme Lepcha. 4416071
- DJ Raju and the Cloudwalkers: live at the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency, every Friday and Saturday, 4491234

DINING

- Hawaiian Nite at the La Soo Restaurant, Pulchok, 11 May, Rs 850 including a complimentary drink, 5537166
- Friday evening BBQ with live music, at the Hotel Himalaya, 7PM, Rs 49 net. 5523990
- Kababs and curries at the Dhauba, Thapathali. 9841206919
- Krishnarpan: Nepali specialty restaurant at Dwarika’s Hotel, six to 11AM-6PM daily. 4271645
- Mongolian BBQ: Wednesdays and Fridays, 8:30 PM at the Splash Bar and Grill, Radisson Hotel. Rs 1,000 for unlimited barbeque and beer. 4422826
- Flavours: of the Middle East: every Friday and the taste of Thailand every Wednesday at The Cafe, Hyatt Regency, Boudha. 4491224
- Light nouvelle snacks and elaborate cordon bleu meals at La Soo, Puchok, behind the Egyptian embassy. 5537166
- Continental cuisine and wine by the fire place at Kliney’s, Thamel. 4250440
- Smorgasbord lunch at Park Village Resort, every Saturday. 4375280
- Gysok: at the Shambala Garden Cafe, Hotel Shangri-La, minimum four diners at Rs 450 per person, two hours’ notice.
- Retro brunch: barbecue with Crossfire Band at Le Meridien, Gokarna from 12-4PM, Rs 1,000 including swimming. 4451212
- Calcutta’s: rolls, biryani, kebab, Indian cuisine at Barwach, Bluebird Mall Food Court. 974100736
- Woodfired pizzas at the Roadhouse Cafe, Thamel 4282768, Bhatbhateni 4429567 and Pulchok 5521795
- Pizza line from woodfired oven at Java, Thamel. 4422519
- Jazzabell cafe: enjoy great food, exotic cocktails and music, Chakupat, Patan. 2114075

GETAWAYS

- Weekend package: at Le Meridien Kathmandu Gokarna Forest Golf Resort and Spa, two nights three days at Rs 8,888 and one night two days at Rs 4,444, 4451212
- Wet and wild package: at Godavari Village Resort, every Saturday and Sunday, unlimited swimming, buffet lunch with a bottle of beer or a soft drink, Rs 690 net. 5560675

For inclusion in the listing send information to editors@nepaltimes.com
ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?: Girija Prasad Koirala makes a point to Ram Chandra Poudel and Bal Bahadur Rai (right) at the Nepali Congress’ conclave of district presidents on Friday.

RED JUSTICE: This large stash of red sandalwood was delivered by members of the Young Communist League to the District Forest Office in Hattiban on Thursday afternoon. The YCL seized the contraband in a raid on an Imadole house on Wednesday.

NOT THE BEST POLICY: Deeya Maskey and Sabine Lehmann busy projecting in Studio 7’s production of The Honest Thief on Sunday. The play is on for two more long weekends at the Naga Theatre, Hotel Vajra.

CAN’T LOOK: Chandra Sekhar Karki’s picture of a woman grieving over the body of her husband at Naumule five years ago was too much for this high school student. More than 100,000 people all over the country watched the photo exhibition tour of photographs from the book, A People War.
Let us bray

Even as tabloids this week exposed the details of how Paras sirac had to scrounge around to raise the Rs 1.6 million compensation (Daddy apparently didn’t chip in) for the widow of musician Pravin Gurung after he allegedly ran over him near the Yak & Yeti seven years ago, came news that the crownless prince has got bored hanging around at Gokarna and is back to his old ways roughing up people at watering holes in the capital.

The Ass was glad to see that not getting an American transit visa didn’t deter Suresh Ale Magar from flying off on a junket to Peru recently. The trip was paid for by the Americans. Ironically enough, although Suresh Dai says the Swiss took care of his part of the ticket and per diem. Be that as it may, the delegation met Peruvian civil society, peace monitors, and human rights organisations involved in truth and reconciliation. The Nepalis even flew off to the Andean altiplano to the town of Ayacucho and the university where Abimael Guzman taught. Ale was so moved to be in the cradle of the Shining Path that he started singing praises of Prachanda Path, about the common struggle of the Peruvian and Nepali people for the cause of World Revolution and how violence is justified in a political struggle. Needless to say, there weren’t many takers among his Peruano hosts for Guruji’s end-justifies-the-means line of reasoning.

The Nepali media survived the sycophantic Panchayat era toeing the royal line, lived through the post-1990 period when every new elected government used state media shamelessly as a propaganda tool and even after 2002 when King G turned Radio Nepal, NTV, and Gorkhapatra into his mouth organs.

Now that we have a Minister of Incommunicado belonging to the Maoist persuasion, one expected him to revolutionise things. Nope. Maharababu has inducted (if that’s the right word) four comrades into Radio Nepal and actually argued at a cabinet meeting that he should be allowed to do it because that was what the NC and UML did when they controlled the ministry. Makes perfect sense: they ate donkey manure why can’t I?

On World Press Freedom Day the minister also shot himself in the foot by delivering a convoluted justification for past assassination of journalists by his party. All this was duly reported in excruciating detail by His Master’s Voice on NTV’s evening news. Let us pray.

Speaking of the eight parties, none except the foreign minister bothered to show up for the official EU Day function at the Hyatt on Wednesday. Don’t they know the Europeans have just doubled aid and are basically bankrolling the elections? Not that any of you is asking the Ass, but if you did I’d say we’re getting a tad too dependent on donors. The NC’s district president meeting this week was paid for by the Indians. Even the UML had no qualms about having their recent conclave sponsored by Scandies. Who’s paying for the new helipad at Baluwatar, eh?

So, like the Ass, all of you thought Sita Ram Yechury had come to check up on the progress of the peace process? Hai Fodded ya’ll. It’s no coincidence that soon after the visit, we heard that GMR had won the bids to explore both Upper Karnali and Arun III. Congrats, Chandrababu.

One recent proof that absolute power corrupts absolutely is that Naryanhiti hasn’t paid its power bills for the past few years. And those power-hungry chappies didn’t even have to suffer loadshedding! No wonder Comrade Sita Ram wants a republic.

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Backside