Changing of the guard

MALLIKA ARYAL

When the newly-elected constituent assembly sits for its first meeting at the BICC on 28 May, it will ratify the abolition of the monarchy before it even starts drafting a new constitution.

To make things easy, king Gyanendra could vacate the palace on 27 May itself. If he wants to make it difficult, he could try to stick it out and face protests at the gates, which could turn ugly.

“When Nepal was declared a federal republic last year, the king was given a grace period to leave the palace and he has had ample time to plan how he was going to go,” says political analyst Krishna Hachhethu. But the king has tried to cling on till the last.

Right-wing Hindu groups and royalists haven’t given up, and say only a referendum can abolish the 240-year-old institution. “The decision to remove the king came from a reinstated unelected parliament that had no legitimacy,” deputy royal high priest Madhav Bhattarai told Nepal Times.

The RPP (Nepal) has been a vocal champion of monarchy and its leader Kamal Thapa has been trying to buy time for the king. “This country will plunge into crisis if the monarchy is removed in haste,” he says.

The election was an overwhelming win for republicanism, with the royalist forces seeing a rout, so it can be expected that a referendum wouldn’t save the monarchy even if it was tried. Even palace insiders say the king should see the writing on the wall and exit gracefully while there is still time. But they fear his decision may be “too little too late”.

Jurist Nilamber Acharya dismisses speculation that the king has something up his sleeve. “The king is powerless, he has no support from the political parties, the international community, the Nepali people or the Nepal Army,” says Acharya.

Some monarchists advise king Gyanendra to negotiate a deal with the prime minister and the Maoists on his security and a privy purse, and to keep Queen Mother Ratna in her present cottage in the palace, a place she has not left since her marriage to King Mahendra. He can then make a proclamation and step down on the day the new parliament sits.

Acharya and others say the end of the monarchy can be marked by a ceremony in which the royal standard within the palace is lowered and replaced symbolically by the national flag. Headline: “Most countries have a republic day, ours could be 15 Jestha.”

Eviction day nears at Narayanhiti

DISTANT THUNDER: Storm clouds brew over the palace on Wednesday evening.
Sore losers

Democracy seems to work differently in Nepal

I

Procrustes nation

Depend ing on whether you see the glass as half full or half empty, some of us are waiting for Nepal to enter a brave new era of democracy and progress, while others are convinced that we are headed towards afallstaryabb.

The argument is well made that the Maoists won the elections, and they should be allowed to govern. The NC and UML should get over their self-obsessed misery and deep suspicion of each other, and look at the nations future instead of their partisan ambitions. And in a vest of the Old Nepali we lay to the streets and declare a shutdown, punishing the people get to back the Maoists set are in they in their ways, that to change seems to be asking too much of them.

But its not entirely feckless at the heims of the NC and UML. The two parties are divided, and distrust true Maoist

The other parties have some understandable wisdom voted for the Maoists, but it’s no longer believable that terrorising opponents is not a part of his strategy.

It’s so difficult for Pushpa Kamal Dahal to say sorry. He owns up to the killing, says there will be an investigation, the guilty will be punished and the victims family will be compensated. But not politically. This is the case with all other acts of TCA brutality. The standard operating procedure is go into denia, and when the evidence becomes too glaring, dismis as an act of few universities in public outrage mounts, a statement is released promising compensation and blaming (reactionaries) and counter-revolutionaries (for an incraspacy).

Reversal of devar their children. If the Maoists aren’t careful this is what will happen to them. The Nepali people in their wisdom voted for the Maoists, but didn’t give them the majority to run things on their own. In a democracy, they have to learn to work together with the other parties in a coalition. The other parties have some understandable concerns and have set pre-conditions to join the government.

Ultimately there is no way but to give up the culture of violence and cooperate. That can start with the Maoists leading the government, making the NC a real federal head of state and giving the speakers post to the UML. After that, who gets what ministry isn’t that important.

Accountability: Residents of the Kuleswor area have been protesting against the Maoist murder of Ram Hari Shrestha since Saturday.

Prashant Jha

The argument is well made that the Maoists won the elections, and they should be allowed to govern. The NC and UML should get over their self-obsessed misery and deep suspicion of each other, and look at the nation’s future instead of their partisan ambitions. And in a vest of the Old Nepali we lay to the streets and declare a shutdown, punishing the people get to back the Maoists set are in they in their ways, that to change seems to be asking too much of them.

But its not entirely feckless at the heims of the NC and UML. The two parties are divided, and distrust true Maoist intentions. The comrades, it must be said, have done nothing to ally these fears. They have kept up their tactics of violence by beating up those they beat in elections. They have even taken a victimised businesswoman to a UN-supervised camp to torture and beating up those they beat in elections. They have even taken a victimised businessman to a UN-supervised camp to torture and

The other parties have some understandable wisdom voted for the Maoists, but it’s no longer believable that terrorising opponents is not a part of his strategy.

It’s so difficult for Pushpa Kamal Dahal to say sorry. He owns up to the killing, says there will be an investigation, the guilty will be punished and the victims family will be compensated. But not politically. This is the case with all other acts of TCA brutality. The standard operating procedure is go into denia, and when the evidence becomes too glaring, dismis as an act of few universities in public outrage mounts, a statement is released promising compensation and blaming (reactionaries) and counter-revolutionaries (for an incraspacy).

Reversal of devar their children. If the Maoists aren’t careful this is what will happen to them. The Nepali people in their wisdom voted for the Maoists, but didn’t give them the majority to run things on their own. In a democracy, they have to learn to work together with the other parties in a coalition. The other parties have some understandable concerns and have set pre-conditions to join the government. Ultimately there is no way but to give up the culture of violence and cooperate. That can start with the Maoists leading the government, making the NC a real federal head of state and giving the speakers post to the UML. After that, who gets what ministry isn’t that important.

Accountability: Residents of the Kuleswor area have been protesting against the Maoist murder of Ram Hari Shrestha since Saturday.

Prashant Jha

The argument is well made that the Maoists won the elections, and they should be allowed to govern. The NC and UML should get over their self-obsessed misery and deep suspicion of each other, and look at the nation’s future instead of their partisan ambitions. And in a vest of the Old Nepali we lay to the streets and declare a shutdown, punishing the people get to back the Maoists set are in they in their ways, that to change seems to be asking too much of them.

But its not entirely feckless at the heims of the NC and UML. The two parties are divided, and distrust true Maoist intentions. The comrades, it must be said, have done nothing to ally these fears. They have kept up their tactics of violence by beating up those they beat in elections. They have even taken a victimised businesswoman to a UN-supervised camp to torture and beating up those they beat in elections. They have even taken a victimised businessman to a UN-supervised camp to torture and

The other parties have some understandable wisdom voted for the Maoists, but it’s no longer believable that terrorising opponents is not a part of his strategy.

It’s so difficult for Pushpa Kamal Dahal to say sorry. He owns up to the killing, says there will be an investigation, the guilty will be punished and the victims family will be compensated. But not politically. This is the case with all other acts of TCA brutality. The standard operating procedure is go into denia, and when the evidence becomes too glaring, dismis as an act of few universities in public outrage mounts, a statement is released promising compensation and blaming (reactionaries) and counter-revolutionaries (for an incraspacy).

Reversal of devar their children. If the Maoists aren’t careful this is what will happen to them. The Nepali people in their wisdom voted for the Maoists, but didn’t give them the majority to run things on their own. In a democracy, they have to learn to work together with the other parties in a coalition. The other parties have some understandable concerns and have set pre-conditions to join the government. Ultimately there is no way but to give up the culture of violence and cooperate. That can start with the Maoists leading the government, making the NC a real federal head of state and giving the speakers post to the UML. After that, who gets what ministry isn’t that important.

Accountability: Residents of the Kuleswor area have been protesting against the Maoist murder of Ram Hari Shrestha since Saturday.

Prashant Jha

The argument is well made that the Maoists won the elections, and they should be allowed to govern. The NC and UML should get over their self-obsessed misery and deep suspicion of each other, and look at the nation’s future instead of their partisan ambitions. And in a vest of the Old Nepali we lay to the streets and declare a shutdown, punishing the people get to back the Maoists set are in they in their ways, that to change seems to be asking too much of them.

But its not entirely feckless at the heims of the NC and UML. The two parties are divided, and distrust true Maoist intentions. The comrades, it must be said, have done nothing to ally these fears. They have kept up their tactics of violence by beating up those they beat in elections. They have even taken a victimised businesswoman to a UN-supervised camp to torture and beating up those they beat in elections. They have even taken a victimised businessman to a UN-supervised camp to torture and

The other parties have some understandable wisdom voted for the Maoists, but it’s no longer believable that terrorising opponents is not a part of his strategy.

It’s so difficult for Pushpa Kamal Dahal to say sorry. He owns up to the killing, says there will be an investigation, the guilty will be punished and the victims family will be compensated. But not politically. This is the case with all other acts of TCA brutality. The standard operating procedure is go into denia, and when the evidence becomes too glaring, dismis as an act of few universities in public outrage mounts, a statement is released promising compensation and blaming (reactionaries) and counter-revolutionaries (for an incraspacy).

Reversal of devar their children. If the Maoists aren’t careful this is what will happen to them. The Nepali people in their wisdom voted for the Maoists, but didn’t give them the majority to run things on their own. In a democracy, they have to learn to work together with the other parties in a coalition. The other parties have some understandable concerns and have set pre-conditions to join the government. Ultimately there is no way but to give up the culture of violence and cooperate. That can start with the Maoists leading the government, making the NC a real federal head of state and giving the speakers post to the UML. After that, who gets what ministry isn’t that important.

Accountability: Residents of the Kuleswor area have been protesting against the Maoist murder of Ram Hari Shrestha since Saturday.

Prashant Jha

The argument is well made that the Maoists won the elections, and they should be allowed to govern. The NC and UML should get over their self-obsessed misery and deep suspicion of each other, and look at the nation’s future instead of their partisan ambitions. And in a vest of the Old Nepali we lay to the streets and declare a shutdown, punishing the people get to back the Maoists set are in they in their ways, that to change seems to be asking too much of them.

But its not entirely feckless at the heims of the NC and UML. The two parties are divided, and distrust true Maoist intentions. The comrades, it must be said, have done nothing to ally these fears. They have kept up their tactics of violence by beating up those they beat in elections. They have even taken a victimised businesswoman to a UN-supervised camp to torture and
Caste, class and religion

Mithila’s mythology of monarchy and militancy

JANAKPUR — The capital of Mithila looks like a boomtown gone bust. There is haphazard growth and the infrastructure has almost collapsed. But the magnificent Janaki Temple continues to be the centre of everything.

Compared to the festivities of Ram Navami, celebration of Janaki Navami is a low-key affair. Other than a session of bhajans in temple premises, there is no sign of birthday of Janaki being marked in what is believed to have been her hometown. But Maithil women are now conscious enough to see a “male, royal and high-caste conspiracy” behind this tradition.

Inside the temple premises, a modern Sita pointedly asks her Ram, “Why do we still have a national holiday on Ram Navami but not even a mention of Janaki Navami though she is the daughter of our soil? Is it because she was merely the consort of a ruler rather than a reigning Queen? Does her indeterminate caste as the offspring of Mother Earth make her less sacred?”

Ram’s answer: “It has been a Pahadiya conspiracy. They celebrate Chaite Dasain, and Ram Navami holiday is merely a cover to get an extra day.” When asked whether he is a Maoist, this particular Ram responds that his politics are closer to NC and TMLP rather than the Maoists or MJF.

Mythology is stronger in Mithila than history. Janak is the synonym for king in Maithili legends. Maithili language and literature are believed to have reached their apogee in the courts of minor kings of the region. Maithil pundits went to Gorkha and other Baise-Chaubise kingdoms to draft their laws. They were the mainstay of Malla courts in Kathmandu Valley.

When Durganand Jha threw a bomb at King Mahendra after he usurped all powers in a royal-military coup in 1960, he became Mithila’s mythology of monarchy and militancy. Continued neglect of Durganand by successive governments in the post-1990 period rankled the Madhesis. The TMLP has now honoured Jha by nominating his widow to the constituent assembly.

The love-hate relationship of Maithils with monarchy persists. The king will probably find that he has sizeable support in the town where a Shah king was physically attacked but has been neglected since. The attendant of municipality guesthouse reverentially touches the couch on which King Gyanendra reportedly rested during a brief visit to the town two years ago.

Perhaps it’s the monarchical bent of the Mithil mind that refuses to accept the Maoist ideology. That could be the reason journalist-turned-politician Roshan Janakapuri almost lost his deposit even though he is quite popular and commands the respect of local intelligentsia for his literary pursuits.

But adherence to tradition does have its pitfalls; caste is much more important than either class or religion. Your surname is a marker of identity. Mainstream Nepali society has long pretended that the issue of the Madhes didn’t exist, but the uprising was waiting to happen.

After the national language controversy over the use of Maithili in Rajbiraj municipality, the conspiracy against citizenship laws, and the Hritik Roshan riots in 2001, denouement has been long overdue. Despicable though they may have been, the demolition of Bhanubhakta’s statue in Janakpur and anti-Maoist violence in Gaur represented the rage of the oppressed.

Popularity based on resistance to authority may win elections, but will that be enough to secure justice for Madhesis? That’s a question Upendra Yadav will have to face as he works on electoral arithmetic to share power at the centre. Mithila has existed for over 5,000 years. It can wait for the restoration of its mythic glory. 

Lilliput

WEAR IT. LOVE IT!

KIDSWEAR & ACCESSORIES

New Available at:

SHOP NO. 98
FIRST CHOICE BLUE BIRD MALL TRIPTI KESHUWAR

Tiger Mountain

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

KARNALI LODGE & CAMP

Galda National Park

KARNALI LODGE

TIGERMOUNTAIN

Tel: 0697 1 4251500, Fax: 4251600
E-mail: info@tigermountain.com
URL: www.tigermountain.com
The new Madhesi woman
Make way for these articulate, aggressive assembly members

Earlier this week, human rights activist Dipendra Jha organised an interaction of the 13 women who have made it to the constituent assembly from the MJF. The experience was a revelation.

You can easily travel across the plains, hold meetings with politicians and civil society leaders, get a sense of the macro political dynamics, write reports, but when the discussion started, we saw a very different side to them.

Women in the MJF are passive at best: as a voter told by her father, husband or son which way to cast the ballot, and as fodder when street agitations are launched. Discrimination against women exists across the country. But in the MJF the preference for a son is higher, female infanticide is growing alarmingly and girls usually drop out after primary school. Dowry is widespread with education only reinforcing the practice and hiring up the rates for grooms. Widowhood is stigmatised and deprived of the most basic human dignity, and a premium is placed on women being confined to homes. They may be treated as symbols of izzat, but rarely does this translate into autonomous decision-making and personal agency.

When quotas were allotted for women, the cry for education, the demand for reservation for women in all Panchayat posts, India has now evolved with women politicians coming into their own, taking independent decisions, and rising from the ranks.

But the discussion started, we saw a very different side to them. They may not have structured speeches and power point presentations. Maybe they were more comfortable because it was an all-Madhesi gathering where they could speak in their own languages, with Hindi as the common medium. But what was undeniable was the sense of empowerment. They knew what they were talking about.

The group was diverse in terms of caste—Kanai Bagem, Durga Devi Mahato, Ramabati Devi, Savita Yadav, and the most vocal of them all, Kalavati Paswan, a middle-aged Madhesi Dalit woman. They have been kicked out by their own families and have run away from home. They spoke about the discrimination against the Madhes, the oppression of women, the need for a new Madhesi politics, and the need for a new Madhesi social structure. What was striking was the anger against Kathmandu as well as the Madhesi social structure.

Kalavati Paswan said, “We are as strong as iron. We are ready to die and kill for Madhes. If they do not listen to us, we will break the chairs of the CA.”

This is a similar struggle to that in India, the Panchayat system in which the women have been elected for the first time. It is only a matter of time before more independent women come to the forefront. The question is whether they can present an alternative kind of politics, or will merely be pawns in the masculine norm of corrupt, violent, and manipulative politics.

This political revolution now needs to be accompanied by drastic social reform on the ground. Gandhi always attached his politics with a constructive programme: promoting khadi, eradicating untouchability, working on sanitation in villages.

What the Tarai desperately needs is a similar social revolution that fights caste and discrimination, builds inter-community relations, focuses on rural upliftment, and, of course, allows women across casts to break more barriers.
Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat talks to Nepali Times about why there is no election power play and about the state of the economy.

Nepali Times: The Nepali Congress lost the election, yet it is reluctant to give up power.

Ram Sharan Mahat: The PM is ready to handover power democratically and constitutionally. The constitution envisages a consensus government. If that is not possible, it should be a government with two-thirds support of the CA. As soon as such a scenario emerges, the NC will leave the government. The PM has already asked the political parties to start a consultation to form such a government.

Furthermore, the Interim Constitution has ordained some responsibilities to this interim government, such as the implementation of the republican agenda. The cabinet making process will therefore have to await the start of the CA session. Instead of making irresponsible charges against the NC, the Maoists, as the largest party, should start negotiations with other political forces to form a government based on a common minimum program. At least to ensure necessary support to their government, as they lack necessary numbers to form the government on their own.

How come the king's agents are demanding the presidency?

As finance minister, what is your assessment of the state of the economy?

The real threat now is the emergence of one party forces to pave the way for total control of state power. Probably want to target the NC and other democratic forces to remove the king. Now, they probably want to target the NC and other democratic forces to pave the way for total control of state power. The real threat now is the emergence of one party forces to pave the way for total control of state power. It is better to wait for the CA meeting. The Maoists joined hands with NC and other democratic forces to remove the king. Now, they probably want to target the NC and other democratic forces to pave the way for total control of state power. We are not, this is another canard. The constitution says the king's role is only as a head of state. Otherwise there will be a vacuum of power in the state until the time the republican agenda is implemented. There is a constitutional guarantee provided by the company are also certified in value added and liaison services in Nepal.

"Constitutional politics and violence can't go together"

Are you championing a Maoist-led government needlessly? Your party is talk of a government. Our seven pre-conditions are to ensure the survival of multiparty democracy in Nepal. The Maoists have unleashed violent activities and are against the law in their own hands, this is a real threat to peace and a democratic future in Nepal. We want to make sure the politics of violence and terror is given up for good. They still continue with their parallel administrative structures, hold arms, maintain militias and paramilitary forces. There isn't a day that goes by without some YCL atrocity being reported in the press. They are terrorising and looting property.

Constitutional politics and violence can't go together.

How come the king's agents are demanding the presidency? We are not, this is another canard. The constitution says the king's role is only as a head of state. Otherwise there will be a vacuum of power in the state until the time the republican agenda is implemented. There is a constitutional guarantee provided by the company are also certified in value added and liaison services in Nepal.

"Constitutional politics and violence can't go together"
What is the mandate of the people?
Change. Radical forces, agitational forces, have won. The rest have been swept aside. The people voted for us because we led the Madhes movement and fought genuinely for Madhesi rights. The masses want us to continue fighting against Kathmandu.

Will you join the government?
Our joining the government is really a secondary issue. The crux is whether they implement past agreements, and whether they amend the constitution to incorporate the provision of an autonomous Madhes state. That is our key demand prior to any deal. As of now, we are not in favour of joining the government.

Do you think Girija Prasad Koirala should become a ceremonial president?
Girija Prasad Koirala must resign immediately to pave the way for a new government. He has no right to be president. His party has lost under his leadership. He is physically, emotionally, mentally, intellectually, morally not appropriate for the job.

How do you see the role of India in Madhesi politics?
Very negative. India, especially South Block and the Indian Embassy, have been against the Madhes and MJF. They created the TMLP to weaken us. They also tried to defeat me in Sunsari by backing Sujata Koirala, funding her and getting people from across the border to support her. I am not saying anything against the Indian people or the entire Indian government. Sections of MEA, especially ambassador Shiv Shanker Mukherjee, were against us. As the counting started and results came, Mukherjee packed up and ran off. I don’t know the new ambassador yet.

Was RAW more positive?
I have never met any of them. Don’t know them.

How do you see your relationship with Maoists shaping up given the past tension? What is your stand on issues like PLA integration?
We have met already. If the Maoists are positive towards the Madhes, I think we can work together. The army must be a politically neutral force. If the soldiers of one party join the national army, problems might come up. The PLA has to be managed and some way needs to be found. But I don’t think integration will be appropriate.

The Maoists have said they will launch land reforms. This has implications in the Tarai. What is your stand? These issues come later. First we have to fight a political battle against the internal colonialism in the Madhes.

What should be done with armed groups?
Talk to them. Do not ignore them. What can I do? It is the government which has to take the initiative. It is a part of the eight-point agreement.

Is a single Madhes province across the plains a feasible demand? Western Tharus want their own unit, there are mixed population settlements, other administrative issues will crop up.

See, the people of the Madhes want one province. This is a non-negotiable demand for us and not a bargaining chip. If we compromise on this issue, the Madhes will be finished. The Pahadi ruling class will divide up the Tarai and we will all be powerless little units. Tharus and others in the west are also with us. If there are internal issues within the Tarai, we will deal with it ourselves within one Madhes, that is our business. If the other parties do not agree, we will launch a decisive movement and go back to the streets.

“Koirala must resign”

Was RAW more positive?
I have never met any of them. Don’t know them.

How do you see your relationship with Maoists shaping up given the past tension? What is your stand on issues like PLA integration?
We have met already. If the Maoists are positive towards the Madhes, I think we can work together. The army must be a politically neutral force. If the soldiers of one party join the national army, problems might come up. The PLA has to be managed and some way needs to be found. But I don’t think integration will be appropriate.

The Maoists have said they will launch land reforms. This has implications in the Tarai. What is your stand? These issues come later. First we have to fight a political battle against the internal colonialism in the Madhes.

What should be done with armed groups?
Talk to them. Do not ignore them. What can I do? It is the government which has to take the initiative. It is a part of the eight-point agreement.

Is a single Madhes province across the plains a feasible demand? Western Tharus want their own unit, there are mixed population settlements, other administrative issues will crop up.

See, the people of the Madhes want one province. This is a non-negotiable demand for us and not a bargaining chip. If we compromise on this issue, the Madhes will be finished. The Pahadi ruling class will divide up the Tarai and we will all be powerless little units. Tharus and others in the west are also with us. If there are internal issues within the Tarai, we will deal with it ourselves within one Madhes, that is our business. If the other parties do not agree, we will launch a decisive movement and go back to the streets.

“Koirala must resign”

Was RAW more positive?
I have never met any of them. Don’t know them.

How do you see your relationship with Maoists shaping up given the past tension? What is your stand on issues like PLA integration?
We have met already. If the Maoists are positive towards the Madhes, I think we can work together. The army must be a politically neutral force. If the soldiers of one party join the national army, problems might come up. The PLA has to be managed and some way needs to be found. But I don’t think integration will be appropriate.

The Maoists have said they will launch land reforms. This has implications in the Tarai. What is your stand? These issues come later. First we have to fight a political battle against the internal colonialism in the Madhes.

What should be done with armed groups?
Talk to them. Do not ignore them. What can I do? It is the government which has to take the initiative. It is a part of the eight-point agreement.

Is a single Madhes province across the plains a feasible demand? Western Tharus want their own unit, there are mixed population settlements, other administrative issues will crop up.

See, the people of the Madhes want one province. This is a non-negotiable demand for us and not a bargaining chip. If we compromise on this issue, the Madhes will be finished. The Pahadi ruling class will divide up the Tarai and we will all be powerless little units. Tharus and others in the west are also with us. If there are internal issues within the Tarai, we will deal with it ourselves within one Madhes, that is our business. If the other parties do not agree, we will launch a decisive movement and go back to the streets.
Nepal’s move towards federalism is now confirmed. The majority of the winning parties in the CA election are for it, including the CPN-M, NC, UML and MJF. However, Janamorcha and the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party are against it.

There have always been differences in opinions about how much power the states should have. In India, the friction between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on Narmada can be taken as an example. It is also possible that if means and resources are not distributed properly, goods produced in one state might not be permitted in another, and states might even impose blockades against each other.

King to obey

Sanghu, 19 May

The CPN-M has sent a letter asking the king to leave Narayanhiti by 26 May. This sudden message after their earlier claim that the king would be asked to depart to gain the goodwill of the international powers, and raise his popularity to a point where the monarchy could be restored.

New Pushpa Lal?

Bishwadeep Pandey in Kantipur, 19 May

There has been a lot of commentary, both positive and negative, about the Maoist leader Baburam Bhattarai. His adamant stance on ‘republican democracy’ is history now. It is no longer just Maoist party doctrine but has become the policy of the entire country.

But now there are opportunists both inside and outside his party, who from the shadows call him an anti-republican. People want to know how seriously Bhattarai is taking these charges, and his well-wishers want to know why he is not retaliating.

Bhattarai is a republican and the People’s War will be put down. The entire Maoist revolution is history now. It is no longer just anti-monarchist, and Bhattarai is now a member of the political parties and international powers, and made republican impossible. Those who were shown up by his capability are now trying to sully his name and image by spreading rumours and lies. If real revolutionaries are not able to unmask these fake revolutionaries then the entire Maoist revolution and the People’s War will be put to shame.
“Ready?” shouts Kabita Sah, one hand on her hips and the other casually tossing a lime green tennis ball in the air. There is an answering nod from the other side and Kabita gets into position. Taking a few steps backwards, she makes a running start along the dusty path and sends the ball rocketing over her head in a perfect bowl. It bounces once on the hard ground, finds a snag and careens wildly, flying over the head of the batter. “No ball,” shouts Ramesh RC.

Every evening, on this small stretch of dusty path in the alleyways of Dhumbarahi, local boys and a few girls gather to play cricket, football and sometimes, marbles. “If one of us has a bat or a ball, then we play cricket. If there is only a ball, then it’s football,” says Kabita, 12, who bowls and bats like a pro. Kabita started playing because of her brother. An avid cricket fan, he would gather his friends in the empty lots behind buildings and construction sites to play with a tennis ball and a piece of wood. “At least we have a bat now,” says Kabita, before turning back to her bowling duties.

With few parks, playgrounds or public spaces, the alleyways and empty lots of Kathmandu have become a sportsground for its children. Between the end of school and nightfall, the city kids congregate with tattered footballs, worn tennis balls and whatever else they can find. Usually, the one who brings the ball gets to make the rules. In this evening’s cricket match at Dhumbarahi, a fly ball over a...
nearby wall is a six. If it touches the back wall then it’s a one-run, and if it hits or breaks a window, you’re out. Street football, too, has some rules of its own. The goal is small, usually just two bricks about five paces apart. The ball has to roll through the posts; it can’t fly over. That is a “high goal” and doesn’t count.

A few kids even play golf, after acquiring a golf ball from somewhere. As children do, they improvise: a few holes in the ground, a hefty L-shaped pipe and they’re teeing off. They don’t know golf rules, except that the ball needs to go into the hole and whoever does it with the least number of strikes wins.

In the outskirts of the Valley, five children looked like they were wrestling in the middle of a field. On closer inspection, it turned out they were in a scrum over an oval rugby ball. “I’ve seen this on TV,” says Nirmal Pandey, 13. “Your team has to get the ball to the other side, and the other team tries to stop you.”

They have no proper equipment or sports fields, and sometimes don’t even know the rules, but Kathmandu’s youngsters put boundless energy into their hotly-contested, makeshift games. A long boring day at school is relieved by a tussle in the grass, a sprint for the crease or a slide for the ball. Playing on concrete and litter-strewn surfaces means there are often injuries and often tears, but grazed knees are usually quickly forgotten to return to the game, until it’s dark and their parents call them home.

Pranaya SJB Rana
I t is common knowledge in Nepal that foreigners do not know how to drive. And if any proof needed, you do see many of them driving around.

Drive as you live.

---

NEPALIPAN

Jean-Baptiste Monneau

---

Dangerous. It’s not surprising that barely a month goes by without a major bus accident given the way that buses drive overtake on the blindside on the edge of precipices and blaze through villages with children and pedestrians on the road.

Of course people rarely pay for breaking the rules or causing harm to others. Traffic police are more than happy to look the other way if their palm is greased with a bribe, or the other way around, make life difficult for themselves by driving like maniacs. Traffic laws, like other laws, exist for a purpose, and if people here started abiding by their laws they might find the country functioning much more smoothly and painlessly.

Driving is an expression of our civic and social behaviour, and requires civility and respect for others. It shows to what extent a society respects law and order, and appreciates and applies democratic values.

The selfishness and lack of consideration evident in the way most Nepalis drive, including psychotic use of horn, threatening use of head lights (light out of my way) and disrespect for the most basic of traffic rules show that Nepal has a long way to go in this regard.

It’s not just an annoyance—driving habits here are also really

---

One size doesn’t fit all

Providing education for Down’s syndrome children is still a problem

---

D ishops has slanted eyes, a low set, nose, and ears with a slightly unusual shape. Born with Down’s syndrome, his characteristics apart from other children. Despite being mentally disabled, he was enrolled in mainstream nursery school at the age of three.

Down’s syndrome is an agentic disability caused by chromosome shift. It is associated with a range of medical conditions, including mental impairment. Despite this, studies have shown that early intervention can allow people with Down’s syndrome to lead a reasonably independent life.

Unfortunately, in Nepal, there is no such institution that provides individualised education and training for these children.

Parents are therefore forced to choose between the equally unsuitable alternative of mainstream schools, neither of which provides Down’s syndrome children with the kind of education they need.

Dipesh faced difficulties in a mainstream school, as the classes moved too fast for him. Special schools were just as difficult, as they inhibited his individual capabilities, causing him to retreat into himself. By the time he was 11, he had been enrolled at five different institutions.

Most parents of Down’s syndrome children would rather send their children to a mainstream school, but some schools are reluctant to accept children with the condition.

If there really is to be a new mentality in a new Nepal, this is one of the issues that should be addressed. At the end of the day Nepalis just make things more difficult for themselves by driving like maniacs. Traffic laws, like other laws, exist for a purpose, and if people here started abiding by their laws they might find the country functioning much more smoothly and painlessly.

As the old campaign said, Drive as you live, in a more respectful and egalitarian way, and the whole of society will benefit from it. And casualties and deaths on the road will decrease dramatically too.
While their leaders say the revolution will follow the path of "bourgeoisie capitalism", here in the Maoist heartland party faithful are planning to expand existing communes.

During the conflict, the Maoists set up four communes in Jajarkot, Rukum and Rolpa. Each has between 30-40 families, there is no private property, labour and harvests are shared. Marx's famous dictum, "from each according to their ability and for each according to their need", is the credo here, and for the most part members of the communes seem happy with it.

"Life is easier living in a commune, work in the farm is easier since everyone helps out and agricultural productivity is higher," says Dipak Khadka, the head of the 'Balidan' commune in Rukum.

The 'Juni' commune in Jajarkot was set up after the police killed 20 farmers in two separate massacres in 1999 to take care of surviving family members, widows and orphans. Farmers handed over all their land and property to the commune.

In Thawang, the 'Ajambari' commune was set up by the survivors of an army helicopter raid which destroyed most of the buildings in the town. See also: 'Rolpa is waiting', #389 and 'From Maoism to tourism', #340.

The communes all have departments looking after health, education, culture, development and security. All the members have to take part in physical exercise and there is military discipline. Alcohol is banned, as is untouchability. There are no religious festivals and 15 February, People's War Day is celebrated as the new Dasain. Funerals are marked by draping the body in red cloth and commemorating the dead with social service.

Another famous member of the 'Balidan' commune is the head of the YCL, Ganesh Man Pun. "Everyone shares the burden, and that makes it easier to bear the hardships," Pun says. This is especially true of elderly parents who can't do back-breaking work. "The senior citizen department of the commune looks after us, and life is a lot easier," says 80-year-old Mangal Roka in Thawang.

Besides communes, there are more than 50 cooperatives that run eateries, manufacturing units, farms, schools and health posts in the Midwest. The big question in the Maoist party now is whether to convert cooperatives into communes, or the other way around, and there have been some contradictory statements.

"We have seen communes just as models, we will not try to replicate them, but will promote cooperatives," explains Maoist ideologue, Baburam Bhattarai. But Ganesh Man Pun thinks cooperatives should all be turned into communes, and there should be more communes.

Last year the Maoists organised a commune conference in Thawang in which they passed a resolution to "preserve communes forever". However, the prospects aren't good. The French Commune in 1871 didn't last more than 72 days and the Chinese communes didn't survive past Mao's death in 1975. In last year's comprehensive peace accord, the Maoists agreed to disband their communes along with their local people's governments. After an election in which they emerged as the largest party, the Maoists now have to reconcile their commitment to a capitalist free market with the legacy of the communes here in the cradle of their revolution.
Elephant and dragon

Can India compete with China?

It is fashionable these days, particularly in the West, to speak of India and China in the same breath. These are the two big countries said to be taking over the world, the new contenders for global eminence after centuries of Western domination.

ANALYSIS
Shashi Tharoor

Indeed, two new books explicitly twin the two countries—Robyn Meredith's The Elephant and the Dragon: The Rise of India and China and What It Means for All of Us and Harvard business professor Tarun Khanna's Billions of Entrepreneurs: How China and India are Reshaping their Futures—and Yours. Some even speak of “Chindia,” as if the two were joined at the hip in the international imagination.

Count me among the sceptics. It is not just that China and India have little in common, save for the fact that they occupy a vast landmass called “Asia.” It is also that they are already at very different stages of development.

China started its liberalisation a decade and a half before India, hit double-digit growth when India was a poor backwater of the world. India is now growing at 5 percent, and, with compound growth, has put itself in a totally different economic league from China, continuing to grow faster from a larger base.

Moreover, the two countries' systems are totally dissimilar. If China wants to build a new six-lane expressway, it can bulldoze its way through any village in its path. In India, if you want to widen a two-lane road, you could be tied up in court for a dozen years over compensation entitlements.

When China built the Three Gorges dam, it created a 660-kilometer long reservoir that displaced 2 million people. Since India began the Narmada Dam project, it has spent 34 years (so far) fighting environmental groups, human rights activists, and advocates for the displaced all the way to the Supreme Court.

That is how it should be. India is a fractious democracy, China is not. But, as an Indian, I do not wish to pretend that we can compete in the global growth stakes with China. But if we can compete, can we cooperate? The two civilisations had centuries of contact in ancient times.

Thanks mainly to the export of Buddhism from India to China, Chinese came to Indian universities, visited Indian courts, and wrote memorable accounts of their travels. But there was always a whiff of Indian and Chinese had much to do with each other. The heady days of Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai (“Indians and Chinese are brothers”), the slogan coined by Nehru’s India, to welcome Chou En-Lai in 1955, gave way to the humiliation of the 1962 border war, after which it was “Hindi-Chini aby-abey” for decades.

The border dispute remains unresolved, and there are new imbalances such as the anti-Chinese protests by Tibetan exiles and Chineselag in India. To speak of a bilateral “trust deficit” might even be an understatement.

And yet, there is some good news. Trade has doubled in each of the last three years, to an estimated $60 billion this year. China has now overtaken the United States as India’s largest single trading partner. Tourism is thriving. There is a wave of Chinese engineers working in India. Indian computer firms and engineering companies are learning from Indian software engineers. Support for Chinesemade Huawei.

In other words, the elephant is already dancing with the dragon. The only question is whether political tensions could bring the music screeching to a halt. There is no doubt that, whatever India’s legitimate differences with China’s Communist regime, cooperation is in the best interests of both peoples.

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

Round robin in the Valley

Golfer Pilots NPGA Classic

The Suaty Nepal Golf Tour and the unwavering support of local golfing fraternities continue to herald a bright future for golf in Nepal. The first event of the tour, the Suaty Nepal Central Classic, which will run from 25 to 27 May. This will be a real test for the pros as they have to compete over three golf courses in the Kathmandu Valley, comprising a total of 54 holes.

The next event lined up on the tour is Golfer Pilots NPGA Classic, which will run from 29 to 31 May. This will be a real test for the pros as they have to compete over three golf courses in the Kathmandu Valley, comprising a total of 54 holes. The first day will be played at Tribhuvan Army Officers Golf Club, followed by the second round at Le Meridien Gokarna, and finally the 18 holes at the RNGC.

This event was initiated last year by enthusiastic pilot golfers, who envisioned scheduling it a week before the all-important Suaty Nepal Masters to provide exposure for the competition and a chance to prepare for the bigger tournament. This paid off last year as we witnessed a Nepali winning the Suaty Nepal Masters.

The two founders, Rabindra Dhakal and Deepak Thapalya, are firmly committed to making this an annual affair. This year the prize money has increased threefold and the winner of the event will receive Rs 100,000.

I caught up with Rabindra Dhakal who said, “The pleasure that golf provides is amazing. Apart from that, this sport really enriches your heath too. We are trying to encourage young talent in golf because we want to give something back to the game.”

There will also be a Pro-Am event on 24 May. Here again amateurs will have the opportunity to play alongside professionals and experience a higher level of play than they are used to.

We hope that the golfing community and sponsors will continue their support to make the Suaty Nepal Golf Tour bigger and better this year and in coming years.

Deepak Acharya is a golf instructor and Golf Director at Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, Kathmandu. prodeepak(at)hotmail.com

The Suaty Golf Tour is in the hands of its newly appointed managing director, Deepak Acharya, who runs Deepak Acharya’s Golf Academy and Gokarna Forest Golf Resort & Spa, a prestigious 18-hole course.

Stay at the HyAtt with a special offer of NRs 5,000 plus taxes for one night accommodation for including breakfast at the Café, complimentary use of the spa, early check-in and late check out till 2pm.

FEEL THE HYATT TOUCH™

For reservation please call 4499800 or 4912934 reservation.kathmandu@hyatt.com

*Offer valid for Nepali residents only

** HyAtt, HyAtt and HyAtt logo are registered trademarks of HyAtt International, Inc. and are used by himalmedia Pvt. Ltd.
Travelling back to Kathmandu

Sincerely January, thirteen outstanding documentaries from South Asia which were first shown in Film South Asia '07 last October, have been touring around the world. The Travelling Film South Asia '08 package features five award-winning films. After successfully opening in Pokhara, Chittagong, New Delhi and Karachi in South Asia, Arizona, New Haven, Minnesota, and Virginia in the US, and Brighton in the UK, the films are coming back to Kathmandu next weekend.

Catch TFS’08 Kathmandu at: Tala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka from 30 May to 1 June. The films will continue travelling until October 2009 and in the next few months will be shown in Islamabad, Goa, Guwahati, Shillong, Colombo, London, and New York.

6 Yards to Democracy (55 min)
India, 2006, dir – Nishtha Jain & Smriti Nevatia (60 min)

From Dust (60 min)
Sri Lanka, 2005, dir – Dhruv Dhawan Post Tsunami exposé of state corruption (31 May, 10AM)

A Life with Slate (59 min)
Nepal, 2006, dir – Dipesh Khairi Poetic dimensions of slate mining in a Nepali village
Joint Winner of the Best Debut Film Award at FSA '07 (31 May, 2PM)

Living Goddess (96 min)
Nepal, 2006/07, dir – Ishbel Whitaker Lives of the Kumars when the People’s Movement of April 2006 (30 May, 5PM)

The Miseducation of Pakistan (30 min)
Pakistan, 2004, dir – Syed Ali Naqvi Primary schools in Pakistan: an indictment of state and society (31 May, 11.30AM)

Motherland Afghanistan (74 min)
Afghanistan, 2006, dir – Sedika Mojadidi An Afghan father’s return to the home country
Winner of the Second Best Film Award at FSA '07 (30 May, 3PM)

The Sky Below (75 min)
India/Pakistan, 2006/07, dir – Sara Singh The India-Pakistan frontier six decades after Partition
Joint Winner of the Best Debut Film Award at FSA '07 (1 June, 11.30AM)

Tickets – Rs 30 available at Dhokai Cafe, Patan Dhoka, 5522113 & Film South Asia Secretariat, Patan Dhoka, 5547279
Limited season passes also available for Rs 300
For screenings schedule and further information, visit www.filmsouthasia.org contact 5547279.

Man of iron
A new Golden Age for superhero movies?

This summer another comic superhero joins the pantheon of box office smashers. Tony Stark dons his slick mechanised armour and becomes the eponymous Iron Man. His outfit is a gleaming shell of metallic red and gold that transforms its human resident into a hurtling missile. As a summer flick, Iron Man provides the requisite CGI bombast, and its hero, a weapon manufacturing magnate turned peace warrior, has more than the usual tally of one-liners, imbued with devilish fun by Robert Downey Jr. Thankfuley, Jon Favreau’s Iron Man isn’t a clumsy, mechanical, lifeless assembly, but a lively piece of work that toys entertainingly through the customary motions of the superhero narrative.

In this first entry (the date of the sequel has already been announced), perhaps an inordinate time is dedicated to the érigé of the character, in this case the development of Tony Stark’s powered costume. As the billionnaire magnate of weapons manufacturer Stark Enterprises, Stark enjoys a playboy jet-setting lifestyle before he is imprisoned in a cave by an ambitious warlord and has to show the true grit. Instructed to recreate his latest weapon, Stark instead constructs a mechanical suit which he uses to test his way out, swinging aside or flaming down gun-wielding fighters.

Of course, the metamorphosis into a superhero is predicated by a more personal transformation. That is, from a conceited egotistical nihilist to a conciliated egotistical humanitarian. The experience of seeing his weapon in the hands of the bad guys seems to show him the truth about the warmongering ways of his company and, conscience now firmly rooted, he publicly commits to ending Stark Enterprises’ war-profiteering ways. He may have seen the light, but there are others who have plans of their own.

Stark is apparently unaware of the malicious machinations of his second in command Obadiah Stone, the burly regent to the Stark kingdom. Much has been made of Downing’s performance—and indeed he is excellent as Tony Stark—but the real showstopper is Jeff Bridges as Stone, a beefed up Iago, all false paternalism and conceited envy.

Iron Man is apparently unaware of the malicious machinations of his second in command Obadiah Stone, the burly regent to the Stark kingdom. Much has been made of Downing’s performance—and indeed he is excellent as Tony Stark—but the real showstopper is Jeff Bridges as Stone, a beefed up Iago, all false paternalism and conceited envy.

Stark treats to his workshop beneath his Malibu mansion, tinkering away at his new concept of a mechanical suit. He entertainingly tests the designs, intentionally and unintentionally demolishing parts of his mansion in the process. How his work may help the cause of peace is a question only partially answered when he flies to Afghanistan to rescue some refugees from the thuggish band that imprisoned him earlier in the movie. Eventually, he puts Stark Enterprises to replace the first Iron Man which leads, unsurprisingly, to a final battle between two titans. Comic book aficionados might be reminded of other superhero rivalries which have made it onto the big screen: Superman/Batman, Spiderman-X-Men to name a few. These titles represent very profitable movie franchises whose proceeds ironically eclipsed the profits from the comic book sales themselves.

But Marvel Comics (the progenitor of X-Men, Spiderman and Iron Man) is now undergoing a transformation of its own: a new Golden Age for superhero movies. The metamorphosis into a superhero is predicated by a more personal transformation. That is, from a conceited egotistical nihilist to a conciliated egotistical humanitarian. The experience of seeing his weapon in the hands of the bad guys seems to show him the truth about the warmongering ways of his company and, conscience now firmly rooted, he publicly commits to ending Stark Enterprises’ war-profiteering ways. He may have seen the light, but there are others who have plans of their own.

Iron Man

Director: Jon Favreau
Cast: Robert Downey Jr., Jeff Bridges, Terrence Howard, Gwyneth Paltrow
2008. PG-13. 2hr 6 min.
EXHIBITIONS
- Brass art exhibition at Susan’s collection, Buddha Garden, Kathmandu Guest House 23-24 May. 4700632
- Transformations furniture exhibition 9-24 May at the Image
- Dai Gallery Café, Nasal.
- Silhouettes in Time paintings by Erina Tamrakar, 13-30 May at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited. 4218048
- Trees and Leaves painting exhibition by Samjhana Rajbhandari and Bidhata K.C., 24 May-13 June, 5.15 PM at Bario Fiesta, Nasal.

EVENTS
- Machhendranath on the road with the red gold by Kesang Tseten on 25 May, 7 PM at Alliance Fransaise.
- Reineke the fox a drama performed by Studio 7 at the Naga Theatre, Hotel Vaja, 7.15 PM until 25 May every Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- Cinema Paradiso, a film by Giuseppe Tomtomini presented by Cine-Sankata at Rimal theatre, Gorkul on 26 May, 5.30 PM. 4466956
- American Gangster a movie by Ridley Scott, 27 May 6.30 PM at Lazzimpat Gallery Cafe. 4428549
- Israeli Film festival organized by Embassy of Israel on 27-29 May at Russian Cultural Center, Kamalpokhari.
- Traveling Film South Asia showcasing 13 documentaries from South Asia at Yala Maya Kendra, Pandan Dhoka, 30 May-1 June. Tickets available at Ohokaina Cafe. 5547297

MUSIC
- Palladi with Kumar Suba on 30 May, 5.30 PM at nepalaya ‘r’ sala, Kathakala. Rs. 555. 4412469
- Live karaoke with special thai cuisine, every Wednesday at Holiday Karaoke Restaurant and Bar, Lazzimpat. 4445731
- Rudra night fusion and classical Nepali music by Shyam Nepali and friends, every Friday, 7PM at Le Meridien, Gokarna. 4451212

DINING
- Lajawab tandem and kabab festival, 7-10 PM every Friday at the Hotel Himalaya, Rs 550.
- Hot summer spicy food at the Jalan Jalan Restaurant, Kupondole Heights. 4892727
- The Kaiser Cafe open now at the Garden of Dreams, operated by Dwarikas 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. 448961
- Steak escape with Kathmandus premier steaks available for lunch and dinner at the Olive Bar and Bistro, Hotel Radisson.
- Bourbon Room Resto-bar now open for lunch and dinner with over a 100 cocktails, Lal Darbar.
- Cocktails and grooves with jazz by Inner Grove at Fusion-the bar at Dwarikas, every Wednesday, at Dwarikas Hotel.
- Cocktails, mocktails and liquors at the Asahi Lounge, opening hours 1-10PM, above Himalayan Java, Thamel.
- Illy espresso coffee at the Galleria cafe, every Friday espresso cocktails.
- International buffet at the Sunrise Cafe., and Russian specialties at the Astoria Hotel, Hotel Radisson.
- Steak Fave variety of steaks every Monday and Tuesday at the Rox Restaurant, Hyatt Regency, 7-10.30 PM. 448961
- Jazz in Palace with coffee, food, drinks and dessert at the New Orleans Cafe, Jawalakhel. 8.30 AM-10PM. 5527082
- Dixie-licious brunch at Kaki, Sattlee Cranea Palace, 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. 427999
- Scrumptious wood fired pizzas, cocktails and more at Roadhouse, Bhabatan 4426587, Pulchok 5521755 and Thamel 4260187.
- Retro Brunch Barbeque with live acoustic music by Sound Chemistry, every Saturday, 12-3PM at LeMendien-Kathmandu, Gokarna. 4455172.
- Dhamaka a Nepali style barbeque with a pan-Indian fusion at the Shambala Garden, every Friday 7PM onwards. 4412999
- Starry night barbecue at Hotel Shangri-La with Live performance by Ciney Gunung, Rs. 666.00 nett. per person, at the Shambala Garden, every Friday 7PM onwards. 4412999
- Kebabs and curries at the Dhaba, Thapathali, 9841290619
- Lava Lava tree top favourite coffee at La Dolce Vila, Thamel, Roadhouse Café Pulcho and Thamel. 4706612
- Pizza from the woodfired oven at Java, Thamel. 4424529

ABOUT TOWN
- "The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian", the Pevensie siblings are transported back from England to the world of Narnia, where they meet Narnia’s rightful heir to the throne, the young Prince Caspian, who has been forced into hiding by his uncle Miraz. During their absence, the Golden Age of Narnia has become extinct; Narnia has been conquered by the Telmarines and is now under the control of the evil King Miraz. With the Narnians, and led by the mighty knights Peter and Caspian, they embark on a remarkable journey to find Aslan, rescue Narnia from Miraz’s tyrannical hold, and restore magic and glory to the land.

WEATHER
- According to the calendar we are now in pre-monsoon time, usually characterised by warm southerly winds and convective rains, the current weather pattern is exactly the opposite. An active westerly front supported by a strong low pressure over the Tibetan Plateau has spread south of the Himalaya, including into Nepal, bringing with it cool breezes and showers in the afternoons. The front is getting stronger and will most likely produce more rain. The Valley has now received 93mm out of its 116mm quota for this month. Satellite pictures indicate that the rest of this will fall this weekend. Together with the rain, expect cloudy skies and cool temperatures.

WEEKEND WEATHER
- Saturday and Sunday.
- The Kaiser Cafe open now at the Garden of Dreams, operated by Dwarikas Group of Hotels, open from 9AM-10PM. 4425341
- Weekend brunch at the Olive Bar and Bistro, Hotel Radisson.
- Sunday jazz brunch design your meal with pastas, salads and barbeque, with jazz by Mariano and band, at the Rox Garden, Hyatt Regency. 448961
- Steak escape with Kathmandus premier steaks available for lunch and dinner at the Olive Bar and Bistro, Hotel Radisson.
- Bourbon Room Resto-bar now open for lunch and dinner with over a 100 cocktails, Lal Darbar.
BODY COOLER: In contrast to Kathmandu, Chitwan temperatures were soaring on Wednesday. Here a woman cools down with a slice of watermelon.

IT’S YOU: Publisher of Himal Khabarpatrika Kanak Mani Dixit points PM Koirala out to himself in a picture at the Himal Khabarpatrika photo exhibition held at the Nepal Art Council last weekend. The exhibition included photos taken since the People’s Movement 2006.

STRIKE AGAIN: The microbus-stops at Ratna Park were deserted during Wednesday’s strike, called to demand justice for Ram Hari Shrestha, a businessman murdered by Maoists at the Chitwan cantonment.

LIKE MOTHER LIKE DAUGHTER: Arzu Deuba and Pratibha Rana, wife and mother-in-law of former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, were felicitated along with other women elected to the CA at a ceremony on Monday. Deuba is representing the NC and Rana the RPP.

The restaurants are:
1. Chinese unlimited
2. Bawarchi
3. Fruit and Salad Club
4. Sandwich Point
5. Cucina Italia
6. Watering Hole
7. Tukche
8. Te
9. Yomari

Free WiFi at Welcome Food Plaza
(Above Kathmandu Bazaar)
Durbar Marg; Tel: 2217201

WORLDLINK Nationwide Network
Connect your regional offices using WorldLink’s Virtual Private Network (VPN) Solutions

PRIVATE PARTIES
LIVE STATION 4 MULTI CUISINE AND INDIAN STYLE BUFFET
FRIDAY NIGHTS BASH
HAPPY HOURS BETWEEN 6PM TO 9PM
RETRO SATURDAYS
DRAG & BATTLE ON SPECIAL HOUSE DEALS

www.worldlink.com.np

Opening at Mahendra, Holanda & Ban For details call 5523050
When Comrade Parsuram, accompanied by his sidekick Comrade Hanuman, accepted garlands and blessings from a republican Godman at the Marwari Brahman Society last month we thought that the baddies were well on their way to becoming goodies.

And sure enough, last week they attended a meeting of Christian evangelicals during which they said atheism didn’t mean intolerance of minority religions. Then on Buddha Jayanti, the comrades all trooped off to Lumbini and, in the presence of a Maoist monk on the podium, Girjau once more underlined the many similarities he shared with Siddhartha Gautam Buddha.

There is a certain logic to all this: being an atheist means not believing in God, but there is nothing stopping an atheist from trying to be God himself. Lotus Flower really thinks he is the reincarnation of the Buddha. Wonder what the widow and children of Ram Hari Shrestha think of that.

The reason PKD needs divine attributes is probably because he intends to perform a “miracle” in this country in the coming months. He hasn’t really specified whether the chamatkar is going to be economic, political or spiritual but he sort of hinted that the nation was going to be brought back, Lanza-like, from the dead. For that he definitely needs a miracle, how on earth are we going to be Switzerland in the next 25 years at the rate we are going? And for this country of 28 million growing at 2.5 percent we need to attain an economic growth rate of 25 percent a year or we are in for a per capita income of $3,000 in ten year’s time. Given the difficulties, YCLS armed with iron rods are having to discipline traffic at Kalanki, we may need more than a miracle - we may need a Second Coming.

From the 12-point agreement to the 7-point preconditions that GPK has put to PKD to join a Maoist-led government, now we have come to the 5-point prerequisite that Kingji has set out before he vacates Naryanhiti. KG wants security, protection of his assets, a royal allowance befitting an ex-King and cultural and religious rights. The plan seems to beto buy time for the monarchy at least till such time as the new republican constitution is not promulgated in two years time. The trouble is, because of his past bad behaviour, no one trusts His ex-Majesty anymore, not the parties, not the international community and the not the people.

This country is an example of samanupati gone bonkers. The PR lists brought in the janajatis and dalits and women in overwhelming numbers, but now the remaining 103 ethnic groups want to be included in the 26 seats remaining in the assembly. It’s high time we journalists also demanded a seat in the assembly; there isn’t a single hack representing your profession.