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No 34.6%

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Weekly Internet Poll # 358. To vote go to: [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

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KIRAN PANDAY

## Nepal's monarchy was separated from its political and military links in the past year, now its cultural ties to Nepal's festivals and rituals are also being taken away.

In his budget presented to parliament on Thursday afternoon, Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat axed the salaries the king, queen, crown prince, and princess used to get from the state coffers, saving the tax payers Rs 40 million a year. Some of these savings will go towards the elections, for which the budget has set aside Rs 6 billion.

Snapping the monarchy's ties to tradition seems to be indirectly affecting the Kumari custom. In one week, Nepal's living goddess tradition was broken twice. The Patan goddess, 13-year-old Chanira Bajryacharya, had to bless the prime minister instead of the king at Bhoto Jatra in

Jawalakhel on Sunday. Not everyone in

Patan was happy—even if the king couldn't come they thought it inappropriate that a bahun prime minister should take over the monarch's ceremonial function.

Also last week, ten-year-old Sajani Shakya, the Bhaktapur Kumari, was fired from her job for travelling 'across the black waters' to the United States to release her documentary, *Living Goddess*. Sajani's parents say the Taleju priests knew of her trip in advance and did not object. Guthi Sansthan member Jaya Prasad Regmi says the trust is dismissing

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Sajani "following the wishes of devotees". Sajani is now in India with a companion waiting for the fuss to die down. Her mother Rukmani insists that the family has not been officially informed about the Kumari's dismissal. ●

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## FOUR MONTHS TO GO

It's not by chance that the budget presented to parliament on Thursday is being received with a big national yawn. The people have concluded that in the past 100 days this government has delivered little, and is unlikely to do so in the next 100. Only good sign was money set aside for elections in four months.

The Maoists have argued that eradicating the monarchy will solve everything. Wish it was that simple.

Declaring Nepal a republic is not going to remove the risk of anarchy, separatism, and ethnic fragmentation. Even janajati and madhesi activists demanding full proportional representation in the June polls now sound like moderates compared to a new breed of ultra-radicals who see the end of the Nepali monarchy as an opportunity to scrap all treaties their territories or ethnicities negotiated with Prithvi Narayan Shah.

The current uncertainty is bringing out the most dangerous bigotry and fanaticism in Nepalis. Such extremism and intolerance will jeopardise not just the peace process but undermine this nation's reason for being. Elections are the only antidote to this insecure interregnum.

We shouldn't be asking whether the constituent assembly elections will be held on 22 November, but what we can collectively do to ensure that it does. For Nepalis the polls are synonymous with peace. Scrapping the polls or postponing it again will create socio-political turmoil that could spiral out of control.

If only the political players in the fray looked beyond immediate tactical gains to the larger national interest, they could easily create the conditions for free and fair polls in four months time.

Even if the security situation doesn't improve, elections can still be held in 80 percent of the country. Most janajati and madhesi activists are now committed not to let their demand for full proportional representation be the reason for delayed elections. That leaves the tarai armed groups and young communists, both of which can be brought in line if the 7+1 parties show a unity of purpose. The anarchy in the eastern tarai is due more to the absence of the state and the political parties than the strength of the criminalised militant factions there.

At the moment, the UML is most enthusiastic about polls because it rates its chances as high. The Maoists are damned if they do and damned if they don't, but the longer this uncertainty drags on the worse it is for them. The NC is losing ground and is least keen, so it is banking on NC-D reunion. Even for king Gyanendra, an early election may be the only way to end the excruciating uncertainty about the future of the throne.

It is important to be focussed on elections, resolve uncertainties without downplaying the dangers. We in the media must proactively counter those deliberately fomenting ethnic discord and instigating anarchy and chaos. Those against the historic opportunity provided by the November polls will be sabotaging the chance of lasting peace. And it is easy to pinpoint who they are.



MIN. BAJRACHARYA

# Unceremonial monarchy

## The state should keep itself out of the religious realm

Swedish anthropologist and author of *The Patron and the Panca* Bengt-Eric Borgstrom notes how during the Panchayat days the Nepali monarchy was in a severe role conflict with itself.

As a politician associated with modernity, the king had to prove himself by delivering



**GUEST COLUMN**  
**Sudhindra Sharma**

development, but as an institution associated with tradition, he functioned as a bulwark against modernisation. The king's role during the Panchayat era reflected the contradictions of an institution straddling tradition and modernity.

By his presence at the Bhoto Jatra ceremony this week, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala is repeating that incongruity in a reverse manner: here was a modern institution asserting to portray its association with tradition.

Nepal's monarchy is in animated suspension, its fate to be decided by an elected constituent assembly. The prime minister is now head of state and head of government. Under

normal circumstances, he should have been elected, but this prime minister emerged from a mass movement. Even so, prime ministers should have fixed tenures, their rule mandated through periodic elections. It is not a hereditary office, nor is it associated with tradition. It is a quintessentially modern institution that stands for the people's aspirations to a better life.

In mature democracies with constitutional monarchies such as in Europe, the line between the prime minister and monarch is well defined. The monarchs function as repositories of tradition and the linkages they have forged with the established church over the centuries is displayed during state ceremonies. Elected prime ministers are associated with modernity and have mostly been advocates of secularism.

Koirala's support for a ceremonial monarchy amidst a rising tide of republicanism could be seen as acceptance of this division of labour between monarchs and prime ministers. But his attendance at the Bhoto Jatra festival has blurred this separation.

One of the core pillars of secularism is the separation of state and religion. By taking the seat at Jawalakhel on Sunday Koirala underlined the continued alignment of the state with religion irrespective of the stricture of the interim constitution.

Republican India's secular leaders have sought to expand the frontiers of secularism but in doing so they have been careful not to encroach upon the religious or ritual spheres. At the

Jagannath chariot carnival, Kangra's dussera, or the festivals in Varanasi, former kings remain patrons of the occasion, not chief ministers or the prime minister.

Coming from a mature democracy with a constitutional monarchy, Borgstrom, was arguing for a delineation of spheres between the monarchy and elected prime minister, and he saw cooperation between the two as a prerequisite for a stable polity.

Even as King Gyanendra continued to snub him, Koirala had been making a distinction between Gyanendra the person and monarchy the institution, calling for the retention of the monarchy even while asking the king to step down. Perhaps in his enthusiasm to hit back at King Gyanendra (who obdurately shows no sign of abdicating) Koirala overlooked the fact that he is head of state of a secular country, and not of a Hindu kingdom. The presence of the head of the state in a Hindu-Buddhist religious festival is a setback to the idea of a secular state in as much as it tampers with established tradition.

Unwittingly Koirala the head of the state has seriously undermined Koirala the person who has argued for a ceremonial monarchy. What is a ceremonial monarch supposed to do if not attend religious, cultural, and educational functions? If the prime minister is to appropriate religious and cultural spaces like Bhoto Jatra for himself, what role is there for the present king, or future kings or queens? By his very presence at the Bhoto Jatra festival Koirala has made the idea of ceremonial monarchy *ad absurdum*. ●

*Sudhindra Sharma is a Nepali sociologist specialising in religion.*

# Communist quicksand

## Pushpa Kamal Dahal can save the peace process from the various leftie threats to it

The way YCL cadres vandalised the offices of the RPP and the Rastriya Janashakti Party in Dhankuta on Sunday is morally reprehensible, politically condemnable, and legally punishable. But the Maoists have become experts at condoling and condoning at the same time.

A clique inside the CPN-M actively promotes criminal behaviour of their young cadres. Ram Bahadur Thapa (Badal)



**STATE OF THE STATE**  
**C K Lal**

alludes to a brewing military coup and that goads his young turks into militancy. Mohan Baidya admits to training guerrillas, providing the militia the excuse to openly indulge in extortion. Apparatchiks in the countryside remain wedded to Leninist passions, Stalinist prejudices, Maoist dogma and refuse to internalise the dynamic doctrine of Prachanda Path. These rigid lefties, invisible but insidious,

are an even bigger threat to ongoing peace process than the adolescent YCL.

The concern of Maoist commissars about attacks on them in the madhes isn't unfounded. But the militancy of the Chure Bhawar Ekata Samaj is aimed primarily against madhesis and could itself snowball into an anti-Maoist movement. The entire line-up of challengers to the Maoists in the madhes consists of ex-Maoists themselves: JK Goit, Jwala Singh, Bisfot, Upendra Yadav. None have publicly renounced Leninism, Stalinism, and Maoism. Almost all visible leaders of the Chure Bhabar are erstwhile CPN (M-L), the Maoists of 1970s. Khambuan activists in the eastern hills also cut their teeth in the politics of violence under Maoist mentorship.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal has a point when he says that he knows his former comrades very well and can handle them. The problem is, his assurances sound more like threats. Dahal of all people should remember that counter-violence

isn't the way to tackle leftwing extremism. The response will have to be much more nuanced.

Lenin's criticism of 'leftwing extremism as an infantile disease of the communist movement' is well-known, but Stalin and Mao went ahead to make fanaticism the fundamental credo of communism anyway. Their sect-like traits include conformity to the party, fervour for the cause, intolerance of dissent, and complete submission to politburo diktats. But it is the deification of the dictator that makes communism the flipside of fascism.

Ironically, the unchallenged primacy of the supreme leader is also the saving grace of communist ideology. It enabled Stalin to marshal the entire Soviet structure against Hitler. Mikhail Gorbachev could introduce glasnost with the confidence of an absolute ruler. A determined despot, Deng Xiaoping initiated a catalytic course correction of the Chinese economy. They could do this unchallenged because questioning

authority is anathema in doctrinaire communism. Chairman Dahal will have to show similar resolve and grit to keep the peace process on track towards the constituent assembly elections.

Madhesi Maoists who have crossed over to the various factions of the JTMM or the MJF need to be convinced why their parent party accepted an interim constitution because it addresses almost all their demands except that of meaningful federalism. It is necessary to rein in the YCL and take various protesting groups on board to go to the polls. Despite their drawbacks, the Maoists have better ability, higher credibility, and more sophisticated skills to negotiate (or arm-twist) their former comrades in the madhes militancy than any other party in the ruling coalition.

It needs a courageous leader to exercise his authority and inspire confidence so the less enlightened rebels can come up to speed. If Dahal fails to measure up, he too risks being gobbled up by the communist quicksand. ●



## LETTERS

### MONARCHIES

In the Guest Column '2007 to 2007' (#356) the text made reference to the top and bottom 20 countries ranked by the 2006 HDI scores, but the accompanying table was shortened to 15 countries due to space limits. Since that selective shorter list may have confused readers, below is the full list of the top 20 HDI ranked countries. Nine of these 20 are independent monarchies (M); and three more are Commonwealth Realm constitutional monarchies (CR). The other eight are republics.

#### Top 20 HDI Ranked countries in order:

Norway (M), Iceland, Australia (CR), Ireland, Sweden (M), Canada (CR), Japan (M), United States, Switzerland, Netherlands (M), Finland, Luxembourg (M), Belgium (M), Austria, Denmark (M), France, Italy, United Kingdom (M), Spain (M), New Zealand (CR). Another European monarchy, Lichtenstein would also feature in the Top 20 list, but UNDP does not compute HDI scores for Lichtenstein and Monaco.

In addition to these nine monarchies in the top 20 list (and Lichtenstein and Monaco), there are only 18 other commonly recognised independent monarchies. That list, with their HDI rank in 2006 in brackets, is: Brunei (33) Qatar (40) UAE (41) Bahrain (43) Kuwait (44) Tonga (54) Malaysia (61) Oman (71) Thailand (73) Samoa (74) Saudi Arabia (77) Jordan (90) Morocco (124) Cambodia (133) Bhutan (134) Nepal (136) Swaziland (146) Lesotho (149).

Putting the two lists together, the facts clearly are that monarchies are over-represented in the top 20 (and also absent from the bottom 20 list). Conclusion: there clearly are no economic developments gains to the general public from abolishing an existing monarchy. So is it only private gains to specific political players that is making monarchy or republic the unnecessary focal point of the CA agenda?

**Prem J Thapa, Australia**

● Prem J Thapa is comparing apples with kiwis when he tries to stretch the UNDP's HDI rankings to prove that monarchies still have a utility. The reason most European countries have high development indicies has nothing to do with the fact that they are monarchies. Similarly, former sub-Saharan monarchies are not impoverished because they aren't monarchies anymore. And just because a country is nominally a 'republic' doesn't mean countries with ruling dynasties like Haiti, ex-Zaire, Cote d'Ivoire or for that matter even Sri Lanka, Bangladesh or India do not behave like monarchies. In fact, there is no guarantee that once Nepal becomes a republic we will still have a hereditary presidential system. And we will still be poor.

**J Pathak, Kathmandu**

### REFUGEES

Your editorial 'Chance of a lifetime' (#356) is a surprising turnaround of the stand your prestigious media house has long taken on the Bhutani refugee issue. How can you say that third-country resettlement is a chance for refugees to rebuild their lives? It is ruthless to assume poor people are ready to be the servants of rich white people. Nationality is above money. Had you ever been a refugee, you would know this. The Nepalis of Nepal may be tired of their nationality, but Bhutani Nepalis are hungry for our nationality and identity, not money. Don't tell us what to do. If you feel that going west is the start of a new life, you go ahead.

Nepalis, the original inhabitants of the Himalaya, are being removed from their land through Indian-designed moves, and we ourselves are encouraging it. Not just the Nepali government, but renowned journalists have surrendered to a mini-tyrant like Jigme Singye. Shame.

**Kalpita Mabuhang, Biratnagar**

● The people living in the refugee camps in Nepal claiming to be Bhutanis should take the chance offered by Western countries. We know that thousands of people from Nepal have already emigrated to western countries in the name of Bhutan. People in the camps should decide for a better future rather than listening to a few self-interested people who don't care for their suffering. I say take the chance for a better future. Opportunity only strikes once. There are more than 50 million ethnic Nepalis in Nepal and around—no scarcity of Nepalis in the Himalayan regions.

**Gangtergi, email**

### GO ELECTRIC

While it is great news that the government is taking huge steps in hydropower development ('White gold', #356), it would also be great if the government opened its eyes on the very important issue of the import of electric vehicles. Like the Japanese government, the Nepali government has to relax its taxing system, or even make EVs tax-free (as in the case of Safa tempos). It will be seven years before the first of the hydro projects will be completed. The government has to look at the future demand for electricity once EVs can be imported easily. In the long term, the money it loses by relaxing taxation can be made up by the increased demand for electricity. A major benefit will be a cleaner environment.

**E Avani, email**

● The government should increase the price of petroleum to lower use, and decrease the price of electricity and

electric goods. One big advantage is that we wouldn't have to beg other countries for power. The next plus is that electricity is pollution-free. The list goes on. Yet the government is doing just opposite—it subsidises petrol and makes electricity expensive. It taxes electric cars higher than regular ones. It banned electric bikes and doesn't assist Safa tempo and trolley buses.

**Saurav Sharma, email**

### UNREPENTANT

CK Lal sounds like another angry madhesi ('The unrepentant state', State of the State, #356). I considered him an analyst above region, caste, and similar prejudices, and

his angry outbursts do no good to his credibility as a political analyst.

That said, I fully agree that the Maoists are to be blamed for the confrontationist attitudes in the tarai. It is also true that the political parties never seriously discussed this issue in the past and do not seem to have started now either. One reason is that in the past anybody talking

sensibly about the tarai and madhesi was branded a RAW agent. Unfortunately, that political trap of the panchayat era was never shaken off. This tendency is widespread among the political cadre as well as civil society. Unless it is shaken off, there can be no meaningful discussion of the problems, leave alone solutions.

**KK, USA**

### RUDE

By declining the invitation to the king's birthday party, Nepal's diplomatic corps have clearly made a political statement and shown their bias. Such partisan behaviour is undiplomatic and deplorable.

**SK Aryal, email**

● I was surprised by the results of your last poll on rudeness among the diplomats. I think the only real option was 'Who cares'. Really, who cares. The country is in such a depressing state, we should focus on getting it back on track.

**N Ghale, email**

● The Bhaktapur Kumari has been stripped of her 'title' after she visited the US to promote a documentary because she is now considered impure. To those who say that the Kumari tradition should be upheld and that she should have stayed home to avoid scrutiny, I ask—she's 'god', and god is everywhere. It's her right to go out of the country. As for her being tainted, what does that even mean? With the king's throne at stake, it would be interesting to see whether the Kumari gets the same

respect.

Some claim that the Kumari is given appropriate education and care. That's good news. But she should be given some type of counselling after her 'reign' ends. It is a whole new world out there and she has to move back to her house, socialise with other children, go to school, live in the 'real' world. I don't doubt that the Kumari is treated with utmost respect and care. But to isolate her in her room doesn't seem emotionally conducive to producing a sound god to me. Then again, who says god is sound?

The story of how the tradition started sounds like sexual repression. The king had lustful thoughts and so chose the Kumari to represent the goddess he lusted after. Makes sense like every other Nepali tradition objectifying women.

**Yuko Maskay, email**

### FILM REVIEW

Diwas Kc is a film critic par excellence ('World within worlds', Critical cinema, #356). Where did you find him!!!

**Sashin Joshi, Kathmandu**

● Diwas Kc is an excellent addition to your generally witty paper. He expands amusingly on the cattiness in your 'Happenings' captions. Your 'History for winners' caption (Happenings, #356) was great—lots of information that I didn't know. Glad you balanced it out with the rude reference to wind instruments, though, or it might have come off as know-it-all.

**Thomas R, email**

### CLARIFICATION

Re 'Taxing business' (Strictly Business, Ashutosh Tiwari, #356): The government aims to collect Rs 85.38 billion in the current fiscal year. Experts say that the amount could be increased by an additional Rs 25 billion to about Rs 110 billion by introducing general reform measures.


The most recent three-member Tax Settlement Commission added about Rs 3 billion to the government's coffers by assessing the tax obligations of about 2,000 out of tens of thousands of taxpayers in nine months.

### 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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MIN BAJRACHARYA



SHRAWAN KUMAR

**COMMON SIGHTS:** During the Madhes Uprising, even ambulances were not allowed to run. Armed groups like the JTMM-Jwala (above) have effectively run the state out from parts of the tarai.

# Poll-itical solution

## For a credible election , the government must fix the tarai's security mess

JOHN NARAYAN PARAJULI

The political agitation in the tarai is being overtaken by criminal elements. The government is floundering on negotiable issues, missing chances to talk, and can't keep up with the fluid situation. This is a serious bottleneck on the road to elections.

Most of the twelve armed groups identified by the Home Ministry are operating in the tarai's highway belt, frequently crippling Nepal's economic artery. Insec records 76 conflict-related deaths in tarai since January. The East-West highway is regularly shut down—in the three weeks from 15 June-5 July, some parts of the eastern tarai were closed for up to 18 days. The six serial bomb blasts that rocked Birganj last week weren't a surprise.

It is difficult to imagine an election being held under these circumstances, says Purosottam Dahal, of the Human Rights and Peace Society. Dahal and his team recently returned from a 20-district assessment tour.

The situation will only change if political progress is made. Madhesi groups are willing to talk, and it is a positive sign that the announcement of an electoral system giving madhesis 31 percent representation in the CA was not met with a public outcry from any side. But madhesis, like other underrepresented groups, were not consulted during the drafting of the law, and want to be assured it will work. They also see the law as a starting point for talks on institutional, and not just electoral, reforms.

The government, particularly the Home and Peace and Reconstruction ministries, are treating the situation largely as a problem of law and order. Home Minister Sitaula is sending out the APF to deal with groups that, even if they are armed, have a political core. Ram Chandra Poudel invites the armed groups in the tarai to the table through television interviews, but sources close to some of the groups, including JTMM-Goit, say these offers are never followed up off-screen. A recent attempt at behind-the-scenes negotiations with the

JTMM-Jwala failed because the government talks team refused to provide safe passage to the talks to Singh and his team, who are under threat from the Maoists, or waive the murder charges against Singh.

Every new or splinter group, such as the Bisfot faction of the JTMM and the Tarai Cobras, is taking a hardline position on autonomy and threatening secession. Moderate madhesis see this position as a bargaining chip. "The secessionist talk by the armed groups is an articulation of pent-up frustration about continuing discrimination. But the gist of madhesi demand is: treat us like Nepali, we don't want to be Indians, or anything else," says Vijay Kant Karna, a political analyst and activist with Jaghrit Nepal. He is convinced that even the radical groups will sit down to talk if they feel the government is honest about righting the wrongs.

The government has been conducting stop-and-go negotiations with the MJF on proportional representation and a federal set-up with the right to self-determination, but these have hit a roadblock, says Sarita

Giri of Nepal Sadhbhawana Party (NSP), adding that there have been no meetings for over a month in part because Minister Poudel is overstretched.

In any case, the home and peace ministries can't keep up with the changing situation on the ground. The Forum has weakened in recent months, and analysts say talks will only be productive if all groups, armed or not, are engaged with.

Madhesi analysts concede that the lack of a unified front and credible leadership is a problem, as is the inability of the moderates to fill the vacuum created by the eroding political bases of the main parties, including the Maoists and the MJF. There is no critical player in the tarai and that the situation could tip in any direction, says a researcher. Most madhesi factions, including the armed groups, met in Patna last month to build an alliance. So far, the idea has not taken off.

The government looks set to push ahead with election preparations, whether or not all of the tarai is on board. The onus lies on the government to send fresh peace missives to the various madhesi factions if it wants to be able to conduct an election anytime soon, says Giri.

The election has to be credible. "The whole point of the CA is to write a people's constitution, and if the government cannot ensure the participation of people from all over the country, who can be sure what kind of constitution that will lead to," says Karna. ●



## Everest at Birtamod

Everest Bank's 21<sup>st</sup> branch started in Birtamod, making Everest the private commercial bank with the largest branch network in Nepal. The bank also plans to start using the financing software Finnacle in February 2008 and will offer travelling banking to customers from Sanischare to Kakarvitta serving them from vehicles. EBL has tie-ups with Punjab National Bank and the SCT Network. Its debit card works at all ATMs of the SCT network, over 500 merchant outlets in Nepal, and over 1,000 PNB bank machines across India.



## Wipro gets Unza

Wipro Consumer Care and Lighting has acquired 100 percent ownership of Unza Holdings, a Singapore-based fast moving consumer goods company for \$246 million. The transaction is expected to be closed by this month. Unza is South Asia's largest manufacturer of personal care products, with operations in over 40 countries. Unza markets the Enchanteur, Safi, Romano, Izzi, Vigor, and Maxkleen brands of personal care products.



## Golfing Laxmi

Laxmi Bank is sponsoring pro golfer Deepak Thapa Magar to participate in the 2007/08 Professional Golf Tour India. Thapa, who turned pro in 1993, became the first Nepali to win the Surya Nepal Masters this year. Laxmi Bank is also supporting Shiva Ram Shrestha, a 19-year-old caddy-turned-golfing prodigy. The bank was established in April 2002 and currently has nine branches around the country.

### NEW PRODUCTS

**ARMY FRAGRANCES:** The Swiss Army Company has launched three brands of Swiss Army fragrances in Nepal—the Swiss Army classic, Swiss Army Altitude, and Swiss Army for Her. Founded in 1884, the Swiss Army company is most famous for its multi-function knives. The perfumes are being marketed by United Marketing in Nepal.



**PERFUMED KILLER:** Overseas International is importing a new brand of air freshener, RS Air Fresheners, which also doubles as a mosquito repellent. Made from citronella, the air freshener is available in 12 different fragrances, at prices ranging from Rs 175-325. The product is being marketed by Bishes Marketing.



# Future sights

## There's a whole new world out there if you can look ahead creatively

Travelling is always a chance to learn a lot, particularly when you go to countries of hope, innovation, and aspiration. In Vietnam, companies are developing infrastructure as part of a three decade plan. In Singapore there is a perpetual desire to do something new and different, to improve one's life. If the president gets a seven-figure corporate salary, he better earn it. Thailand, it is said, is the Argentina of the East—three steps



MIN BAJRACHARYA



**ECONOMIC SENSE**  
**Artha Beed**

forward, two steps back. The underlying lesson in all cases is that you do not mess around too much with political structures. Going from Nepal, the other striking thing you notice is how forward-looking countries can be. It's good to have tradition but we are mired in our heritage, looking for state structures from the time of Rama or before the unification of Nepal at any rate. The world benefits from moving towards a regulated market economy and outsourcing services, but we continue to live in the belief (and hope) that the state should do business, that all employees should have tenure for life, and that unions will solve everything. In many countries you can buy prepaid electricity cards with a choice of service options. We spend our time debating whether to use water for rafting or generating electricity. Private

developers have, through public-private partnerships, created cities and townships that provide quality of life at affordable costs. We make owning and developing a crime. Globally, countries find it possible to make their citizens self-disciplining. We have things like traffic lights as merely suggestions, instead of part of a legal framework. So here's what we need to do. First, of course, stop craning our necks to look into the past and instead turn our gaze to the future. Second, we need to think innovatively about the future. For instance, out-of-the-box-crusader Anil Chitrakar and the Beed have discussed allowing SMS voting for the upcoming elections to the constituent assembly. Nepal will go through a dozen elections in the next five years. The CA election will be followed by the national election, then elections in the federated provinces, for local government, and so on. Given the South Asian love for coalitions, most of these will not last the full term. We should distribute mobile

handsets so people can vote without having to disrupt their daily lives. The software can ensure that no one votes more than once, and the hardware providers will be happy to look at a market of 15 million. This phone can then be used for multiple purposes—microcredit transfers, rural banking, and so on. In Kenya, Vodafone has made money transfers possible through mobile phones. Think of the savings on infrastructure, security, and personnel costs. The initial investment—the cost of the phone sets, the software, security features—will be lower than all the above. There is unlimited potential for advertisers and content providers, whether radio, multimedia news, education programs, or whatever else strikes your fancy. We don't need bizarre ideas, just an innovative look at existing processes. It's the one thing that could move us into a whole other league. ●

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# "Fitting reply to those who call us terrorists..."



KIRAN PANDAY

Puspha Kamal Dahal in interview in Maoist paper, *Janadesh*, 10 July

जनादेश

**Janadesh:** Lenin wrote his 'April Thesis' while traveling clandestinely by train from Moscow to Switzerland. Did you also draw up a new outline for the revolution during your plane trip to Switzerland?

**Puspha Kamal Dahal:** Not exactly. But we did see the place where Lenin stayed, and this certainly made me think about our revolution but this wasn't exactly the right moment to write a thesis.

**What about the discussions on security sector reforms?**

We had memorable discussions at the Democratic Forum for Control of Armed Forces in Geneva. Their main understanding was DDR [demobilisation, disarmament, and rehabilitation] like in other countries. But we were able to convince them that we are not going from armed struggle to politics, but that politics and armed struggle are related. We tried to explain to them our position on the political revolution we are

embarked in and how it is possible to have a political transformation in Nepal.

**How do the European governments and people look at the Maoist uprising in Nepal?**

Europe is positive. It doesn't want the peace process to collapse. Neutral Europeans are even more positive about the Maoist uprising. I told the press conference that if the Europeans don't come forward the peace process could be disturbed because the superpowers don't want peace in Nepal. I said this could lead to a big crisis. I appealed to the Europeans to take the lead.

**Can Europe cross out the Americans?**

I don't think so. But even so, the Europeans have their own culture, tradition, and ideology and they could make a positive impact.

**So what were the main achievements of your visit?**

We managed to dispel some of the falsehoods about the People's War and the CPN-M. The fact that we first went to Switzerland sent a message to Europe and to the world that we don't want to be mixed up in any geopolitical blocs. We learnt about how to engage in development and political transformation by looking at a country with similar topography to ours. We gave a fitting reply to those who call us terrorists.

**Did you find any confusion about the Maoists?**

Yes, there is some confusion. Some people seemed to think that we don't want the constituent assembly elections. We cleared up that confusion. Baburam Bhattarai's visit to Oslo for an international meeting was also useful in clearing confusion. All in all, we made a positive intervention in Europe.

## Harsh lessons

Nepal, 8 July

Six months ago, Krishna Prasad Baral (*pictured*), a teacher at Himalaya Secondary School in Mainakaderi, Saptari, was threatened by the JTMM and was forced to flee to Damak, Jhapa.

"I was the only pahadi in the entire school. When the JTMM threatened to abduct me, I had to flee. Now I have no job and a family to support," said Baral. He started being threatened after other teachers at the school were targeted. Shivadhan Rai had been abducted, and Shantiram Adhikari was told to leave the village within five weeks. Baral says the principal of the school, the district education officer, and local human rights activists were aware that Baral was being threatened.

Meanwhile in the hills, many madhesi teachers are being forced to leave. Durga Sinha, 24 (*pictured*) was transferred to Tapericha Lower Secondary School in Dolpa three years ago. She was earning a good living

teaching at the school and giving private classes. As a single mother she had to support two children who were studying in Kathmandu.

"When madhesi did not let pahadis live in the tarai, pahadis started doing the same thing with madhesi in pahadi-dominated areas," says Sinha. She says that both local Maoists and the school administration were responsible for spreading fear in the region.

Sinha, who now lives in Kathmandu, no longer has a regular source of income and has been compelled to pull her kids out of school in Kathmandu and send them to her parents in Siraha. She says madhesi teachers from other schools have also fled due to fear and intimidation from pahadi groups.

Minister of Education and Sports Pradeep Nepal said he was not aware that teachers are being displaced from both the tarai and the hill regions. "I am in touch regularly with district education officers, but have not received such information about the displacement of teachers," he said.



PICS: DEBENDRA BHATTARAI

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Forest and trees  
Forestry expert Narayankaji Shrestha in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 1-15 July

The Forestry Minister has stopped the handover of community forests in the tarai saying he wants to stop the logging being carried out by poachers in cahoots with rural big shots and the bureaucracy. But the Federation of Forestry User Groups says this goes against the principle that communities should benefit from local forest conservation and have threatened to bring the country to a halt if this is implemented. Both may be right, but neither side is trying to resolve the issue by looking at the root of the problem.

Nepal's community forest success story is premised on

participation and consensus, transparency, local-decision-making and management and ownership. That is why there are provisions for the marginalised to also benefit from the handover of community forests. The Forestry Master Plan of 1990 laid out these principles and they have been followed till now.

Today, many of these principles are being violated. Forests are being handed over without consensus and participation to smuggler and poachers with local connivance. Local bureaucrats were never comfortable with decentralised decision-making on community forests. They were never converted from 'technical experts' to 'social experts' as envisaged in the Master Plan.

Donor experts assigned to

this sector are also not knowledgeable or committed as they used to be. They are more interested in the 'inclusion' mantra than on the crisis in the forest management system that is threatening to undermine past gains. Donor-funded NGOs are similarly only involved in patchwork damage control. The minister sholdn't just pass an edict to stop handovers, but discuss the problems with the stakeholders first.

There is an urgent need to make the Forest Coordination Committee more inclusive and effective, scrap the contradictory rules and laws imposed after 1999, hold the fifth national conference in 2008 to evaluate the community forestry sector, aim to have a new Master Plan by 2010 crafted by Nepalis to conserve Nepal's forests.

State of confusion

Tularam Saha in *Kantipur*, 12 July

As violence, abduction, and extortion become common and the relationship between pahadis and madhesis worsens, it is becoming clear that Kathmandu's attitude towards the tarai has not changed.

During the Rana period, madhesis needed a visa to enter Kathmandu. BP Koirala tried to be more inclusive, but was not successful. The 1990 movement came and went, governments changed, but the tarai was never a priority. Pahadis started thinking of all madhesis as Sadbhabana party workers. Similarly, after the Madhes Uprising all madhesis have become Forum workers. There are a handful of organisations against pahadis, but Kathmandu seems to think all of the tarai is anti-pahadi.

When the Madhes Uprising started, people thought it was just another protest by royalists and called it a law and order issue, and Badri Prasad Mandal and Kamal Thapa were arrested. When the situation still did not improve, the protests were called a problem of social harmony. After the prime minister's second address, the madhes issue went back to being a law and order problem. The government has never given the tarai a serious thought.



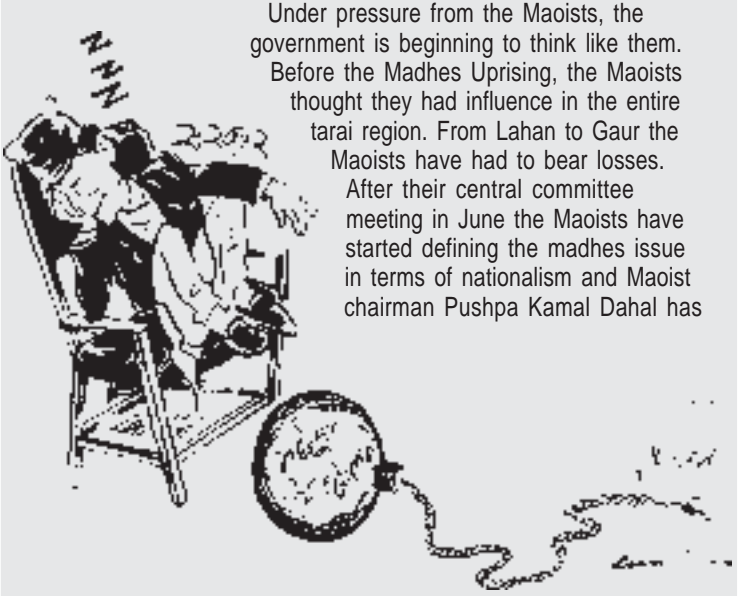
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Abin Shrestha in *Samaya*, 12 July

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Now the only thing we can talk about is how to delineate the borders of the two countries [Nepal and Madhes].”

JTMM-Jwala leader Nagendra Prasad Paswan, 'Jwala Singh' in an interview with *Naya Patrika*, 12 July



publicly said that the trouble in the tarai is the work of criminal elements. The NC is quiet and the UML flip-flops, and the Maoists say the madhes issue is related to class, and not identity or inclusiveness. The prime minister who was eager to find a solution for the tarai in January is now preparing a 'special security system' now.

It's not just the government and the political parties who do not know what to do about the madhes issue. The madhesi community itself does not have an agenda. The uprising was leaderless and even so-called madhesi intellectuals do not argue logically on issues of identity and inclusiveness. The Uprising could also not identify the enemies of within the madhesi community and friends among pahadis.

This complex region is caught in a war started a decade ago by pahadis and criminal politics of UP and Bihar. The madhesi revolution has to be linked to the essence and uniqueness of the tarai. It has to be redefined and taken in a new direction. If the state tries to suppress it in the name of peace and security, the movement will turn communal and violent.

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Pollution and encroachment have destroyed the Valley's historic river

# An unholy ho



**MARRED VISTA:** This 150-year-old painting by British doctor Henry Ambrose Oldfield (*left*) shows the unmarred panorama of the **Chobar gorge**. The photo taken this week shows a road bridge under construction next to the old suspension bridge. When complete it will destroy the natural and cultural heritage of Chobar, the hill Manjushree is said to have sliced to let out the water of the valley's prehistoric lake. Chobar is one of three remaining gorges in Kathmandu. The other two are at Gokarna and **Pashupati**. The fourth at **Kodku** was destroyed by stone mining.



KIRAN PANDAY



## PRANAYA SJB RANA

High in the Shivapuri hills at Sundarijal, a crystalline spring drips into a stream, forming the Bagmati river. Once you've tasted the cool, crisp water up there it is difficult to grasp that this is the same river you see down in Chabahil, Pashupati, Baneswor, and beyond.

By the time, the river reaches Thapathali, the water is a murky brown, sluggish, and viscous, polluted with a torrid mix of the decaying remains of slaughtered animals, urine, faeces, household waste, industrial sewage, and

garbage. In the summer, the stench makes you retch. The river exits the Valley past Chobar as a foul sewer. No fish survive here, and humans who take a dip in the Bagmati are likely to contract serious dermatological problems.

Kathmandu Valley is home to over two million people, and produces more than 750 cubic metres of waste every year. Almost a quarter of the 100 or so tons of waste generated daily is left to decay on the streets or tossed casually into rivers and streams. Every morning hundreds of open drains and sewers dump raw untreated yellow-green sewage into the Bagmati. Adding

to the river's problems is the unregulated and rampant sand mining, which has greatly denuded the river bed, weakened the bases of the bridges and dams, and exposed the underlying clay.

The Bagmati is the grid on which the Valley's traditional cultural life is mapped. Along it are ghats, temples, and choks. Like the river, they too are falling apart. Riverbank encroachment has led to the narrowing of the Bagmati, making it deeper and creating a canyon of sorts at different places. The river has been forced to recede so much that the

Misra, **Indrayeni**, and Tankeswor Dev ghats are next to streets, not the Bagmati. Some ghats have decayed into dumping grounds, others are quite literally pigsties.

There are two main sets of problems related to the Bagmati that need to be urgently addressed. One is pollution. The other is the encroachment along the riverbanks that is forcing a north-south river to flow east-west.

Bagmati activist Huta Ram Baidya (*see box*) says that the narrowing of the river due to encroachment could cause a major flood in the next few years. The bridges, especially the one at

Tinkune, are already weak. The sloppily constructed buildings and flimsy squatter settlements will be washed away just as easily as they were constructed.

Fifteen years ago, the river broke through the dam below the bridge at New Baneswor. The dam was rebuilt, but instead of taking steps to ensure that it wouldn't collapse again, the government allowed settlement along and encroachment of the riverbank, and itself built a police station there. Just three years later, there was another flood, and everything on the banks—including the police station—was destroyed. ●



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# oly river



**NOW AND THEN:** The old Bagmati Bridge at **Thapthali** in the 1950s (top) spans a wide, still sandy and clean river. Today, the Bagmati at **Teku** is a sewer and garbage dump. The **Tankeswar Dev** ghat (below) is now a long way from the river's bank.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

## Old man river

"We cannot control nature," says Bagmati activist, Huta Ram Baidya, "we must work together with nature to preserve the river and our culture."

Baidya, who turned 87 on Monday, calls the Valley a part of the 'Bagmati Valley Civilisation'. But he is not very optimistic about the condition of the river. He realises that some things have changed permanently, but is disheartened that the Bagmati remains as polluted as ever. The problem now, as he sees it, is that efforts to deal with pollution and urbanisation will have their own negative consequences. The proposal of building sewer drains parallel to the river to manage waste will destroy the ghats just as roads along the west bank of the **Bishnumati** have.



MIN BAJRACHARYA

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# "I was never for a

**At the end of his three-year tenure America's outspoken ambassador to Nepal, James F Moriarty talked with *Nepali Times* about being misled by the king, his continued mistrust of the Maoists, and the need to get Bhutani refugees out of camps.**

***Nepali Times:* In hindsight, do you think you and the international community gave the king too much benefit of the doubt in February 2005?**

**James Moriarty:** At the beginning after he took over, we all hoped he would move back towards democracy and he didn't. I myself, the British ambassador, and the Indian ambassador did everything possible to tell the king that this was a very ill-advised move. He warned us in November [2004] that he was thinking about it, but we all said it was a horrible idea. In December he assured us he wasn't going to do it...I want to make the historical record clear: we did everything possible to turn him away from that [move] and that's why we all had a pretty harsh reaction to his takeover.

We were all willing to say, 'Well, you've done this, now figure out where you go from here.' Unfortunately he never did, despite our continually stressing that he had to bring the parties back into government.

**Did this affect your relationship with him?**

I'm a diplomat, I'm used to people telling me things that aren't completely true. It always had to be something I had

to consider. I think it also had a big impact on other countries' views of his reliability, including India's.

**There's a perception that before February First you sided with the king and not the parties, and that your remarks about the Maoists pitched a hard line.**

I don't think in the run up to the takeover anyone thought I was siding with the king against the parties. The king told me he had plan, which subsequently proved to be wrong and I advocated the king's reaching out to the parties. Maybe I wasn't quick enough to say it should be the king doing the reaching out, maybe I'll find a bit of fault there. But I really did not do or say anything to welcome a royal revival.

**You have always been very outspoken against the Maoists. Why were you so certain about where they were going?**

I'm a China hand and the Maoists are, from my perspective, Maoists. From a lot of Nepalis' perspectives, they are just another political party going through teething problems, pointing to insurgencies and murderous tactics used by other parties in the past. That never made sense to me. I saw an insurgency that had made huge progress, was committed, and was using roadmaps handed down by Lenin and Mao. Mao always said tactical flexibility is fine, but never lose sight of the end goal. Until I begin to see something that indicates that

they are willing to abandon those roadmaps and that end goal, absolute power, I have to consider them Maoists.

**If you could do it over, would you be more diplomatic?**

No. I think your country is going through a huge, huge transition. The outcome is still uncertain. It could end up being very positive but if I felt that my lack of doing something let it drift in the wrong direction, I'd never forgive myself. The downside of not proclaiming the dangers is much greater than that of some people saying I'm not very diplomatic.



MIN BAJRACHARYA



MIN BAJRACHARYA

## Pressing need

### Why a free press matters for Nepal

"Be assured, there will be no anti-press activities on our behalf. We are committed to press freedom, freedom of expression, and loktantra." This statement by Pushpa Kamal Dahal to the



**OPINION**  
**Jason Miklian**

Federation of Nepali Journalists last September brought hope of a new golden age for press freedom. Journalists had weathered a terrible storm the past ten years,

with reporters intimidated, harassed, fired, kidnapped, and even murdered by both the state and the Maoists in one of the most dangerous journalistic environments in the world. Now more assassins lurk on the doorstep after a too-brief respite.

The elimination of independent media has long been a favoured tactic of regimes that wish to suppress free speech, and it is disheartening to see these dark forces return. A competitive and free press provides an essential function in a healthy democracy as a check on the power of the

corrupt and incompetent. As the proverbial 'fourth estate', an independent press provides a voice for the voiceless. But now, Maoist-supported groups and others are attempting to stifle dissenting voices through intimidation. *Samacharpatra* and *Mahanagar* have returned to the newsstands, but independent newspapers within and outside the capital are increasingly being pressured to be political mouthpieces, with warnings of dire results if they do not comply.

This is added to a disturbing larger trend gaining ground

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# royal revival”

**Have you considered that the [Maoist] leadership may be trying to move into the mainstream, but is having a hard time controlling a radicalised cadre?**  
That’s the hope. If people want to see a few nice words as an indicator that they’ve made that leap, I can quote you just as many tough things they’ve said that make it clear they have no intention of settling for anything less than power.

We’re hoping they will eventually recognise that “Oops, we’ve gone as far as we can go with this revolution, our best bet is staying within the system and over time seeking electoral support to become the dominant party.”

They don’t become a mainstream party by saying a few nice things and signing a lot of documents, none of which they’ve implemented. This should be about Nepal having a process in place which, if implemented in good faith, will inevitably convince them to come into the mainstream.

**How important has your coordination with India been in the outcome so far?**  
I think it has played an important role. India has a heck of a lot more influence here than the United States does. It’s much closer, the ties are much greater. If India has some view in the same direction that makes it a lot easier. Most of the time I’ve been here, that’s been the case.

**The US is ready to take 60,000 Bhutani refugees, but doesn’t this let off the Thimpu regime scot free?**  
Bhutan’s regime has been let off scot free for 16 years now. Nothing happening now is holding them

accountable, and that’s the second-most important issue. The humanitarian tragedy has to be addressed first. I’ve been down to the camps a lot and you don’t want to be second generation, born in a camp where you have no future. I tell the refugee leaders that if their real concern is keeping the issue the focus of international attention, the best way to do that is to get 40 or 60 or 70,000 refugees in the United States and elsewhere, writing to their congressmen and senators saying they were victims of ethnic cleansing. Then you get congressmen asking what the government of Bhutan is doing to rectify the situation. I also want to stress that the 60,000 figure is not a cap. We will consider anybody who wants to come.

**How seriously do you take the sometimes violent activism against resettlement?**  
It raises a big question—to what degree do the Maoists influence particularly the more violent of the pro-repatriation types. I think most Bhutanese in the camps can be worked with, but I worry that there might be a hardcore of total rejectionists. I hope we can steer them away from violence and into letting the other refugees exercise their freedom of choice.

**What are your parting thoughts on leaving Nepal?**  
I’m very sad, particularly because I hope and I pray that the November election is going to come off. It will be the most important step forward on the road to democracy. The thought that I’m going to miss that brings me a lot of regret.

throughout Nepal that journalists are fair game for assault, and not just by the state. Physical attacks upon individual reporters are increasing, from not only groups like the JTMM-Goit, the YCL, and the MJF, but even from individuals and relatives of those exposed for corruption. The pen may be mightier than the sword, but journalists cannot be treated as if they were armed fighters on the frontlines.

Reversing this trend will require Information and Communications Minister Krishna Bahadur Mahara to take three courageous steps. First, he should use his leadership position to work with Labour and Transport Minister Ramesh Lekhak to publicly and universally disown violence of any form against news organisations or those who work for them. This means serving as an honest broker for legitimate labour movements representing those mistreated by media outlets, but also condemning the strong arm tactics of the Maoist-influenced All-Nepal Communication, Press, and Publications Trade Union, and actively prosecuting those who use violence as a means of action. Members of any organisation have the right to assembly and fair employment; they do not have the right to threaten their superiors with violence if their political demands are not met.

Second, Mahara needs to take a leading and visible role in ensuring all media personnel can do their job in the run-up to the elections without fear of reprisal. There will be tremendous pressure to harass and threaten journalists from all sides of the political spectrum, and the time is now to set a strong public policy that explicitly ensures journalistic freedom. There is growing concern that government outlets will be used as propaganda tools, and appointing Maoists Om Sharma and Rishi Raj Baral as heads of the state newspaper and TV stations does not instill confidence in impartiality. Allowing the opposition to make its voice heard would prove to those both within and outside Nepal that the CPN-M is interested in democracy at least as much as its own power.

Third, Mahara should ensure that the Working Journalist Act of 2051 is effectively enforced and also updated to protect those in radio, TV, internet, and government-run media outlets as well as print. This simple step will serve to legally protect those who agree or dissent, from Royalist to Maoist. Publicly supporting even a single journalist who disagrees with the Mahara/Maoist party line would deliver a powerful message of legitimisation not only to voters and a still-sceptical assembly, but also to an international community that desperately wishes for a fully democratic Nepal. Upholding the rights of all journalists would teach that victimisation of those in the media is never acceptable.

Now is your chance to prove the detractors and diplomats wrong, Mr Mahara. Nepal, and the world, is watching and waiting for your leadership. ●

Jason Miklian is a South Asia researcher at the International Peace Research Institute of Oslo. He can be reached at [jason@prio.no](mailto:jason@prio.no)

# Planet Hong Kong

**H**uge signboards hang precariously above streets teeming with pedestrians, all miraculously obeying the traffic signals, as double-decker buses barrel through intersections without honking or hitting anyone. Rush hour subways, packed with commuters who never spit, shove or eve-tease, convey us across town in minutes for dinner with old friends, featuring mysterious dishes we regret asking about. This could only be Hong Kong, the city of dreams on fast-forward, where time is money and I’m the only one running late for appointments.

After imperial Britain seized the barren island called Fragrant Harbour in 1841, the sole reason most people came to this free-port devoted to *laissez-faire* economics was to make a buck, and the Hand is no exception. Fortunes were made by British firms and their Chinese suppliers in everything from silk to opium, arms to toys, turning Hong Kong into China’s outlet to the world. Shanghai industrialists fled to this safe-haven when the People’s Republic was declared in 1949, bringing their capital and expertise, while the poor escaped famine and upheaval in the provinces and provided cheap labour for the factories.

The well-heeled descendants of these refugees now crowd the high-end shopping malls, and no one worries much about the past. There was a time when the Orientalist in me would have taken offence at the suggestion that Kathmandu had anything to learn from this paragon of consumerism and avarice. Hong Kong has always been about money and very little else, while Nepal had abiding spirituality and rich culture. Hong Kong is a new city, constantly tearing down and reinventing itself, while Kathmandu boasted ancient temples and a brilliant architectural tableau. If we copied such a place, all we’d be left with is ugly glass and concrete and a bunch of greedy materialists.



Well, anyone who still agrees with this sentiment hasn’t been downtown for awhile. Since Kathmandu’s heritage and social cohesion has already been sacrificed to haphazard modernisation perhaps we can learn something from Hong Kong and its people, who also wrecked their heritage but at least got rich doing so.

Recent conversations with local friends centred on the tenth anniversary of the handover from the old colonial regime to the new. Fears that China would govern with a heavy hand have long dissipated, and though no one yearns for the old days nor feels any loyalty to the British Empire, all value the sanctity of the individual and rule of law that stands as the greatest colonial legacy.

The Brits never seriously considered granting democracy to the rabble, much like the new masters in distant Beijing; the territory’s chief executive and top bureaucrats are chosen by a secretive cabal guided by the central Politburo. Citizens express concern over irksome details like the promotion of Mandarin over Cantonese and withdrawal of subsidies for English-medium schools, but most accept political manipulation as long as the economy is left alone.

Many say it was actually Hong Kong that took over China, as its well educated entrepreneurs fanned out in search of opportunities, teaching the skills of international trade to unsophisticated mainlanders emerging from decades of deluded policies. Needless to say, the Chinese are quick learners, proven by the free-for-all across the border as communism is hastily abandoned and unbridled capitalism feverishly embraced.

We already know prosperity defuses social tensions, but transparency and the rule of law play essential roles in allowing everyone a shot at improving their lot in life. HK’s burgeoning middle class got where they are primarily through hard work, but were greatly helped by the lack of government interference in the economy, a low tax rate fairly applied, an independent judiciary, and a vibrant free press. An environment that guarantees impartial justice for all encourages investment and risk-taking that creates jobs, the answer to most of our problems here in Nepal.

Typically, we’re heading in the opposite direction. The judiciary can be bought by the highest bidder, leftist forces punish business with militant unionism and extortion, and efforts to muzzle the media are intensifying apace. If Hong Kong represents a more modern, open approach, Kathmandu doggedly pursues protectionist policies that failed long ago everywhere else, ensuring that factories close, jobs are lost and the economy continues in free-fall. ●



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# Road to recovery

Post-conflict countries need to work on the economy and inclusion together



**CARROT AND STICK:** These locals are waiting for a US-led Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team to open a new school in Ahmed Aba in Afghanistan. Such efforts only work in the long term if all groups have a fair shot at progress.

extraordinarily high levels after the conflicts ends, both in per capita terms and relative to the size of the recipient economies. Typically, this type of aid declines very rapidly.

Low-income countries in the normal process of development, for example, receive steady inflows of official foreign assistance of about 3 percent of their gross national income. By contrast, aid reached 95 percent of gross national income in Rwanda soon after the conflict ended, but fell to 20 percent within five years.

Consolidating peace following violent conflict has little chance of success unless jobs are created and the economy is quickly stabilised and brought onto a path of investment and growth with low inflation. The United Nations reckons that if economic reconstruction fails in terms of promoting dynamism and inclusion, countries in the transition to peace have a better than even chance of reverting to war.

Leaving aside the cost in terms of human lives, the economic costs of maintaining peace are a fraction of what would be required for humanitarian assistance, military intervention, and peacekeeping operations should the country relapse into conflict. Hence, effective financing for peacetime is a good investment of donors' resources and a

major factor in conflict prevention.

But donors need to avoid some common mistakes. In many cases, economic reconstruction has failed partly because donors required that their own nationals or companies be used. This policy has often led to programs that countries do not want and to employment of foreign experts for tasks nationals could and should have performed. By providing domestic firms with wage subsidies for hiring unskilled workers, donors would increase the effectiveness and fairness of their assistance in support of national-led reconstruction and conflict prevention.

Given lower labour costs, local businessmen could decide to invest under the conditions of uncertainty and high risk that characterise post-conflict situations. The advantages in terms of employment creation, reintegrating former combatants into productive activities, savings from safety-net programs, and improved public security would be many. This type of aid would also provide political support for the authorities from a population grateful for policies that promote job creation.

This policy would have neither the fiscal cost associated with government-financed subsidies nor the distortions caused by the difficulty of cutting subsidies once the government has offered them. Grant-supported subsidies would remain in place for a finite period, and donors would gradually phase them out as aid programs expire. Such subsidies would also help reactivate the private sector, which is essential as large-scale post-conflict aid withers to the low levels that are common under conditions of normal development. ● (*Project Syndicate*)

*Edmund Phelps, Nobel laureate in economics for 2006, is professor of economics at Columbia University. Graciana del Castillo, a director of the Centennial Group, is author of a forthcoming book titled Post-Conflict Economic Reconstruction: Lessons, Best Practices, and Policy Guidelines.*

For the world's advanced countries, a key challenge is to broaden economic and social inclusion without diminishing existing economic dynamism. The problems of war-ravaged countries are far more acute and their choices much more constrained. They have a double challenge: creating dynamic economies and at the

**COMMENT**  
**Edmund S Phelps and**  
**Graciana del Castillo**

same time promoting economic and social inclusion.

In countries coming out of war or other conflicts, efforts at inclusion are futile in stagnant economies. Without both dynamism and inclusion, the path to peace and national reconciliation will be elusive, as recent experiences in Kosovo, East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq, and many countries in Africa illustrate.

Economic recovery needs to begin soon, not only because this is essential to maintaining political and social stability, but also because donors are unwilling to support economic reconstruction unless countries do their part to create an environment conducive to ensuring its sustainability. In the midst of political, social, and institutional vulnerabilities, as well as the vast damage to human and physical infrastructure that are the legacy of conflict, this is a monumental task.

Policymaking in these war torn economies is unique. Most countries in post-conflict situations suffer from weak fiscal positions, rendering the provision of internally financed subsidies impractical in most cases.

Moreover, foreign assistance, while stable in 'normal' developing countries, often exhibits sharp spikes in countries undergoing war-to-peace transitions. In many cases, post-conflict aid can reach

# Embracing Empire

The west is misguided in its reading of radical Islam as apocalyptic

Many prominent intellectuals in Europe and the United States—often with a leftist past—are sympathetic to the idea of using American armed force to further the cause of human rights and democracy in the world. Many are Jewish and much of the support has to do with fear of a repeat of the Third Reich. Any force is justified to avoid another Shoah.



**OPINION**  
**Ian Buruma**

Those who shirk their duty to support such force are no better than collaborators.

Now if we were less haunted by memories of appeasing the Nazi regime and the ensuing genocide, people might not be as concerned about human rights. And by no means do all those who work to protect the rights of others invoke the horrors of the Third Reich to justify Anglo-American armed intervention.

But the term "Islamofascism" invites us to see a big part of the Islamic world as a natural extension of Nazism. Saddam Hussein, hardly an Islamist, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who is, are often



**FASCISM UBER ALLAH:** The fact that the SS made a concerted effort to recruit Muslims, particularly European, is for some commentators today evidence of the roots of 'Islamofascism'.

described as natural successors to Adolf Hitler. And European weakness—and the 'treason' of its liberal scribes—paving the way to an Islamist conquest of Europe ("Eurabia") is seen as a ghastly echo of the appeasement of the Nazi threat.

Revolutionary Islamism is undoubtedly dangerous and bloody. Yet analogies with the Third Reich are usually false. No Islamist armies are about to march into Europe—indeed, most

victims of Revolutionary Islamism live in the Middle East, not in Europe – and Ahmadinejad, his nasty rhetoric notwithstanding, does not have a fraction of Hitler's power.

The refusal of many Muslims to integrate into Western societies, high levels of unemployment, and ready access to revolutionary propaganda can easily explode in acts of violence. But an 'Islamised' Europe is a remote prospect. We are not living a replay of 1938.

So why the high alarm about European appeasement, especially among neo-conservatives? Why the easy equation of Islamism with Nazism? Israel is often mentioned as a reason. But Israel means different things to different people. To certain evangelical Christians, it is the holy site of the Second Coming of the Messiah. To many Jews, it is the one state that will always offer refuge. To neocon ideologues, it is the democratic oasis in a desert of tyrannies.

Defending Israel against its Islamic enemies may be a factor in the existential alarmism that underlies the "war on terror." A nuclear-armed Iran would make Israel feel more vulnerable. But as an explanation it is overstated. Kouchner did not advocate western intervention in Bosnia or Kosovo because of Israel. If concern for Israel played a part in Paul Wolfowitz's advocacy of war in Iraq, it was probably a minor one. The common concerns were for human rights and democracy, and perhaps geopolitical.

Islamist rhetoric, adopted by Ahmedinejad among others, is deliberately designed to stir up memories of the Shoah. So perhaps the existential fear of some Western intellectuals is easier to explain than their remarkable, sometimes fawning trust in the US

government to save the world by force.

The explanation of this mysterious trust may lie elsewhere. Many neocons emerged from a leftist past, in which a belief in revolution from above was commonplace: "people's democracies" yesterday, "liberal democracies" today. Among Jews and other minorities, historical memory of protection from the imperial state may also play a part. Austrian and Hungarian Jews were among fiercely loyal subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor because he shielded them from the violent nationalism of the majority populations. Early in the communist era, Polish and Russian Jews were loyal subjects of the communist state, because it promised (falsely) to protect them against the violence of anti-Semitic nationalists.

If it were really true that the fundamental existence of the democratic Western world were about to be destroyed by an Islamist revolution, it would only make sense to seek protection in the full force of the US informal empire. But if one sees our current problems in less apocalyptic terms, then another kind of *trahison des clercs* comes into view: the blind cheering on of a sometimes foolish military power in unnecessary wars that cost more lives than they were intended to save. ● (*Project Syndicate*)

*Ian Buruma's most recent book is Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance. He is a professor of human rights at Bard College.*



# Prachanda’s ‘Song of the endgame’

ANONYMOUS

The game is going very well, Prachanda HMK.  
Your little ploy is racing on as no fool sees the ground you’ve won  
Or has the sense to understand as, still with blindfolds blithely on,  
They surge to do the all you urge, and stagger sightless on.

Demon Crass stupidity or as some say democracy  
(Which Mouthi Tongue proclaimed to be  
In his outdated ology the curse of spirits free)  
Has given you the cloak you need to serve your mockery.

The pace is set and gathers speed conniving parties, run on greed,  
Have failed to sight the void below or heed the Maoist seed.  
The seven clowns you’ve duped so well will fall and slowly drown  
And with them take the people’s hopes, the mantle and the crown

The GON is yours and good for you you’ve got the Monarch chained,  
The army’s next by treachery so friendship must be feigned.  
Infiltrate the PLA and make the body flail,  
Betrayed by politicians greed the second estate will fail.

What next you say, it’s plain to see, those silly parties they must be  
Removed if we are now to be a red flagged com-autocracee.  
No Army, King..., should not be hard,  
Two bridges more, we must remove, to play our Master card.

However brothers there’s a snag despite the gains we’ve made,  
With FUGs and public services now well within our shade.  
Though all the people’s ministries have fallen to our ploy,  
The CA polls have yet to come fore parliaments our toy.

We must manipulate the vote, to win it fair and free,  
Despite these nuisance monitors round every corner be.  
They’re supping all the beer and ale in every district bar  
But we can fool the western ass, just wait and see how far.

Our propaganda is the best, our lies are quite superb,  
We have the finest spin about for serving up this blurb.  
And if this fails the YCL is there to force our hand  
With ample stocks of guns and bombs buried in the land

The press we’ll handle easily, extortion tools are bound to see  
A pure and simple vick toree.  
Election day or People’s day will be our entry pawn,  
The brightest future every known, is just about to dawn.

Now parliament’s at beck and call, The Red Flags hoisted high.  
The ruling class we’ll crush at will with iron fisted hand,  
We’ll change the education rules as well and nationalise the land.  
It’s now too late you witless fools this path was surely known,  
Though buried by your brainless minds ...Now reap the seeds we’ve sown.

# Dhoopee

Excerpt from *The Juniper*, a long poem, by  
Toya Gurung

A bower of meaning  
the burden of meaning  
then it is empty of memory  
there is neither a place for it to step  
nor a branch to grasp  
nor words to speak

only sensations, stilled/stilled  
these pond-games themselves free of desire

various daily dealings  
the soft speech of love itself excavated  
it’s late now for body and mind to be cleansed  
a roar falls into a profound sleep, smoke emerges

An obvious film over the eyes  
where did the fibres of curiosity thin out  
Oh, oh people, what dismal days are here

The time has come to be troubled by a burning breast  
the time has come for wishing we could cool our  
burning  
legs in cold water

How long  
How much time  
How long must we wait entangled  
on this precipice, in these patterns

throb-throb, it’s the brain or the skull it sits in  
or the tiny roots of hair in its flesh  
pound-pound, ache-ache from head to foot  
will it be an excuse for this life to discover its end  
somehow...

What is this  
gusts of wind are snapping tiny twigs  
How can anyone see the gust or the wind

Either it has to blow all dust-coloured  
or one has to sand inside a roaring whirlwind  
How would I know... the wind god’s promises...

Translated by Ann Hunkins  
*Dhoopee*, Toya Gurung, Rs 185

# ALL FALL DOWN

WAYNE AMTZIS

*iWhen they hit you on the bone  
you limp the rest of your life!*  
Krzysztof Kieslowski

1. Taken from class  
Their rooms taken over  
Lines drawn

down book-spine  
and text Between threat  
and dare, it’s so

much a game,  
all join in! *All-y All-y in free!*  
Math and grammar

on the run. Cutting class  
for *Follow the leader.*  
Skipping grades

for (“do this!” “Do that!”)  
*Someone* says. Tongue-tied  
and finger-pointing

taught. Answers sworn  
to a stammering halt  
the..., the ... lesson learned:

no one to answer  
for it. Shouts and slaps  
spat out from above

You duck you hunker  
You slip away.  
Martyrdom, *the Prix*

*de Triumph.*  
Death — a graduation of sorts.

2. Questions hurt  
The answers... to put hurt away  
But Hurt hurries hides

holds back  
Hits!  
Not just knees

and bridges,  
but buttressed belief,  
all ties

to a wider world  
House full, kerosene lit,  
ruin...

rises on hind legs,  
bares its teeth.  
Rasped breath resounds

under ground  
No helping hand  
pulls you free. Hillbilly,

no odyssey  
brings you back  
to set things

right. Dragged  
from a soiled blanket of roots  
and stones,

a youth no one claims

3. The Museum  
(of the Insurrection)  
houses: the cries

of the bereft  
On alternate Tuesdays,  
at midday,

in the inner courtyard,  
actual participants  
reenact (with assistance

from the audience)  
a Maoist public execution  
Drawn out with khukri

Or the military’s  
clandestine rapes

4. Everyone knows  
where Abel is.  
When Cain stands near

who dares say?  
Rumor has it –  
among the ash and gristle

there’s a list  
with names entered  
meticulously

Rumor has it —  
with only one killer left,  
all killing will cease.


Ashes, ashes, we all...  
Bow down to the Killer-in-chief.  
Brother to us all

# Learned behaviour

## The stage doesn’t translate perfectly into cinema—and that’s not always a bad thing

After moderate success on Broadway, Nicholas Hytner, director of Alan Bennett’s witty play about middle-class ambitions in ’80s Britain, quickly shot *The History Boys* for screen. The boys in question are eight brilliant overachievers at a grammar school. The school authorities see the boys’ zesty self-assurance as an opportunity to break into the Oxford/Cambridge arena. What ensues is an epigrammatic debate over how this can be achieved and what wisdom means.

Irwin (Moore), the young history tutor who represents the highflying pragmatism of Thatcherite England, impresses the boys with his glib quips and expedient methods of approaching historical topics. Interesting interpretations are more important to him than truth. Opposed to this pedagogy is the aged and adored



**CRITICAL CINEMA**  
**Diwas Kc**

general-studies teacher, the ultimate hero of the story, Hector (Griffiths). Hector’s anti-utilitarian and humanistic passion for

knowledge is formidable, despite (or perhaps because of, as Hector would argue) his fondness for pop culture and his students’ crotchets. The tussle between the two philosophies animates this story about learning with great vigour.

The film was made with the original cast, and the actors embody the characters with categorical exuberance. Richard Griffiths, who has received multiple awards for the role, plays Hector with a masterful balance of humour and sorrow. Also notable are Dominic Cooper as Dakin, the cocky seducer, Samuel Barnett as Posner who is desperately in love with Dakin, and Frances de la Tour as Dorothy, the jaded matron of this academic world.

For better or for worse, *The History Boys* is rooted in its theatrical past. Dialogue rules the film, and there is no room for



inarticulacy or dullness among the barrage of words. Hytner’s application of stage contrivance to the film is effective in emphasising the artificial and performative aspect of formal education. On the downside, the scenes appear over-prepared yet limited cinematically. Partial attempts at making the screen adaptation more realistic appear misguided. And the editing compliments neither the mercurial pace nor the shifting moods of the drama.

Still, the film offers glimmering entertainment and, staying true to Bennett’s writing, also asks rich questions about education. The distinctions between profound knowledge and pop culture, between high language and plain talk, are blatantly diminished. And Bennett’s buffeting of account book pedagogy impresses with remarkable wit. ●

*Director: Nicholas Hytner.*  
*Cast: Richard Griffiths, Stephen Campbell Moore, Samuel Barnett, Dominic Cooper, Frances de la Tour.*  
*2006. R. 104 min.*



ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Heartbeat Series 5** a group art exhibition by 12 young artists, 4.30 PM till 2 August at Baryo Fiesta, Naxal. 9851050299
- ❖ **Japanese Film Festival** 13 July: *Nodo Jiman*, 1.15-3.10 PM, *Fifteen* 3.30-5.30 PM, 14 July: *Adrenalin Drive* 10-11.50 AM, *Like Asura* 1-3.15 PM, and *Ghost Pub* 3.30-5.20 PM, at Nepal Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel. 4426680
- ❖ **Shastrartha** on history and historiography by Tri Ratna Manandhar and Surendra KC, 14 July, 4-6PM at Martin Chautari. 4238050
- ❖ **Pottery classes** one month course in coil and slab methods and two month course in wheel work, starting 1 August. 9851101837
- ❖ **Grand Yarhung** horse racing festival, part of Destination Manang 2007, from 18-22 July in Manang. 4423643
- ❖ **School Bullying** a workshop by Niti Rana, 28 and 29 July at The New Era, Battisputali. 9851023958
- ❖ **Film South Asia 2007** Festival of South Asian documentaries, 11-14 October. www.filmsouthasia.org



MUSIC

- ❖ **15<sup>th</sup> Yala Maya Classic** music series, 18 July, 5PM at Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka. 5553767
- ❖ **Jazz at Jatra** every Saturday 7PM onwards, at Jatra Café and Bar, Thamel.
- ❖ **Soul of Raga** live classical and fusion music, every Friday night at Nhuchhe's Kitchen, The Organic Bistro. 4429903.
- ❖ **Open mic night** at Via Via Café, every Friday, 8PM onwards.
- ❖ **Live music** at the Red Onion Bar, Wednesdays from 8PM with Yanki and Zigme Lepcha. 4416071
- ❖ **Ciney Gurung** every Wednesday and Rashmi Singh every Friday, live at the Absolute Bar, Hotel Narayani Complex, 7PM. 5521408
- ❖ **DJ Raju and the Cloudwalkers** live at the Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency, every Friday and Saturday. 4491234

DINING

- ❖ **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Monsoon Wine Festival** 16 wines at Rs 150 a glass and Rs 600 a bottle, at Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel. 4250440
- ❖ **Monsoon Magic** live jazz by Inner Groove and a variety of cocktails from the summer special menu, every Wednesday, Rs 599 at Fusion – the Bar at Dwarika's. 4479488
- ❖ **Friday evening BBQ** with live music, at the Hotel Himalaya, 7PM, Rs 499 net. 5523900
- ❖ **Walk and lunch** every Saturday at the Shivapuri Heights Cottage. 9841371927
- ❖ **Kebabs and curries** at the Dhaba, Thapathali. 9841290619
- ❖ **Krishnarpan** Nepali specialty restaurant at Dwarika's Hotel, six to 22 course ceremonial lunch and dinner. 4479488
- ❖ **Weekend special** with sekuwa, bara, barbeque, Fridays at Ambassador Garden House, Lazimpat, 5.30 PM onwards. 4411706
- ❖ **Flavours of the Middle East** every Friday and the taste of Thailand every Wednesday at The Café, Hyatt Regency, Boudha. 4491234
- ❖ **Light nouvelle snacks** and elaborate cordon bleu meals at La'Soon, Pulchok, behind the Egyptian embassy. 5537166
- ❖ **Continental cuisine** and wine by the fire place at Kilroy's, Thamel. 4250440.
- ❖ **Smorgasbord** lunch at Park Village Resort, every Saturday. 4375280
- ❖ **Gyakok** at the Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, minimum four diners at Rs 450 per person, two hours' notice.
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- ❖ **Calcutta's rolls, biryani, kebabs** Indian cuisine at Bawarchi, Bluebird Mall Food Court. 9741000735
- ❖ **Woodfired pizzas** at the Roadhouse Café, Thamel 4262768, Bhatbhateni 4426587 and Pulchok 5521755
- ❖ **Pizza** from the woodfired oven at Java, Thamel. 4422519
- ❖ **Jazzabell café** 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 softdrink, Rs 690 net. 5560675

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Harry Potter returns for his fifth year at Hogwarts still shaken by the tragedy of the previous year's Triwizard Tournament. With the Ministry of Magic denying the truth about Lord Voldemort's (Ralph Fiennes) return, Harry (Daniel Radcliff) has come under suspicion from the wizarding community. As Harry struggles with the problems at school, including the hateful new teacher Dolores Umbridge (Imelda Staunton), he tries to learn more about the mysterious Order of the Phoenix and their role in the fight against the Dark Lord.

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**WEEKEND WEATHER** by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

**KATHMANDU VALLEY**

**Fri** 30-22  
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**Sun** 27-21

Despite a promising start, the monsoon is sputtering out. There are now drought conditions in eastern Nepal and in most of the midhills rice planting is three weeks late. This monsoon looks set to be the fourth consecutive one with subpar precipitation. Pressure troughs from the Bay in the past weeks have all been waylaid. The only hope for a late save is the low pressure system over the central tarai seen in this satellite picture taken on Thursday morning. The system could bring some monsoon showers, but it is getting difficult to tell for sure how much moisture it can shed. It won't be a very pleasant weekend—the days will be scorching. The rain will be too light to cool things down, and enough to keep it muggy and sticky.

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KIRAN PANDAY

**EVERY DOG HAS HIS DAY:** Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat flanked by Home Minister Krishna Sitaula, Minister for Education and Sports Pradeep Nepal, Minister for Peace and Reconstruction Ram Chandra Poudel, and Agriculture Minister Chhabilal Biswakarma. Royal allowances were slashed, even as a large election budget was announced.



KIRAN PANDAY

**CEREMONIAL PRIME MINISTER:** Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala takes the salute from an army guard at the Bhoto Jatra festival on Sunday in Jawalakhel. For the first time, the king of Nepal did not attend this ceremony.



NEPALNEWS.COM/RAM HUMAGAIN

**DIPLOMATIC CORE:** Kathmandu-based ambassadors were summoned to the Election Commission on Tuesday for a briefing on preparations for polls planned for 22 November.



KIRAN PANDAY

**RAILROADED:** Indian ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee speaking at a function on Friday to mark the opening of an office to sell tickets for Indian Railways in Kathmandu.



DEEPENDRA BAJRACHARYA

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY:** A porter carrying construction material on Darbar Marg as supporters and opponents of monarchy prepared to march to the royal palace on Saturday on king Gyanendra's birthday.

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# Towards a cashless society

Good to know that Doha's *The Peninsula* in its Saturday edition prominently carried the news that Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani had sent a cable congratulating His Majesty the King of Nepal on his happy birthday. What's more, the paper duly noted that the Qatari heir apparent, His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani also sent a congratulatory **cablegram** to HM the K of N.

Not to be outscoped, down the Gulf Coast the *Khaleej Times* of Dubai also carried a front page item about His Highness Shaikh Mohammend bin Rashid of the United Arab Emirates congratulating our kingji on his birthday.

The Ass was struck by two things when he spied these items. One, they still send **telegrams**? And two, why did the heir apparent send the cable to Gyanendra and not to our heir apparent, Paras. A hidden message there from oil sheikhs to our sheikhs? Apparently.



Either way, the news item made some of us here slightly nostalgic for the good old days when *The Rising Nepal* used to reserve a space on the upper left-hand corner of page one every day for similar congratulatory messages sent by our majesty to other majesties, potentates, fellow tinpot dictators, and other tyrants.

The Ass is glad to note that these loktantrick times, the space on *The Rising New Nepal* these days is about Crown Prince and Heir Apparent Prakash being feted in the People's Republic of China. Or news items headlined: 'Govt Takes Decisions', 'Condolences Expressed', or 'Scribes' Body Revived'. Who says we haven't made progress towards a New Nepal?

But to give credit where it is due, the Ass felicitates *The Rising Nepal* for turning a new leaf, coming out in a new slicker design and cutting down on newsprint in these **austere** times by trimming size. But most of all, we are happy we no longer have to read verbatim transcripts of congratulatory royal

telegrams to the Swazi king anymore.



Nothing proves the resilient spirit of us Nepalis more than the way we can grin and bear every new shortage. When the government said, sorry, no electricity we said fine we'll make do with **candles**. Then the taps went dry and we said who needs water anyway, we'll just use toilet paper.

When the 7+1 government said, oops, no petroleum we dutifully queued in lines so long that the cars waiting at Sajha in Pulchok snaked right down to Inar, back to Patan Dhoka, cut across Krishna Galli until the tail got entangled with the head and no one could make head or tail of where it started and where it ended. There is still no petrol, but instead of rioting, we open the hatch on our Maruti and play **marriage** with other taxi-drivers.

Now it looks like there is a shortage of cash. Since the governor of Rastra Bank has been framed and arrested there is no one to sign the new banknotes (being printed in Indonesia) so there will be a huge cash crunch. Which is a good thing because with nothing to buy, who needs cash anyway?



Getting difficult to keep track of all these new outfits springing up in the eastern tarai. It was bad enough with the Madhes Tiger, Tarai Cobra, Python X, Jwala, and Goit. At the rate they are splintering into criminal gangs, it wouldn't surprise us to have new militant groups called Rautahat Rhinos, Hosiarpur Hornbills, or Siraha Scorpions.

And just as UNMIN is getting ready to destroy the maobadi IEDs comes news of yet another faction of the JTMM calling itself 'Bisfot'. This is the story of Nepal these days: you defuse one bomb and another one goes off under our collective asses.



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