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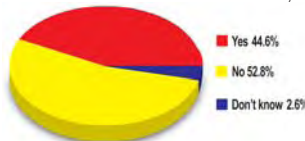
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nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll # 397

Q. Should the NC and the UML join the Maoists in the government?

Total votes: 6,940



Weekly Internet Poll # 398. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Do you trust the Maoists when they say they will support a capitalist economy?

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ROUNDTABLE: Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Baburam Bhattarai with UNMIN's Ian Martin and the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Robert Piper, at a meeting with the donor community on Thursday. US ambassador Nancy Powell is at left, and China's empty chair in the foreground.

MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Let's cooperate

Maoist leaders lobby the international community for trust and support

DEWAN RAI

The final results of the 10 April elections now in, the Maoists will be the largest party in a hung assembly and will need help to form a new government.

In the past week, Maoist leaders have been engaged in hectic lobbying with the parties. They have also tried to reassure the business community and Nepal's donors not to be spooked

by their radical rhetoric.

Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and deputy Baburam Bhattarai were invited to a regular monthly meeting of the UN with the Nepal-based donor community on Thursday. Diplomats quizzed the Maoist duo about the party's policy on foreign aid, the budget, education policy, army integration and the monarchy.

Seats set aside at the closed

door meeting for representatives from China and India were empty. American ambassador, Nancy Powell, was present but didn't ask anything. The US State Department said on Tuesday that there was no move to lift the Maoist terror tag, but hinted there could be a review.

"We reassured our foreign friends that we are not a doctrinaire party, we are not against privatization and globalization and will pursue a mixed economy," Dahal told the press after the meeting.

Speaking at a panel discussion on Tuesday organised by *Nepali Times*, Maoist shadow foreign minister

CP Gajurel said his party was going to be much more efficient about using foreign aid. "Unlike in the past when aid did not reach the people because of institutionalised corruption, every penny of foreign aid will henceforth directly benefit Nepalis," he said.

Gajurel was sure his party would lead the next government and stake its claim to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Home Ministry, Finance and Defence.

EDITORIAL
Peace on a war-footing p2

Also speaking in the panel was Markus Heiniger from the Swiss Foreign Ministry. "The lesson from Nepal's peace process is that all stakeholders need to be included," he said, "all the parties must be on board as the government moves towards conflict transformation."

Gajurel said his party would overhaul the education system, but clarified: "It's not our policy to close down private schools." ●

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PEACE ON A WAR-FOOTING

The Maoists will soon be leading a government, and whether or not they do that with inside or outside support of the NC, UML or MJF is not so important in the larger scheme of things.

There are many reasons why the result of the 10 April constituent assembly election was a landmark, but the most important is that it was a popular rejection of the status quo. Yes, there was some cheating. Yes, there was blatant and widespread pre-poll intimidation of voters by the YCL, but the Maoists won fair and square.

There are plenty of lessons for the EC so mistakes this time are not repeated in the next general elections. The excesses in the campaign period by over-zealous young communists need to be meticulously documented. Lapses in pre-poll security has to be studied. There have to be safeguards in place to assure voters that their ballots are secret and sacrosanct. Electronic ballots must be made nationwide next time and there must be provisions for absentee voting.

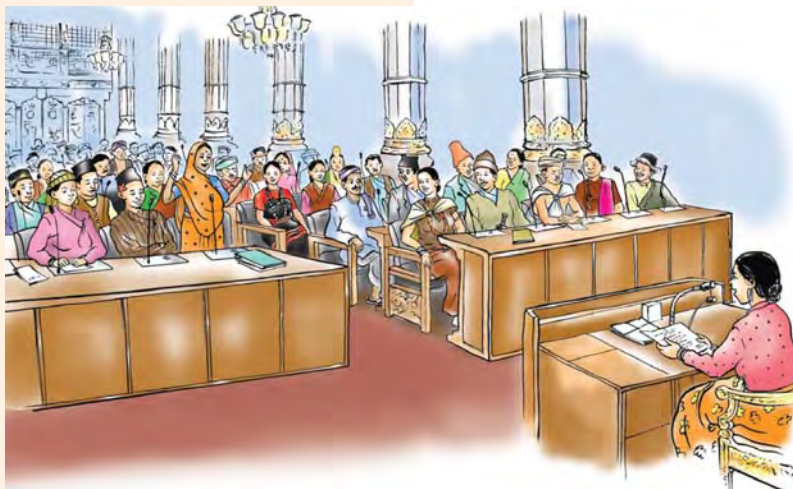
There are three weeks after the EC declares the results till the time the constituent assembly meets. That isn't much time to sort out procedural issues like the exact sequence of events in replacing the monarchy with a new republican head of state, agreeing on a workplan for the assembly and setting up a new government.

There will be strong temptation to be distracted by who gets what ministry, whether or not other parties join in and if so what portfolios they get to keep. We have to get out of the rent-seeking mentality that has traditionally made the division of the spoils all-important after an election.

Much more important this time, if this is truly a New Nepal, is not who gets to be ministers, but how they perform. Is there a proper policy framework guiding them? It would restore confidence in the Nepali people if the Maoists stayed above the wheeling-dealing to focus on immediate relief and give the people a tangible peace dividend. The smaller parties must also resist the urge to make political capital out of the Maoist discomfiture with being in the driving seat.

That would buy time for medium-term goals like massive job-creation through food for work in infrastructure. In the longer-term, we need a favourable investment climate so investors pour in money to develop hydropower, set up manufacturing bases to exploit Nepal's comparative advantage. We need peace and development on a war footing, as it were.

From what we've heard so far, the Maoists seem to broadly know what is wrong with the country. But they'll need help in identifying what needs to be done, and be shown how to do it without making big mistakes.



ROBIN SAYAMI

Poll post-mortem

Winners or losers, Madhesi parties don't have a clear plan for the future

The fluidity in post-election national politics is mirrored in the Madhes.

All key actors are analysing the results and what it means in terms of influence in Kathmandu. Most parties are on wait-and-watch mode and only have a hazy idea of what lies ahead.



TARAI EYE
Prashant Jha

The MJF is relishing its victory with ruthlessly ambitious Upendra Yadav getting another boost. But the incoherence and competing ambitions within the top Forum brass is already visible. Yadav sounds reconciliatory and completely willing to work with Maoists one day, the very next day JP Gupta takes a belligerent line asking for immediate implementation of agreements before any co-operation.

The Forum needs to decide how it understands this mandate. Is it to represent the Madhes in government? Is it to continue the agitational politics of the past year? Will it do both (be inside, while continuing to be radical) like the Maoists in the past year? The third option seems the most likely: many in the Forum are keen to be a part of the

Kathmandu establishment to recoup their huge campaign investments. At the same time, they know distance from and opposition to Kathmandu is politically beneficial on the ground. If they cosy up too much with the Maoists, the other Madhesi parties will pounce on the MJF base.

The defeat of the TMLP's Mahant Thakur was a blow to his party, Madhesi upper castes and local elites in Tarai towns. Some within TMLP are learnt to be happy, for this provides them an opportunity to wrest control of the new party. But most know that the party's credibility stemmed largely from Thakur's image. His defeat means that future defectors from NC will think hard and prefer the MJF over TMLP.

Given that Thakur is not among the most energetic leaders around, he may pull back from day-to-day politics. But if he has thought of the TMLP as a long-term political project and is motivated enough, the defeat may actually be a blessing in disguise and allow him to focus on party-building. There is no other leader in the party who will be willing to spend time on the ground. The Tripathis and Shuklas are too addicted to power politics in Kathmandu.

Sadbhabana (Mahato) is clearly the real inheritor of the mother party with the Shyam Sundar Gupta and Anandi Devi faction almost decimated. But it is also the weakest of the three key Madhesi parties. With 10 seats, they can play a bit in the CA but the maneuvering space will be limited. Like TMLP, Rajendra Mahato and Anil Jha face a difficult choice. Do they want to work with the MJF, albeit as junior partners? Will they project themselves as the opposition to

MJF in Madhesi politics?

Madhes units of the NC are in complete disarray and the blame game has started. There are more defections in the offing. The reason for the dismal showing was the party's arrogant and insensitive handling of Madhes over the past year, and disastrous ticket distribution. For NC leaders to now say they lost out because voting happened along ethnic lines is foolish.

With a decline in the party's patronage dispensation, the NC faces a real threat in the Tarai. A party that does not respect and reward as popular a leader as Gagan Thapa cannot be expected to come up with imaginative solutions to win the support of Madhesi youth.

The armed groups in Madhes do not know what hit them. The massive turnout in polls, the Maoist victory, and a respectable performance by the Madhesi parties are not happy signs for the militants. As confrontation with the Maoist government increases, and Madhesi parties engage in competitive radicalism, they can make a comeback. The militants are also hoping that some domestic or international power centre -if it wants to give the Maoists a tough time -will support their armed activities.

In the entire intra-party discussions hovering around these calculations, the Madhes agenda is only peripheral: to be used as a cover to push personal and institutional goals. Indeed, the Madhesi parties right now neither have a roadmap for Madhesi representation or a clear vision of federalism. As important as the immediate power games may be, the Madhesi leaders should begin their homework on substantive issues if they want to make a real difference and change the system. ●

Among the alchemists

Miracles won't save us, a reality check will

Pushpa Kamal Dahal needs to change his dress designer. He wore a black-and-red track suit while talking to the media during the central committee meeting of his party the other day. Good to see him so relaxed, but the man needs to start behaving like a head of state (and government?) that he is soon to be.



STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

The chairman is known to be sensitive about his appearance. The gelled swept back hair, the Stalin moustache are all carefully planned. Without the dress, address and paraphernalia of voodoo, a shaman has no appeal. And so it is for Dahal.

The list of miracles the Maoists need to work are lengthy. Dahal thinks that integration of his fighters with Nepal Army

will take place miraculously, Gyanendra will voluntarily depart from Narayanhi, political parties will be falling over each other to assist him run the coalition government in the coming days. He thinks he will attract foreign investment, encourage domestic industry, control prices, rein in trade unions, ensure better wages, respect private property, resettle the landless and accelerate the capitalist economy even as he prepares the country for inevitable rise of 'New Improved' brand of socialism. Dahal studied agriculture at Rampur Campus under American mentors, he should have also taken alchemy.

Baburam Bhattarai studied urban planning and appears to believe that a 20 percent economic growth rate is possible, trickle down economy will do wonders, and Nepal can ride the relative easy road to prosperity upon the vehicle of hydroelectricity, herbs, tourism and entrepreneurship of Nepali industrialists. We have heard that before, and need to

know what has changed in the last two years to make it all possible now.

Shadow (and aspiring) foreign minister CP Gajurel freely admits his party needs miracles to happen. Apparently more foreign aid will begin to flow because Nepal has voted in the first ever Maoist government in the world. Donor agencies will forsake all conditionalities to support this blast from the past. Overnight, the bureaucracy will turn squeaky clean, traders will begin to pay taxes honestly, the army will agree to be frugal, and Nepal will become a country of milk and honey.

Hisila Yami believes that privatisation of water distribution in Kathmandu valley is the first step towards social justice. Melamchi will come on stream because her technical advisers have assured her so, affluence will drive on the six-lane road from Bhaktapur, and housing for the urban poor will materialise out of thin air. Who said the Maoists are atheists?

The grandstanding is aimed at the next

general elections. Dahal has declared that the new constitution will be miraculously written within one year (Interim Constitution allows 24 months) and the elections to be held soon after will give his party the mandate to rule for another 40 years. He has his plans of continuous miracles for 10, 20 and 40 years. He seems to have forgotten to factor in the Nepali people, the real miracle-makers. If Maoists continue to expect too many miracles, it is doubtful any of them will come true.

It's a fractured verdict, the Maoists need the confidence of the other parties. Due to the drubbing they got at the polls, it will probably take a while for the NC and UML politicians to collect their wits and talk to Dahal and his fellow magicians. But there is also the MJF now, and they can always do to Maoists what Maoists have been doing to others for last two years: threaten to take to streets to pursue their agenda.

Dahal looked more dependable in his turtle neck and beard. The Maoists need to subject themselves periodically to a reality check. Perhaps the YCL still has its use, it can be depended upon to declare war on the party headquarters just as the Great Helmsman commanded his Red Guards to do against "revisionists". ●

LETTERS

ROAD FOR NEPAL

I think that Baburam Bhattarai's economic ideas are sound and practical ('The investment climate will improve', #396 and full version on *Nepali Times* website, 'Radical democrat'), but I also wish to make a suggestion. Nepal should no longer be a dumping ground for Chinese goods which have been rejected by the rest of the world. It is wrecking our own production base, as anything our small country can make is immediately swamped. I agree with many others of his suggestions, but I think that the families of victims killed by both sides in the war should be recognised and compensated. This is important. Government should be more transparent, and the police force should be both cleaned up and strengthened to provide real protection to Nepali citizens. I think it's better that Nepal's revolution will now be a gradual change rather than a drastic, violent confrontation.

Pradipta Rana, email

● Baburam Bhattarai's interview really depressed me. There is not one iota of new economic thinking in his agenda. What new or different views did he give that NC or UML politicians have not put forward already? Or that's not in the usual recommendations from the World Bank or ADB? I don't see any insight in the economic thinking or agenda for the 'New Nepal'. Anyway, how can we trust a party that calls itself Maoist but is prepared to hobnob with all the big capitalists?

Samjhana, email

● CK Lal's reference to businessmen as 'Kathmandu fat-cats and Lalitpur

moneybags' ('The survival of the weakest', #396) shows us the apathy that Nepali society at large has towards its entrepreneurs. No economy can grow without the contribution of its private sector. What people like CK Lal fail to understand is that wealth creation is necessary before wealth distribution. A simple mathematical example for you, Mr Lal: zero divided by any number equals zero. It's a good thing that the Maoists have realised this, or at least are trying to show that they have realised it.

Swagat R Pyakurel, email

● The constitutional assembly gives us hope to build a new Nepali nation state. But we also have to seriously consider what might happen if the future political system fails to meet people's high and diverse expectations. In this time it is crucial that all political pundits look towards true and meaningful democracy. The Mexican anthropologist Bonfil Batalla said that democracy can only work properly if it serves the benefit of all in the country, not just a minority or an elite. He also stresses the importance of cultural pluralism. I think this is especially apt for Nepal right now. We need to follow through on the agenda of federalism and self-determination both to decentralise power and empower minorities.

Prakash Thapa, Virginia, USA

● Why are your views still so anti-Maoist? Please be positive. Now that the

Nepali people have elected the CPN (Maoist) enthusiastically, please respect that. Do you recall the open letter you wrote to Prachanda asking him questions ('Dear comrade', #382)? Your question was very nicely answered by the Nepali people with the election result.

Pashupati Neupane, Syangja

● I strongly feel that the CA election was more a populist and propagandist display for the political class of Nepal than any sort of necessity for the nation itself. There are many countries in the world which are peaceful and developed but never had a whole election just to make their constitution. Rather, they preferred a consensus constitution, written by legal experts, representing all political stakeholders of the country. Anyway, hopefully this chapter in Nepal, alleged to be pending since 1950, is closed once and for all. But who is happy with the outcome? Truly speaking, no one. The Maoists? Just look at the u-turn in their rhetoric on various national and international issues.

Pradeepa Sharma, Mumbai

HARDLY SURPRISING

Congratulations to Deepak Thapa for this rigorous and unbiased analysis ('Hardly surprising', #396). This election has proved that you cannot survive in politics anymore based on what you did 60 years ago. Nepal has shown that like other countries its politics are not static but

dynamic. The people are ready for a radical change. Many NC and UML candidates were known to be corrupt, and this contributed to the parties' defeat.

P Adhikari, email

● I find it funny when the Nepali media blames the Tarai people for 'voting along ethnic lines', as Deepak Thapa did. Didn't they elect NC and UML politicians time and time again, who in turn always chose to favour their own aphno manche and sycophants? Just look at GP Koirala's constituency. What has he or any other Pahadi leader done for Madhesi or unprivileged people in the Tarai? Now it's time for change and I hope the media will bear the importance of this in mind in the future.

Vivek Gupta, email

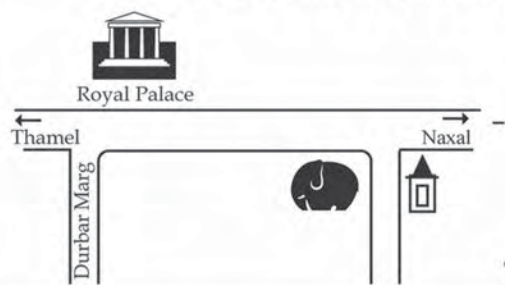
● One does not know what to make of so-called experts such as Deepak Thapa. Two months ago, in your sister publication *Himal Khabarpatrika*, he wrote an article saying there was growing disenchantment with the Maoists and they were victims of their own ethnic politics. Now that the election results are in, Thapa says the Maoist victory is 'hardly surprising'. His article attributes their success to their organisational skills, as if no one else had guessed this and you need to be an expert to say it. What happened to his claim about Maoists and ethnic politics? I think *Nepali Times* should start an 'Expert Watch' column so readers can decide for themselves who really knows what they're talking about and who are really just hangers-on and self-styled experts.

Pooja Belbase, Kathmandu



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Nepal Dairy's river of milk

Nepal's top private dairy is preparing a new generation of entrepreneurs



SHEERE NG

Each time Nepal Dairy makes a breakthrough, the effects cause a wide ripple in the Nepali dairy industry, ultimately benefiting not only consumers and producers, but also the company's business competitors.

But HJB Rajbhandary, the company's director, is not worried about inadvertently helping his rivals, for him the company's business and the national interest go hand in hand.

When Rajbhandary set up first private milk company in Nepal 25 years ago, it eased the shortage of processed milk, laid the foundations for subsequent dairy businesses and provided additional income for farmers.

The supply of milk is often volatile, and in periods when there is a surplus, some companies stop buying and call for a 'milk holiday', which harms many producers who depend on being able to sell their milk.

Yet, Nepal Dairy, which has been selected by *Nepali Times* as its May Company of the Month, continued to buy even more and ventured into product diversification as a solution. Today, in retail outlets across the



SHEERE NG

country, he sells ice cream, cheese, pizzas and pastries. In the process, ND has created thousands of jobs and given dairy farmers a fair price for their milk.

Since its foundation, the company continues to enjoy an annual 10 to 12 percent growth in profits. This is remarkable given the political instability of the war years.

One difficulty Rajbhandary is currently facing, and this is surprising in a country which is burgeoning with youth, is a graying workforce. Nepal's brain drain means many young and middle-aged executives have left and there are only seniors who run the company.

In an effort to bring in new

blood into Nepal Dairy, Rajbhandary recently opened his doors to college students training them in the processes of the dairy industry. He is now preparing to channel a portion of Nepal Dairy's profits into setting up a Nepal Dairy Institute of Technology and Management.

This is because during the 1970s when the country experienced a shortage of processed milk, Rajbhandary—then general manager of the Dairy Development Cooperation and a PhD in Dairy technology—didn't have the technicality to solve the problem. "I only understood things theoretically," he says. He had to seek help from countries like New Zealand and Denmark.

Hence, in an industry where many players prefer to keep their methodology hush-hush, Rajbhandary says that helping the younger generation to get hands-on experience is a responsibility that established players should shoulder.

Asked what happens if the students decide not to work for the company upon graduation, Rajbhandary shrugs: "They will probably work for other dairy companies. Nepal needs qualified, competent young people."

It is this ability to look beyond his company's welfare to the national interest that sets Rajbhandary apart from many of his peers. He hopes that if the

training produces good managers, he can split the company into separate units such as fast food and bakery sections, and expand each one under separate management.

The institute will also train dairy farmers to diversify their products to encourage entrepreneurship in the countryside. Rajbhandary says ND will help with distribution.

At 75, Rajbhandary has the energy, drive and vision of a man half his age. But he is determined to pass the torch to the new generation. When *Nepali Times* commented that he will be missed, he laughed and said, "Maybe there are people who want to see younger faces." ●

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“We can all win together”

Management self-help guru, Shiv Khera, is an educator, business consultant and a much sought-after speaker. His clients include Lufthansa, Johnson & Johnson, Motorola, Nestle, Glaxo SmithKline Beecham, Tetrapak, Sanofi Torrent, Phillips, Gillette, Daimler Chrysler, HSBC Bank, Carrier, Deutsche Bank and General Motors. He is also the author of the International Best Seller books, *You Can Win* and *Living with Honour*. Over 20,000 people have attended his three-day dynamic workshops internationally. Khera will be in Kathmandu next week to conduct a series of training sessions with Nepali executives and managers. *Nepali Times* conducts a curtain-raiser interview with him.

Nepali Times: Tell us about your life so far.
Shiv Khera: My formal education stopped with B Com (Hons) at Delhi University. When coal mines in India were nationalised, we were literally on the streets. I went to Canada and started a new life, beginning with washing cars, then moving on to selling vacuum cleaners and life insurance.

What inspired you to take up teaching management?
I once attended a program by Norman Vincent Peale, the author of *The Power of Positive Thinking*. From Peale, I learnt that problems are a sign of life. We cannot solve all our problems, but with positive attitudes we can handle them. Selling life insurance taught me the quality of persistence, which helps people get back to their feet after setbacks.

Most of us know all this, but can't seem to implement them.
That's the most important thing I have learnt. Unless the success principles are put into practice, knowing them alone does not help. When I started applying what I learnt from people like Peale, I saw my life changed. I realised it was time to give back to society. I started volunteering my time in maximum security prison in the US and saw lives changing. Thereafter, I took my program to the corporate world and wrote my book *You can Win* which has sold 1.2 million copies in 11 languages.

To what do you attribute that phenomenal success?
Corporate Executives all over the world are drawn to motivational programs because like our body needs food every day, our mind also needs positive thoughts to stay motivated. Just like what happens when we suffer from bad food or malnutrition, we became physically sick. Similarly, if we don't feed our mind with positive thoughts, negative thoughts automatically enter and we become mentally sick. Hence, optimistic thoughts on a daily basis are food for the mind to remain motivated.

Yet not everyone can be a winner.
There is a big difference between winning and being a winner. Winning is an event in life, whereas being a winner is about the spirit. Winning can become habitual to those who develop positive habits in life. In the same way, there is a big difference between selfishness and self-interest. Selfishness is for me to win while others have to lose. Whereas self-interest is for me to win, but the world does not have to lose. We can all win together.

So the proof of the pudding is in the eating?
Exactly. The best prescription from the best doctor is useless unless it is acted upon. Similarly, knowing the principle of success is not enough, but putting it into practice will truly materialise it.

Do you have different advice for Nepal?
Nepali executives are no different than those in other countries. I have worked in 15 to 20 countries and found that human and emotional needs are identical. Integrity and cheating have the same meaning in New York, New Delhi and New Zealand. Somehow, right from my childhood I have had a close affinity to Nepal. I have always admired certain great traits of the Nepalis, such as their bravery, loyalty and their ability to overcome adversity. So I am looking forward to visiting Nepal and hoping to see it as one of the top nations of the world with foundations built upon integrity, respect and responsibility.

Mission drift

Reading or watching interviews with Maoist leaders this week, one could get the impression that they have won not the boring constituent assembly election but the much sexier general election.



STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari

Instead of sticking primarily to the task of making a new constitution as soon as possible, and *then* going for general elections to start the process of formally governing Nepal under the agreed-upon rules (which, if I remember correctly is the mandate of the CA), the Maoists are busy handing out platitudes on how they will address issues affecting Nepal's all-round development. It could just be a play to the gallery. But if we start to forget what the CA election was for, a worrying start of mission drift is likely to be upon us.

True, the CA elections showed that millions of poor and hitherto neglected Nepalis want their concerns addressed. And the Maoists have wasted no time in assuring that they have the right answers, even though reaching that ideal state of communism will by their own admission require a century or more.

But what's forgotten in this assurance game is that, just as Girija's capstone contribution lay in ensuring the successful completion of the CA election, the Maoists' biggest contribution ahead should be

delivering a new constitution to the Nepali people within a reasonable frame of time. After all, only when there are fundamental rules, enshrined in the constitution, can the government accountably get on with the business of governance.

If they try to multi-task and be all things to all people, the Maoists risk drawing out the process of constitution-making to interminable lengths. If that happens, it creates opportunities for them to make up and enforce their own rules in the interim, which can then be potentially (ab)used to consolidate a hold on power for longer periods.

The new government should not forget what it was elected for

The other parties should learn from recent history. Had the interim government focused primarily on getting the CA elections completed by the original date of June 2007, a mere 14 months after the second Jana Andolan, who knows what the election results would have been?

But the government acted as though it had won some kind of general election in April 2006. It tried to multi-task. The longer it stayed in power, the further away it moved from the most important goal of holding the CA

elections on time. During its watch, there occurred some of Nepal's most shameful human rights abuses in Gaur and Kapilvastu. The Maoists walked in and out of government. The Tarai problem grew worse, and the CA elections were postponed three times until pressure from all quarters, including internationally, was no longer resistible. No wonder its lost focus made the main parties identified with it - the NC and UML - electorally unappealing.

The public's frustration at this no doubt increased support for the Maoists, but they themselves are already suffering mission drift. Baburam wants to invite foreign investors before he can even guarantee protection of private property and individual liberties. His boss Prachanda has promised economic miracles before there is even a clear expression in the constitution about what kind of an economic system New Nepal is going to have.

This is why the challenge for civil society pundits, global well-wishers and the media should be to not get carried away with the grand rhetoric of the Maoists, and to keep a steady eye on the new government so that the winners of the CA elections focus on and speedily deliver the actual task for which they were elected: making this country's constitution. Taking years to do this will be just another familiar case of mission drift - something Nepal can ill afford, or the people may get restless again. ●



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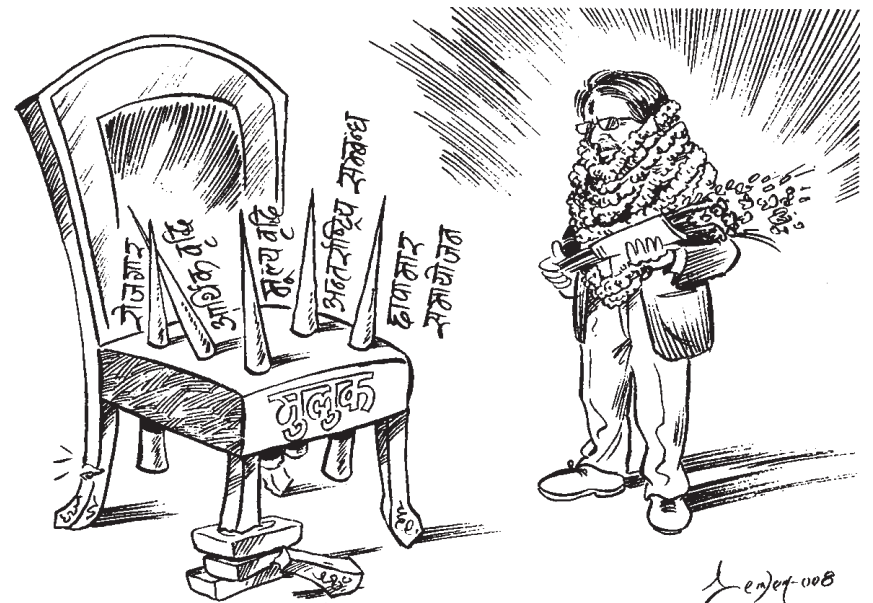
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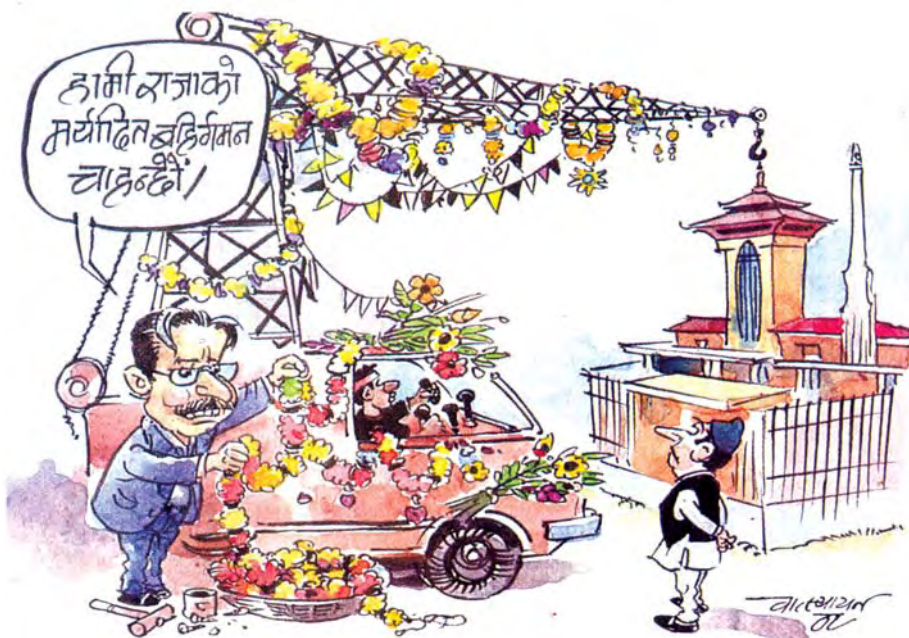
Nepali cartoonists had a field day during the election campaign and after, lampooning everything from the unexpected win of the Maoists, the bad losers in the other parties and looked forward to the challenges of the parties.



Party Office
 I came here to resign because I lost in the election. Is there anyone here who has won and can accept my resignation?
 समय Abin Shrestha in Samay, 24 April



Chair: Country
 Spikes: Employment, price hike, economic development, foreign relations, army integration
 कान्तिपुर Dewen in Kantipur, 16 April



We want the king to step down gracefully.
 कान्तिपुर Ratsayan in Kantipur, 20 April



Rock: Majority
 Watch out! Watch out!
 राजधानी Uttam Nepal in Rajdhani, 20 April



You didn't listen to us when we say don't watch tv. It is not that you were defeated. The people are giving you the opportunity to rest.

पुनराजगरण Uttam Sapkota in Punarjagaran, 22 April



We will not be defeated in the election, even if we are, we won't accept it.

सुमान मानन्धर in नेपाल समाचारपत्र Nepal Samacharpatra, 5 April



Fear. Terror.
 बुधवार Basu Kshitiz in Budhabar, 23 March



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KIRAN PANDAY

Third of the sky

MALLIKA ARYAL

When the constituent assembly sits next month at the Chinese-built conference centre in Baneswor, the chamber will have a fairer touch than previous parliaments. At least 200 of the 601 members will be women.

Despite concerns before the election that women members might not reach the 33 percent ratio stipulated by the interim constitution ('Same old 'menstream' politics,' #394), the latest results of the first-past-the-post ballot show that 29 women have won. The proportional representation ballot guarantees 168 seats for women, making the total number 197, which is 34 percent of the 575 elected representatives.

"This is a great victory for all Nepali women," says Sarala Lama of Sa-shakti Nepal, a women's party that contested this election. Of the 29 women directly elected, 23 are Maoists, two each are from the NC and MJF and one each from the UML and TMLP.

In constituencies like Gorkha-1 and Bardiya-1, which used to be strongholds of the NC and UML, Maoist women candidates have trounced veteran politicians like Chiranjibi Wagle and Bam Dev Gautam.

"In this election people voted for transformation, therefore it is not surprising that Maoist women have defeated these old leaders," says Sarita Giri of Nepal Sadbhabana Party (Anandidebi).

Advocate Sabita Bhandari Baral of the Nepal Bar Association agrees that Nepalis were desperate for change, and it was the failure of the old and male politicians to realise this that brought their downfall.

High hopes ride on the unprecedented victory of women candidates

Some elected representatives are war widows. Experts on women's issues welcome this, but also raise the point that that since the process of writing the constitution of a country is complicated, it is crucial to have legal experts who understand women's issues in the assembly.

But Giri isn't so worried. Women were elected because people trust them to be good leaders, she says, and anyone who says the elected women did not go to school is just trying to discourage them.

Sarala Regmi, who defeated UML's Bam Dev Gautam (17,955 to 13,773) is back in Bardiya, visiting voters in her constituency and thanking them for their support. Regmi has been with the Maoists since the 1990 People's Movement but went underground when the Nepal Army killed her husband in 1998.

During the war Regmi used to go from village to village and got to know many of her constituents. "It was extremely hard for some sections of our patriarchal society to accept that women were on the frontline, sacrificing their lives," recalls Regmi. "Now they doubt us and say we will not be able to write a good constitution."

She is confident gender issues will be given high priority in her party and trusts that some of her women counterparts will be leading various committees.

Representation of women in parliament	
General Election (1999)	CA election (2008)
12/205 (5.8%)	168+29/575 (34%)

Gender campaigners warn that women's issues should not be sidelined by party politics, and the rising profile of women brings an urgent need to restructure political parties to make more room for them. "The biggest challenge and obstacle for women is still the male-dominated leadership in the political parties," says Giri.

Similarly, coordination between MPs and activists is imperative to lobby the government on women's issues. Sushila Shrestha of the Beyond Beijing Committee says: "This group will not let any issue go off its radar. We will work as a support system for women MPs, and help to push women's agendas."

Voters across Nepal made women win, now they wait expectantly to see if that will make a difference in the way politics is done. ●

Rainbow assembly

The constituent assembly will be radically different from any elected house in Nepali history.

Not only will a third of the members be women, but the sea of faces will also be more representative of Nepal's ethnic diversity. Tharu, Tamang, Dalit, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Gurung, never included in proportion to their populations in the past, will be present.

To be sure, the ratios will still not be completely proportional, and the smaller among the 103 ethnic groups in Nepal will not have a place. Still, most rights activists say it is a vast improvement on the elite-dominance of past legislatures.

After the final results of the elections were announced on Wednesday, the final tally of janajati candidates in the first-past-the-post ballot stood at 81. Another 124 janajatis will be selected in the proportional representation segment, bringing the janajati ratio to 34 percent of the 601-member assembly.

This does not quite match the 37 percent of Nepal's population which they comprise, but it is an improvement on their representation in parliaments in the 1990s, which was never more than 29 percent.

The majority of janajatis who won seats in the FPTP ballot are Maoists, with 51 candidates. Other parties trail behind with 12 janajatis from the UML, 10 from the NC, 4 from the MJF, 2 from the NWPP and one each from TLMP and Janamorcha.

Some janajati groups will have representation in parliament for the first time. Rama Nanda Mandal who won in Morang-4 is the first ever MP from the Ganagain community. Despite being the three largest janajati groups in Nepal, Magars, Tamangs and Tharus never had proper representation in parliament, and that has changed this time.

Pasang Sherpa, president of Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) says the election results mark a great stride forward for the janajati movement, but adds that simply being elected is not enough. "Janajati MPs will now have

to raise our issues and lobby to get them passed in the assembly," he told *Nepali Times*.

NEFIN'S agenda has long included ethnic and linguistic autonomy with right to self-determination. The Maoists adopted a similar policy for the constitution, proposing 11 ethnically-based federal states.

Maoist representative Jayapur Gharti says: "Janajatis want their voices heard. We want inclusion and participation at the policy level." After years of waiting, she is hopeful that janajatis' grievances will be addressed this time. ●

Dewan Rai

Janajati candidates elected to parliament

Caste	Population %	General Election (1999)	CA Election (2008)
Magar	7.14	6	13
Tharu/Chaudhari	6.75	9	14
Tamang	5.64	2	8
Newar	5.48	11	14
Rai	2.79	5	8
Gurung	2.39	6	11
Limbu	1.58	7	7
Sherpa/Lama	0.68	2	
Rajbansi	0.42		2
Sunuwar	0.42	1	
Danuwar	0.23		1
Thakali	0.06	1	1
Dhimal	0.09		1
Ganagain	0.14		1
Total		50/205 (24%)	81/240 (34%)



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Getting a taste of Nepal

Nepali cookbook wins international award

When Jyoti Pathak (pictured, right) went to live in the United States 40 years ago, she did her household chores, spending a lot of time in the kitchen trying to make Nepali meals for her doctor husband and three children.

There were not too many Indian spice shops in the remote corner of New York state where they lived, and Jyoti had to rely on friends and family bringing masala, gundruk, maseura and tama from Nepal.

There were some Indian cook books in the bookshops, but nothing about Nepali cuisine. That is when the idea to write a Nepali cookbook first came to her.

Today, nearly four decades later, Jyoti has been awarded the Best Foreign Cuisine book in the Gourmand World Cookbook Award in the US for her book, *A Taste of Nepal*. Jyoti was in London last week to receive another nomination for her book to be declared the best foreign cuisine book internationally.

There have been quite a few Nepali cookbooks that have come out in the past 15 years. And, marching with these more inclusive times, there are books now on Newari, Sherpa and even Thakali cuisine. Jyoti's book weaves in Nepal's history and culture and how the food here has been influenced by Tibetan and Indian culinary traditions.

'Nepali food is characterised by its simplicity, lightness and

healthfulness,' she writes, 'a typical meal uses the freshest ingredients, minimal fat and an artful combination of herbs and spices.'

Observing the mountains of rice that people eat on the food stalls along Nepal's highways, however, one could argue that it is the sheer volume of food ingested that makes Nepali diet unhealthy. Nepalis may have a low-fat diet, but the middle class ODs on carbs and does very little exercise to burn it off.

Jyoti's recipes include the simple mutton curry, and she uses the elaborate and exotic sounding Dahi Haleko Boka-Khasiko Masu which is

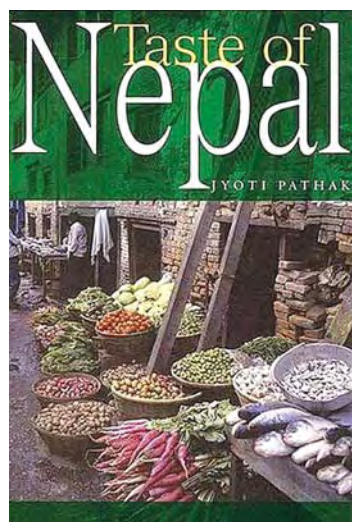
guaranteed to make the diaspora Nepali's mouth water just hearing about it. Then there are the momos and raw marinated water buffalo and even the Basi Bhat Bhutuwa, the ingenious Nepali way to re-use leftover rice for an appetising snack.

A Taste of Nepal doesn't leave out the ingredients and recipes that make Nepali food different from Indian or Tibetan: Alu Tama, Gundruk Bhatnas ko Jhol, Maseura Alu, Jimbu, Lapsi ko Achar, Kalo Dal. Nepalis abroad may find it difficult to find these ingredients, but with 15 percent of Nepalis now living outside Nepal it is only a question of time before stores spring up

stocking up on jimbu and lapsi too.

Jyoti held long-range consultations with her family back home in Nepal and researched the 350 recipes thoroughly. "I used to cook with a pinch of this and a dash of that, but in preparing the book I actually had to go out and measure everything," she says.

Because it is primarily written for the western audience, the book has made it easy by including the masalas usually found in the ethnic food section of any US or European supermarket. ● www.tasteofnepalcookbook.com



A Taste of Nepal
Hippocrene Books, 2007
Hardcover 470 pages
ISBN - 10: 078181121X

Speaking in tongues

The first time I came to Nepal I was kind of intimidated by the food. Placed in front of me was a plate piled so high with rice that I feared having to reject half of it,



KHAIRE BHAI
Tom Owen-Smith

an act which many have told me was one of the worst insults a person can commit in this country. Having managed to eat it all somehow, I had to fast for a day afterwards.

A friend in Kathmandu doesn't eat rice because she is allergic to it. I am impressed she is able to survive in Nepal. The only places where you can do this are big cities, or ironically, the poorest villages on the Mahabharat Lekh and remotest mountain districts, where people eat dhido or potatoes.

It's a shame that people look down on alternative staples like makai, alu and kodo, as poor man's food. All of them are actually more nutritious than polished rice. Many rural Nepalis know this too, but those without khet would still rather sell cash crops and buy rice than eat makai day in day out, even though they remember that they used to be

stronger on a maize diet. I suppose rice is more prestigious than maize and the rest, and if you're eating the same every day, it tastes more interesting.

Nepali cuisine does not have the glamour which is afforded to that of certain other countries. Some people regard it as the poor cousin of Indian food, but this view is ignorant of the subtleties of Nepali gastronomy and is unfair.

The problem is that the most delicious Nepali foods are really hard to explain to the uninitiated. How do you explain

thinking about alu tama with golbheda ko achar makes my mouth water.

There is also something lost in translation when they tell you sekuwa is "burnt meat". Only those who have tried it (preferably with jad or tongba, which I am saving for another column), know that pork sekuwa at the Airport Sekuwa Pasal can be one of the most delicious dishes in the world. Who cares about the tapeworms?

Part of the reason for Nepali food's low profile outside of Nepal is translation problems. I

which are specific to that area and unknown elsewhere. I have had foods in Panchthar which people had not heard of even in Ilam.

Many – not all – 'Nepali' restaurants in England serve Indian food. A token hat is dipped to Nepalpan by including momos in the menu. But then again most UK Indian restaurants don't serve real Indian food either. They conform

to British expectations and tastes, which are used to canonical vindaloo, madras and tikka masala.

Hopefully with time and the spread of the diaspora, the profile of Nepali cuisine will rise internationally. Sadly, many of the local ingredients which make the food special in each place are not available outside the country (some are not even available in Kathmandu).

I just hope Nepali food doesn't sell out, and remains true to its salty, sour, and other tastes that I can't even name. The world will eventually understand the genius. Let them come. ●

How can the glory of gundruk be explained in words?

what gundruk is like? By describing the preparation? "Well, it's kind of half-fermented dried spinach." By describing the taste? I don't think there are words in English to describe the bouquet of gundruk ko jhol. Many foreigners are initially suspicious of gundruk, but once they have tried it lose their hearts to it.

The same can be said for tama. The first time I had it I was somewhat perturbed to find out I was eating bamboo. But now just

have been served things in Nepal for which there is no word in English, or probably any other language.

Some of these I have only tasted in one or two households. Although the holy trinity of dal, bhat and tarkari holds sway in most of the country, its preparation varies between districts, villages and even from house to house.

Many of the real Nepali delicacies are home recipes, sometimes made from ingredients

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With elections over, families of the disappeared hope someone will tell them what happened

The dreaded



HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

GOPAL DAHAL in SUNSARI

"They say the two armies are going to be one now, maybe that is why no one ever comes to ask about us anymore," says 30-year-old Harimaya Magar, who hasn't seen her husband since soldiers came to the house and took him away one night five years ago.

Hari Bahadur Magar was accused of carrying weapons for the Maoists and was disappeared along with six others from Titrigachi in Sunsari.

Hari's 70-year-old mother, Padamkumari, watches television all the time just in case her son appears on the screen. She goes to all Maoist rallies hoping to catch a glimpse of him.

Harimaya's son Nishan was born after his father disappeared and has never seen him. The five-year-old says: "Daddy has gone to Dharan, he will bring me clothes and biscuits."

Machindra Limbu lives next door from the Magar household and his only son, Uttam, was taken away the same night as Hari.

After five years with no answers, Machindra joined the

Ready to put the past



PICS: WONG SHU YUN

Mohan Kumari Shakya never thought that she would live to see the day where she would reach a polling booth to vote, and be part of Nepal's most historic moment. Not in this life.

Late one night four years ago, she was hit by a bullet during the Maoist attack on Beni. The intense battle raged all night. Bombs were going off on the street below, bullets were ricocheting off the walls and hitting metal utensils in the kitchen.

"We had never experienced such a thing in our lives," recalls Mohan Kumari (left), "we hid under our beds all night." The 63-year-old didn't even realise she had been hit in her wrist until she was drenched in blood. Shrapnel wounds covered her face and hands.

It was only in the afternoon of the next day that it was safe to come out of the house, and Mohan Kumari was rushed to Pokhara Hospital.

Now, four years later and thankful to be alive, she says she will support the Maoists even though they had started the war. "They're our fellow villagers," she explains. "They must be given a chance to prove themselves."

She adds: "Innocent people like me have suffered because of their war. Now the Maoists have won the elections they shouldn't go back to their old ways."

The Maoist candidate who won in Myagdi, Govinda Paudel, blends easily into the crowd and looks like any other man on the streets of Beni.

But when talking politics the soft-

spoken man radiates energy. He passionately explains that it was his despair at Nepal's economic disparities and social injustice that led him to join the Maoists.

"He's simple and sincere, nothing fancy, that's why he is popular," says manager Shiva Paudel. "He speaks our language," says teacher Roshan Rana, "he came to my place for tea and when we sat and talked, he listened and understood."

Paudel's rented home in Beni bazar is austere. His house in his village was destroyed by the army and he himself was tortured in the jungles. Sitting on a sukul in a narrow balcony, Paudel says his sacrifice and those of his comrades were worth it because Nepal now has a chance to prosper. "Their blood will not be wasted," he says, "the killings will stop now, we do not want to fight on. To get something, you have to lose something."

Paudel admits that the people's expectations are very high. "It will be a challenge to change things overnight, but things will change even if it takes time," he says. The Maoist plan for Myagdi is to tap the district's biodiversity and hydropower wealth for economic development.

"We don't just have natural resources, we also have people, he says, "many people in Myagdi work abroad and bring back experience. We can be a Switzerland."

Wong Shu Yun in Myagdi

truth

Maoist-affiliated Limbuwan Liberation Front and was fully engaged in campaigning during the elections. “I campaigned for the Maoists because I wanted them to win, so they’d let me know what happened to my son,” he told *Nepali Times*.

Machindra is also the secretary of the Society of the Families of the Disappeared in Sunsari. Uttam’s mother Dhanmaya attended all the Maoist campaign rallies, not so much to show support but hoping against hope that she may catch a glimpse of her son.

Besides Hari and Uttam, at least 19 other young men from Sunsari were disappeared during the conflict. Only six of them are known to have been killed.

Families of the disappeared have nearly given up hope, but many just need to know whether their sons and husbands are alive or dead. With the Maoists’ election victory, they hope they will finally be told.

Officially, there are 1,100 cases of disappeareds all over Nepal, but human rights organisations say the number may be double that. Activists and families are both worried that despite talk about a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the warring sides will try to sweep past atrocities under the carpet.

“We have gone and staged sit-ins in Kathmandu, we went to the army, we went to the Maoists, no one has shown any interest in finding my son,” says 82-year-old Mankumari Bhandari, whose son Pushpa was a Maoist trade union activist in Itahari before he was disappeared in 2003.

Most of the disappeareds were also the sole salary earners of their families who are now destitute. Besides their psychological trauma, many now face economic hardships.

“For many of these families, it would actually be a relief if they were told that their relatives died,” says psychiatrist Pramodmohan Syangbo, “without closure, they are forced to grieve every day.”

Somraj Thapa is with the human rights group, INSEC, and says there is no exact figure for the total number disappeared in the eastern region. He says: “The fact that the state and the former rebel forces have shown no interest in telling the truth proves they are guilty of human rights violations.” ●

behind



Out of control

“You dirty dogs, eat all of these,” shouted the YCL cadre at NC supporters at a campaign rally in Padsari VDC of Rupendehi on 6 April.

Rama Aryal Sharma was singled out because she is the leader of the women’s wing of the NC. About 40 Maoist youths came in two jeeps, ravaged through lunch packets that Sharma and her colleague had brought, scattered the food and tried to force them to eat it off the floor.

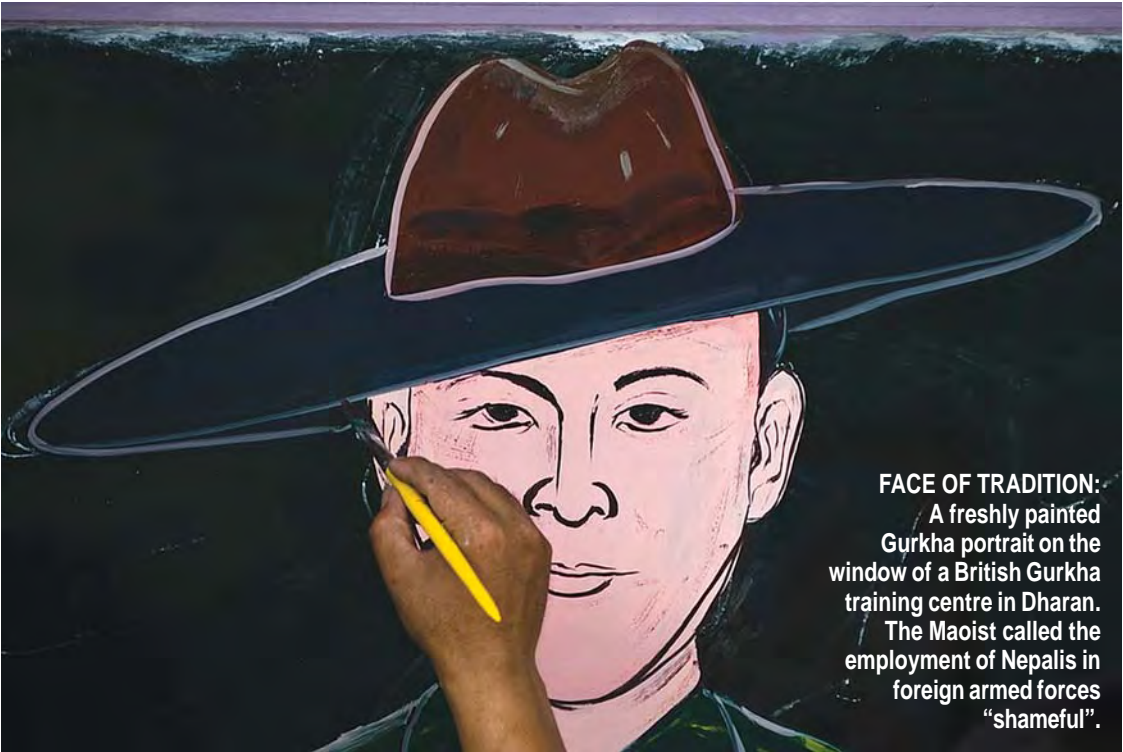
“This area is under our control and you dare hold a meeting here,” they said. Sharma argued that nobody owned the place and that everyone had the right to be there. She tried to reason with them, but it was obvious to her they wanted to disrupt the meeting.

The YCL pulled her by the hair and neck and pushed her into their truck while the other women tried to get her out. The police came shortly, and chased off the YCL with tear gas and blank fires.

The threat has not gone away with the news of the Maoist win in the elections. On 14 April, Maoist leaders demanded the release of 31 YCL cadres who were held under probation by the police at Rupendehi for carrying weapons.

“I’m not afraid of them,” says Sharma, “we are prepared to face them again.”

Wong Shu Yun in Rupendehi



FACE OF TRADITION: A freshly painted Gurkha portrait on the window of a British Gurkha training centre in Dharan. The Maoist called the employment of Nepalis in foreign armed forces “shameful”.

SAM KANG LI

“Just let them try”

RABIN GIRI AND PRANAYA SJB RANA in DHARAN

The Maoist sweep has been not altogether unwelcome here in eastern Nepal, but veterans of the British and Indian armies are worried that the new Maoist government may terminate Gurkha recruitment.

‘Shameful activities like the employment of Nepalis in foreign armed services like the British Gurkhas need to be stopped. All Nepalis should take up respectful and useful jobs inside the country itself. Necessary steps will be taken to create the proper environment,’ says the Maoist election manifesto which has a Prachanda-for-president photo on the back cover.

The Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen’s Organisation has taken strong issue with this. “If the Maoists stop recruitment, it would be a great loss for the country,” says Gajendra Isbo of GAESO. “The Gurkhas do not earn peanuts. The money they send back keeps our economy going.”

Remittances have increased in the past few years as the British government raised the salary and pensions of Gurkhas after protests by ex-servicemen. Ex-Gurkhas now also have the option of settling permanently in Britian (see ‘Ae Gorkhaliharu’, #391).

Much of Dharan’s economy survives on remittances that soldiers serving abroad send home. Ex-servicemen form a vital part of the city’s society and have strong political clout. After the manifesto came out, influential ex-Gurkhas made a lot of noise, putting pressure on the Maoist-affiliated Limbuwan National Liberation Front, many of whose own members are ex-servicemen.

The agenda is not new. The UML has also been against Gurkha recruitment, but that never stopped Dharan from being a UML stronghold.

The British started recruiting Nepalis into their army in 1815, and Gurkha soldiers fought for them in various insurrections in British India and during both world wars. After India’s independence in 1947, under a Tripartite Agreement between India, Nepal and the British government, Nepalis were

formally integrated into both the British and the Indian armies.

This almost 200-year history of Nepalis fighting for foreign countries has become a tradition as well as an institution. For many of the so-called ‘martial races,’ like Rai, Limbu, Gurung and Magar, it is a matter of pride and prestige to become a ‘lahure’.

Every year thousands of young men aged between 17 and 21 try out for the Gurkhas. Only 294 are chosen, out of which 230 join the British Army and 64 for the Singapore Police. The Indian Army also recruits heavily from Nepal and currently has approximately 100,000 Nepalis in 44 battalions.

“Right now it is impossible to stop recruitment,” says Ram Narayan Kandanga, an ex-British Gurkha who is researching a doctorate in British-Nepali relations. “It would not solve anything, in fact it would only complicate matters.”

The Maoists probably realise this, and say they will not implement the provision in the manifesto. “On behalf of my party, I have made clear that there will not be an immediate closure of recruitment,” says

Ex-Gurkhas are worried about Maoist policy on recruitment

Akkal Bahadur Manangbo of the Limbuwan Front and Maoist PR candidate.

Manangbo himself was a British Gurkha and says it is indeed “shameful” that Nepalis serve in foreign armies and that it needs to be stopped. But not immediately. “We want to scrap the unfair tripartite treaty. After that, if the youth still want to go into foreign armies we will let them. But as our economy becomes stronger, we will not need this kind of slavery,” he told *Nepali Times*.

Many here will be relieved that the Maoists do not intend to enforce their agenda. “Many Gurkhas voted for them,” says Parbat Rai, instructor at a local training institute for British Gurkhas. “But if they stop recruitment, we will kick them out in the next parliamentary elections.”

It doesn’t look like the Gurkhas will give up without a fight. Says aspiring British Gurkha, Salil Thakuri: “Just let them try.” ●

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May sky

Stars over a New Nepal

In May, there will be three interesting celestial events heralding the arrival of a 'New Nepal'. We have a meteor shower at the beginning of the month, **Mercury** will be gleaming bright in the evening sky, and the crescent moon will cross the red planet **Mars**.

In May, we see the sky moving into its summer phase. A couple of hours after sunset, the brilliant star **Vega** will be rising in the east, an event which signals the arrival of summer. The most prominent constellations from east to west will be Hercules, Boötes (with the bright star **Arcturus**), Leo the Lion and Gemini the Twins. The great Saptarshi (Big Dipper) will be dominating the northern sky. If you are in a really dark location, you will also be able to see the fainter constellations of the northern sky, like Draco the Dragon, and the Little Dipper which

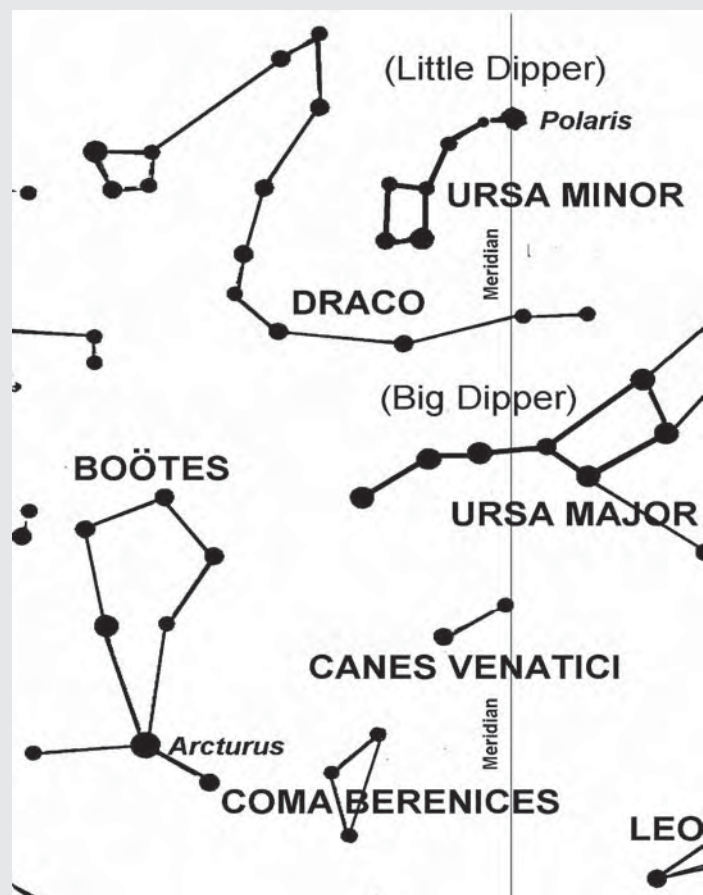


STARGAZING
Kedar S Badu

contains **Polaris** the North Star. (See star chart.) Unfortunately the pre-monsoon sand haze from the desert has reduced visibility.

Among the planets, **Mercury** is a great sight this month. On 14 May, it reaches its greatest eastern elongation and will set an hour and a half after the Sun. If you have children, don't miss the chance to show them this elusive little planet with the help of binoculars. Look towards the western horizon about an hour after sunset.

Venus will be rising less than half an hour before sunrise but will be difficult to see this month. **Mars** moves from Gemini to Cancer and will dim slightly as it reaches aphelion - its greatest distance from the Sun - on 13 May. **Jupiter**, in Sagittarius, is high in the southern sky at dawn. You cannot mistake it for anything else. **Saturn** is sitting in the midst of Leo and is overhead after sunset.



On 10 May, the Moon passes very close to **Mars** and will be visible crossing the red planet at 8PM. Don't miss this great celestial spectacle. It's also best viewed with binoculars.

Celestial fireworks will entertain us in early May, when the Earth passes through the centre of a debris trail left by Haley's Comet (which last visited us in 1986). The Eta Aquarids meteor shower will begin in the last week of April and climax on 5 May with a peak rate of up to 30 meteors an hour. Look towards the constellation Aquarius in the eastern horizon at 3AM. ●



Can't embrace him, can't reject him...

India's Dalai Dilemma

As the world reacts to China's crackdown in Tibet, one country is conspicuous by both its centrality to the drama and its reticence over it. India, the land of asylum for the Dalai Lama and the angry young hotheads of the Tibetan Youth Congress, finds itself on the horns of a dilemma.



ANALYSIS
Shashi Tharoor

On one hand, India is a democracy with a long tradition of allowing peaceful protest, including against foreign countries when their leaders come visiting. It provided refuge to the Dalai Lama when he fled Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959, granted asylum (and eventually Indian citizenship) to more than 110,000 Tibetan refugees, and permitted them to create a government-in-exile (albeit one that India does not recognise) in the picturesque Himalayan hill town of Dharamsala.

On the other hand, India has been cultivating better relations with China, which humiliated India in a brief border war in 1962. Though their bitter border dispute remains unresolved, and China has been a vital ally and military supplier to India's enemies in Pakistan, bilateral relations have grown warmer in recent years.

China has now overtaken the US as India's largest single trading partner. Tourism is thriving. Indian information technology firms have opened offices in Shanghai, and Infosys's headquarters in Bangalore recruited nine Chinese this year. India has no desire to jeopardise

any of this.

India's government has attempted to draw a distinction between its humanitarian obligations as an asylum country and its political responsibilities as a friend of China. The Dalai Lama and his followers are given a respected place but told not to conduct "political activities" on Indian soil.

When young Tibetan radicals staged a march to Lhasa from Indian soil, the Indian police stopped them well before they got to the Tibetan border, detaining 100. When Tibetan demonstrators outside the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi attacked the premises, the Indian government stepped up its protection for the Chinese diplomats.

The Dalai Lama's curious position has complicated India's diplomatic dance with China. He is simultaneously the most visible spiritual leader of a worldwide community of believers, a role that India honours, and a political leader, a role that India permits but rejects in its own dealings with him.

As a Buddhist, the Dalai Lama preaches non-attachment, self-realisation, inner actualisation, and non-violence; as a Tibetan he is admired by people fiercely attached to their homeland, with most seeking its independence from China and many determined to fight for it.

The Dalai Lama's message of peace, love, and reconciliation has found adherents among Hollywood movie stars, Irish rock musicians, and Indian politicians. But he has made no headway at all with the regime that rules his homeland. His sermons fill football stadiums and he has won a Nobel Prize, but

political leaders around the world shirk from meeting him openly, for fear of offending China.

Indians are acutely conscious that, on this subject, the Chinese are easily offended. While India facilitated the highly publicised visit by Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the US House of Representatives, to the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala last month, it almost simultaneously canceled a scheduled meeting between him and Indian Vice-President Mohammed Hamid Ansari.

When China summoned India's ambassador in Beijing to the foreign ministry at 2AM for a dressing-down over the Tibetan protests in New Delhi, India meekly acquiesced in the insult. Though Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has publicly declared the Dalai Lama to be the "personification of nonviolence," India has let it be known that it does not support his political objectives. Tibet, India's government says, is an integral part of China, and India lends no support to those who would challenge that status.

The stark truth is that India has no choice in the matter. It cannot undermine its own democratic principles and abridge the freedom of speech of Tibetans on its soil. Nor can it afford to alienate its largest trading partner, a neighbour and an emerging global superpower, which is known to be prickly over any presumed slights to its sovereignty over Tibet. India will continue to balance delicately on its Tibetan tightrope. ●

(Project Syndicate.)

Shashi Tharoor, is a novelist and commentator, and former Under Secretary General of the United Nations.



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Petit bourgeois pride and prejudice

As the Maoist landslide has unfolded, Kathmandu's petit bourgeoisie has riled quietly in an identity crisis. No one says it, but they are scared, unsure what this victory may mean for their life-sustaining predilections. Never mind the vital differences our home-grown revolutionaries may have with the original Maoists, the more paranoid minds may have already conjured up images of a Chinese or Russian-style purge of the bourgeoisie.



CRITICAL CINEMA
Diwas Kc

Suddenly now, the class lines which affect everything from membership of the intelligentsia to the peace process are becoming uncomfortably apparent. Where, in these nail-biting times, is a petit bourgeois to find some solace, and see his core values reflected and vindicated? If cinema can do the trick, allow me to recommend the perfect nerve-soother: Dai Sijie's *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*.

Adapted from the bestselling semi-autobiographical novel written by director Sijie himself, the movie will transport you to the maelstrom of China's notorious Cultural Revolution in

Love and literature in the time of revolution



the early 1970s. Our heroes Luo (Chen Kun) and Ma (Liu Ye) are two city boys whose refinement and bourgeois ways have displeased the Party, and who are subsequently sent off for 're-education' to a remote village in Sichuan. In what must be these sons of urban professionals' worst nightmare, they are condemned to four years of hard labour heaving spattering buckets of human manure, their passion for Mozart and connoisseurship of high art sacrificed at the altar of peasant revolution.

But don't be alarmed yet. Indignant as the city boys may be at the repressively 'bad-mannered' and ignorant ways of the revolutionaries, the film is ultimately about the triumph of civility. The urbane charisma of Luo and Ma is an object of mild curiosity for most villagers, but for one particular granddaughter of a local tailor, our nameless Little Chinese Seamstress (Zhou Xun), it is a matter of profound fascination. The boys woo her by reading her Balzac from a stolen stash of banned books, stirring in her desires and dreams unthinkable within the dull confines of the village.

In the midst of a 'revolution' which enforced conformity and monoculture, Sijie dares to imply that true liberation comes from

the discovery of art and literature, and individuality. And he does so very touchingly. In fact, *Balzac* is one of the most tender and persuasive defences of the power of art you will ever see.

Quite expertly, Sijie manages to identify his love for French literature with the universal condition of being human. There is a point to be made here – something which I think even Karl Marx himself would have admitted despite his copious writings on cold, hard dialectical materialism. It is art which moves us above the sheer drudgery of subsistence, and brings us closest to our nature. For Marx this insight came from an attention to human labour; for Sijie, it comes from an idealism of middle class life.

Thank God, the Nepali Maoists of the present day barely resemble the Chinese ones of the early 1970s. But the Kathmandu petit bourgeoisie, still reeling from the election result, may still find in the travails and yearnings of Luo and Ma some comfort that they are not alone, and there are people out there who hold their values dear. ●

BALZAC AND THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS
Director: Dai Sijie
Cast: Chen Kun, Liu Ye, Zhou Xun.
2002. 111 min.

Cell Phone Talking

Not Just For ANYMORE

DAILY HOROSCOPE

AST<space>the initial three letters of your zodiac sign. i.e.
AST<space>ARI

STOCK

SHG Top 5 gainers of the day
SHL Top 5 losers of the day
SHH Stock related help

DICTIONARY

DICT<space>the word you want to know the meaning of. i.e.
DICT<space>tut

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JOKES

JOKE
JOKE<space>DOC
JOKE<space>SILLY
JOKE<space>LAWYER
JOKE<space>SANTA
JOKE<space>BLONDE

THOUGHT

THOUGHT
THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

WEEK<space>the initial three letters of your zodiac sign. i.e.
WEEK<space>ARI

TOP 5

TOP5<space>Nepsong
TOP5<space>Engsong
TOP5<space>Bolsong

LOVE METER

LM<space>Your name<space>His/Her name

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ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Double vision** photographs by Nepali and international students, until 27 April at New Orleans, Patan. 5522708
- ❖ **Masks – Expressions We Wear** an exhibition by Soo Jin Oh, from 20 April-5 May, 10AM-6PM at the Gallery 32, Dent Inn.
- ❖ **Collection One** paintings by Amir and Anup Chitrakar, until 10 May, at the Saturday Café, Boudha. 9851106626

EVENTS

- ❖ **Abako Nepal** an exclusive program by Arohan-Gurukul with paintings by Kiran Manandhar from Dhara heights, street play Mithila Natya Parishad, classical music by Sukarma, poetry recitation by renowned poets in Dharahara, Sundhara from 5:30 AM-6:30 PM on 25 April. 2101332
- ❖ **KJC concert Series III** by Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, 26 April at 1PM in the premises of Gyanodaya College, Jhamsikhel.
- ❖ **To be and to Have**, free screening by Candid Society, 27 April at 6PM at Alliance Francaise.
- ❖ **Annual Spring Fair** at Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC), Dhobighat from 12:30-4PM on 27 April. Entrance fee Rs. 100 for adults and Rs. 50 for students.
- ❖ **Tokyo Story** a film by Yasujiro Ozu presented by Cine-Sankipa, 28 April, 5:30 PM at the Rimal Theatre, Gurukul. 4466956
- ❖ **School Bullying** a talk program by Rakshya Nepal, 30 April at The New Era, Battisputali. 9851023958
- ❖ **Don't worry, be happy** spring concert by the Kathmandu Chorale, 3.30 PM and 6PM on 3 May at the British School, admission free.
- ❖ **Tantric Dance of Nepal** presented by Kalamandapa, every Tuesday 7PM at Hotel Vajra and every Saturday 11AM at Patan Museum.
- ❖ **Toastmasters** a communication and leadership program, organised by Kathmandu Toastmasters Club every Wednesday 6PM at Industrial Enterprise Development Institute (IEDI) building, Tripureswor. 4288847

MUSIC

- ❖ **A funky reggae party** with Pachooka at Moksh on 25 April. 5526212
- ❖ **Paleti** with MP Gurung from Shillong, 25 April, 6PM at nepa-laya 'r' sala, Kalikasthan, Rs 565. 4412469
- ❖ **Sundance music festival**, a weekend full of live music, great food, camping accommodation, sauna and plunge pool at the Last Resort from 3-4 May for Rs. 2000. Tickets available at Moksh, 5526212 and The Last Resort, 4700525
- ❖ **Rudra night** fusion and classical Nepali music by Shyam Nepali and friends, every Friday, 7PM at Le Meridien, Gokarna. 4451212
- ❖ **Sufi music** by Hemanta Rana, every Friday at 7.30 PM at Dhaba Restaurant and Bar, Thapathali.
- ❖ **Yankey and friends** live acoustic music every Friday at the Bourbon room Restro-bar, Lal Darbar.
- ❖ **Anil Shahi** every Wednesday and Rashmi Singh every Friday, live at the Absolute Bar, Hotel Narayani Complex, 8PM. 5521408

DINING

- ❖ **The Kaiser Café open now** at the Garden of Dreams, operated by Dwarika's Group of Hotels, open from 9AM-10PM. 4425341
- ❖ **Sunday jazz brunch** design your meal with pastas, salads and barbeque, with jazz by Mariano and band, at the Rox Garden, Hyatt Regency. 4489361
- ❖ **Steak escape** with Kathmandu's premier steaks available for lunch and dinner at the Olive Bar and Bistro, Hotel Radisson. 4411818
- ❖ **Bourbon Room Restro-bar** now open for lunch and dinner with over a 100 cocktails, Lal Darbar.
- ❖ **Cocktails and grooves** with jazz by Inner Groove at Fusion-the bar at Dwarika's, every Wednesday, at Dwarika's Hotel.
- ❖ **Cocktails, mocktails and liqueurs** at the Asahi Lounge, opening hours 1-10PM, above Himalayan Java, Thamel.
- ❖ **Continental and Chinese** cuisine and complimentary fresh brewed coffee after every meal a Zest Restaurant and Bar, Pulchok.
- ❖ **Spit BBQ** with barbequed wild boar and lamb, salads and dessert, Rs. 650 plus tax at The Summit Hotel on 25 April.
- ❖ **Illy espresso coffee** at the Galleria cafe, every Friday espresso cocktails.
- ❖ **International buffet** at the Sunrise Café, and Russian specialties at Chimney, Hotel Yak and Yeti. 4248999
- ❖ **Roasts and reds** fine roasts and red wine at the Rox Restaurant, Hyatt Regency, 15 April-6 May. 4489361
- ❖ **Jazz in Patan** with coffee, food, drinks and dessert at the New Orleans Cafe, Jawalakhel. 11.30 AM-10PM. 5522708
- ❖ **Saturday special** barbeque, sekuwa, momos, dal-bhat at The Tea House Inn, Windy Hills, Nagarkot every Saturday. 9841250848.
- ❖ **Dice-licious brunch** at Kakori, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, roll the dice to the number of the day and get 50% discount on an individual meal, Saturdays and Sundays, 12.30-3.30 PM. 4273999
- ❖ **Scrumptious wood fired pizzas**, cocktails and more at Roadhouse, Bhatbateni 4426587, Pulchok 5521755 and Thamel 4260187.
- ❖ **Starry night barbecue** at Hotel Shangri-la with Live performance by Ciney Gurung, Rs. 666.00 nett. per person, at the Shambala Garden, every Friday 7PM onwards. 4412999
- ❖ **Kebabs and curries** at the Dhaba, Thapathali. 9841290619
- ❖ **Lavazza coffee** Italy's favourite coffee at La Dolce Vita, Thamel, Roadhouse Café Pulchok and Thamel. 4700612
- ❖ **Pizza** from the woodfired oven at Java, Thamel. 4422519



Quest Entertainment



The film tells the story about call centre executive Jimmy Cliff (Saif Ali Khan), gangster Bachchan Pande (Akshay Kumar) and Pooja (Kareena Kapoor), a girl who can't be trusted. The three of them are on a dangerous journey across India, which will alter the course of their lives in more ways than one. And to top it all, there is the evil eye of Bhaiyyaji (Anil Kapoor), a maverick gangster who enjoys killing people as much as he enjoys speaking English.

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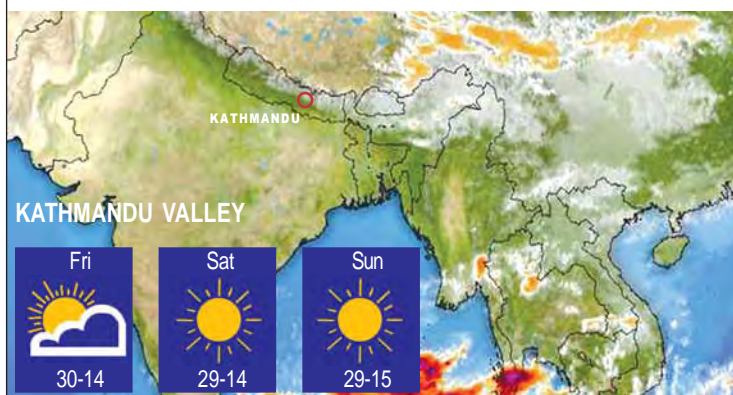
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WEEKEND WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

The dry spell is likely to continue in eastern and central Nepal with hot, dry wind blowing in from the southwest. This is also bringing in wind-blown sand up to an altitude of 3,500 m. The haze filters some of the sunlight, so it should've actually been hotter this week. This pattern is expected to continue because there is very little moisture in the air for mountain convection systems to trigger storms. High mountain valleys will see some brief local showers, with clear mornings. In the Valley, expect a sultry weekend.



रेडियो सगरमाथा

एफएम १०२ थोप्लो ४ मेगाहर्ज



नेपाली रेडियो
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हालवाल
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अंग्रेजी सिक्न सघाउने कार्यक्रम
Tuning In To Language and Culture
प्रसार हुने समय : हरेक शुक्रवार बेलुका (८:१५-८:३५)
हरेक आइतबार दिउँसो (१:४०-२:००)
"रेडियो सगरमाथामा नियमित सुनी, अंग्रेजी सुधारी"
(रेडियो सगरमाथा र अमेरिकी राजदुतावास, अमेरिकी केन्द्रको सहकार्य)

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हरेक विहान ५:०० देखि राती ११:०० बजे सम्म सूचना शिक्षा र स्वस्थ मनोरञ्जनका लागि भरपर्दो साथी रेडियो सगरमाथा १०२ थोप्लो ४ मेगाहर्ज



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AROUND THE WORLD

Prachanda pratapi bhupati

Who on earth has been briefing the UN Security Council on Nepal? In New York this week Dumisani Kumalo asked "all political parties in Nepal to accept the elections results". Get outa here. Hasn't UNMIN told him yet that parties here accept the results? By the way, how come UNMIN is still adding staffers, vehicles and planes when it's time to pack up?

॥

First it was the Eurocopter illegally touching down on top of Mt Everest three years ago and marking the highest-ever chopper landing in world history. Since the manufacturers, EADS, didn't have official permission to land on the summit, the feat was never officially recognised. That didn't stop Eurocopter from putting a video of the landing on their website, though (www.eurocopter.com/everest/).

Then last week another Eurocopter **sneaked** into Nepal, violating our sovereign airspace and landing at Kathmandu airport in a threatening manner. This time it was a US-registered AS365 and the Crooked Aviation Authoritarians of Nepal (CAAN) have impounded the helicopter and put the three-member Indian crew, who couldn't explain whether their flight was an excursion or an incursion, under hotel arrest.

The Ass smells a rat. In other words, the donkey finds it fishy. It was a Eurocopter in both incidents, but the timing was suspicious--just before the Olympic Torch is being taken to the summit of Mt Everest. Is anyone putting two and two together? If this was indeed a dry run to test Nepal's air defence radar for another summit landing, then it succeeded. It proved we don't have one.

If we are to prevent future **alien** aerial invasions, we need an air force pronto. And maybe anti-aircraft batteries on the Western Cwm.

॥

You must hand it to the comrades, they are leaning on the Oily Corporation to raise petroleum prices right away, before they come to power. They also have an astounding ability to be everything to everyone. Comrade Awesome told Kantipur in an interview in 2005: "Even if we come to power through a constituent assembly, we will not be trying to be president or prime minister we will send younger comrades to government. We will display statesmanship." At least he got that part about winning the CA right. At a public hearing at the Khula Munch last week, Comrade

Dina was grilled by his own YCL and asked to clarify why the party wasn't allowing them to say "Down with American imperialism and Indian expansionism" anymore. His reply: "The **context** has now changed."

॥

After Fearsomeone addressed Big Business the other day and basically came out of the closet to say that he has always been a secret admirer of Ayn Rand his disciples weren't too surprised. They seem to have been in on it all along. But it did get the UML comrades muttering under their breath at the Shital Nibas Loktantra binge: "They went to war and had 15,000 people killed, for this?"

॥

So how come Kamred Laldhoj is not living in the Pistachio Palace anymore and has moved in with

Ananta at Quiet Corner? Has co-habitation ended even before it began? All has not been well since PKD found out that if he became the first president of the Republic of Nepal and BB became prime minister, he'd just be a ceremonial prez while Jit Bahadur would be chief exec. Even if the interim constitution is amended, the head of the state will still be a figurehead.

॥

In a few weeks, Nepal will go from being a quasi-kingdom to a capitalist people's republic. And in the palace, Sri Ek is supposed to be trying to cut a deal in the backroom: he'll step off the throne in return for a timetable to vacate Naryanhiti, his assets will not be confiscated, guaranteed a privy purse, get to go to any temple he likes.

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