Seesaw politics
Valuable time is being wasted

DEWAN RAI

There are two main hitches to getting the constitution-drafting process started: finalising the Constituent Assembly’s rules and agreeing on a committee to oversee army integration.

So far, house rule-making is stalled because some politicians don’t want to obey the party whip on constitutional issues. The Maoist members say the whip should be followed by members for the sake of party discipline.

A meeting of the rule-drafting committee on Wednesday ended once more inconclusively over the issue. “A party wouldn’t be a party anymore if its members did not follow its rules,” senior Maoist, Mohan Baidya, told Nepali Times. But Baidya predicted the rules would be finalised next week.

If that happens, work will have to begin on setting up various committees to draft the constitution, so that the actual clause-by-clause writing can start. Asked if army integration would again put a spanner in the works, Baidya said efforts are continuing to get the NC to join the high-level committee on integration.

The cabinet formed a special committee before Dasain, comprising of coalition partners and the opposition NC, to discuss assimilation of the PLA into the Nepal Army. The NC refused saying the decision on composition of the committee was made without proper consultation.

“The Kangreks can’t run away from their responsibility of integrating the PLA into the national army,” he said. The NC has demanded two seats in the committee from each party, just as the Maoists have.

Baidya says the Maoists don’t want to dominate the committee just to push through their agenda on integration, but want it to work on a basis of consensus.

Law and CA Minister Deb Gurung said in Pokhara on Wednesday that if an agreement can’t be reached, his party would push for a Swiss-style referendum on integration. But sources say the Maoists aren’t really serious, they just want to use a referendum as a pressure tactic on the NC.

Vice President Paramananda Jha this week has been speaking out on legitimacy of the committee. His party is against integration and wants Madhesi recruitment into the army.

Baidya said Jha has “way out of line.” The vice president has overstepped his brief by speaking out on a political matter.

INTERESTING TIMES

Obama mania

ANN FLORINI

Barack and us

p2

p12

The key to success is sometimes the doorway to freedom

SPORTAGE

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WIN SOME, LOSE SOME

Among all the challenges before us in the constitution drafting process, perhaps the most daunting will be the lack of political cooperation between the parties. The democratic alliance of 2006 finally broke down after the April 2010 deadline. There has been no sabotaging of this critical component of the peace process.

The NC has refused to agree to full integration of the PLA into the national army. The demand for the FCL to be disbanded, a return of all confiscated property and adherence to the rule of law. There is also the larger concern about the Maoist commitment to a pluralistic democracy. The Maoist leadership may be inclined to strike a deal, but is prevented from doing so by its own rank and file.

And until the NC and Maoists can agree on these points, the constitution-writing process will face obstacles at every step even if it gets started in the coming weeks, as it seems to be a wishful thought to this, but only if the NC and Maoists remind themselves of the larger national interest, and that in a democracy you lose some and win some.

INTERESTING TIMES

Malikia Aryal


aly Wednesday morning, when Nepalís wake up to listen to the news, it looked like the republic was a step closer to the polls. As election results from more states started trickling in Barack Obama overtook

What does the Obama win mean for Nepal?

After 9/11 the Bush Administration

The democratic alliance of 2006 finally broke down after the April 2010 deadline. There has been no sabotaging of this critical component of the peace process.

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INTERESTING TIMES

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his opponent. By 10:30 AM Obama had won 334 electoral votes and it was clear

America would have its first president of

African American heritage. President Ram Baran Yadav wasted no time in
dashing off a congratulatory note to the president-elect. Throughout the
day Nepalis closely watching the race were sending congratulatory messages
to each other, Nepal blogs and message boards were full of praise of Obama.
FM stations and Nepal tv channels were interviewing experts who have been following the American election closely. In the evening many Nepalis celebrated Obama victory with democratic American expats in Kathmandu. American presidents these days have such a strong influence on the rest of the world that many may have demanded, only half jokingly, that the rest of the world should be allowed to vote too. Obama is not just an American president, but a world leader because what America does with its military, what America spends on, how much fossil fuels Americans burn, has such an impact on the rest of the planet.

After eight years of the junior Bush, Americans have finally rejected his unilateralism in world affairs. Why this was such a closely-watched election in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan. Elsewhere across the world, people realised that the elections would have a bearing on global recession, international trade, investments, immigration, humanitarian assistance, remittance, military alliance and climate change. Obama is therefore the planet’s president. It turns out that the Nepali diaspora is also significantly democratic. Since Obamaís victory Nepalis across the world have been asking one question: what will Obama as president mean for Nepal?

Maoists-led government may think that the Obama administration will be more responsive to the partyís removal from the terror list, but there are legitimate American legal requirements for this to happen. The writ of the election result conceals the broad continuity in American foreign policy no matter who is president.

Nepalis expect Obama America to be more immigrant friendly. He is in support of revamping the legal immigration system, against increasing the fees so that poor families who cannot afford lawyers are not left behind. Obama wants undocumented workers to come out of shadows and has promised to allow them to go to the back of the line for the opportunity to become citizens.

For tens of thousands of Nepalis living illegally in the US this may be the chance to finally get their papers. After 9/11 the Bush Administration put in tougher US visa restrictions for Nepalis and foreign students in the US. Many Nepali students started to opt to study in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and even Cyprus. Obamaís victory has redeemed Americaís image and many are hoping that visa restrictions will be loosened so that the young students getting ready to leave to study in US will not have to face the same hassles as before.

Obama administration has also said they would raise the cap of 120,000 H-1B visas issued annually so that foreign graduates can stay in the USA.

This is good news for many fresh Nepali graduates.

In 2006 the US agreed to take at least 60,000 Bhutan refugees over a four-year period and give them permanent residence status. This process is expected to continue for another ten years. Americans, who make up only four percent of the worldís population, consume 28 percent of its resources, including fossil fuels. Obamaís commitments on curbing greenhouse gas emissions if carried through could begin to turn the clock back on global warming.

In the long-term, on a broader canvas, perhaps this means this American election will have a direct bearing decades hence on slowing glacial retreat in the Himalaya.
FAKE
Thank you for the investigation into fake Indian currency (‘Fake or real?’, #423). It is natural that when politicians and criminals start scratching each other’s backs on both sides of the Nepal-India border the result will be smuggling. It is nothing new, what is new is that counterfeit currency is being smuggled in such huge amounts now. But you have missed the other currency being smuggled: fake Nepali Rs 1,000 notes counterfeited in India and smuggled into Nepal. Try investigating that one.
Dinesh G, Pokhara

Whenever India cannot control its own corrupt bureaucracy and wants to hide its inability to curb crime, it blames the ‘foreign hand’. And so it is with these allegations of fake currency being smuggled by Pakistani intelligence through Nepal. Last week, insecure Indian officials said they had ‘intelligence’ terrorists were planning to hijack an Indian airliner from Kathmandu. In printing this investigation on fake currency, the Nepali Times sounded like a clone of the Indian media.
Surya B Panday, email

I read your editorial ‘Terrain warning’ (#421) and the feedback (‘Letters’, #422). I think in the general lynch-mob mentality against pilots one point everyone seems to have missed. It is the criminal negligence in not equipping Nepal’s airports, especially in remote areas, with necessary ground equipment. Pilots have long complained of inadequate navigation aids and beacons at remote area airports and way points. There is also a complete absence of fire-fighting equipment at many airports. Even an airport like Lukla which sometimes handles 40 flights a day has no fire fighting capability. In last month’s Twin Otter crash, villagers were trying to extinguish the flames with small buckets of water. Perhaps not all the passengers would have died, and even the bodies of those who tragically lost their lives would have been easier to identify if the fire could have been extinguished in time. And let’s not forget the negligence at the Civil Aviation Authority that allows even Kathmandu airport to have many hazards including monkeys and birds on the runways, plastic bottles blowing about on the apron and the lack of proper centreline markings and approach lights.
A pilot, Kathmandu

I agree with Ashutosh Tiwari with regards to the decline in revenue generated by traditional media. Therefore, it is extremely important for media houses in Nepal to take an integrated approach where new media complements traditional media. In order to ensure that editorial credibility is never compromised, it is essential for the commercial side of the business to think of new and innovative ways of generating revenue.
Ishita Giri London

The Ass is right in deftly observing how our always-ill former PM GPK has come all alive all of a sudden (‘Ass for sale’, #423). People have been asking where does this renewed vigour and energy come from. Where was it when the country needed it? Tales about his sickness look like a well-thought-out plan to outfox the opponents. Cunning, but wasteful.
S Pradhan, email
aks, dzos, mules carrying pine logs struggle up the last pass before the trail descends to the border checkpoint at Hilsa. Dozens of timber convoys can be seen every day along Humla's dusty trails, all heading into Tibet carrying freshly sawn logs that will be bartered for food.

The timber feeds the construction boom across the border, a result of rising income and investment in China. But Tibet is too dry for trees, so the demand for timber is being met by the supply of pine forests on the Nepal side in Humla, where villagers face a chronic food shortage.

The problem is that trees in these high montane woodlands take much longer to grow back because of the altitude. Forests cleared during the Khampa war of the 1960s still haven’t regenerated.

The Nepalis sell timber in Shera to Chinese middlemen who bargain hard. They bring back mainly food, clothes and also cheap Chinese beer and alcohol. The yak trains follow the new road, that Humla’s DDC tried to build, from the border settlement of Hilsa to the district capital in Simkot. But Kathmandu was never really interested, and money ran out. Landslides and avalanches have taken out whole sections of the road.

However, an asphalt road now winds down from Taklakot right up to Shera, which is on the Chinese side of the Humla Karnali opposite from Hilsa. The contrast between the smooth black tarmac on the Chinese side and the dusty mule track in Nepal is stark.

The Humla highway, when linked to the Chinese road from Taklakot, was supposed to make it easier for essential items like food, fuel and building material to be brought in more cheaply to Nepal’s remotest district. But given the pace at which the forests here are being destroyed, it may be just as well that the road was never finished because instead of yak-loads of timber, there would be truckloads going across.

DeaD-END: The asphalt road on the Chinese side stops abruptly at the Humla Karnali river which marks the border near Hilsa.

CARAVAN: Shera is seen at the bottom of the valley as the yak convoy comes over the last pass (left). Yaks heading up towards the Nara La in Nepal towards the Tibet border.

DEAD-END: The asphalt road on the Chinese side stops abruptly at the Humla Karnali river which marks the border near Hilsa.
New Everest
Everest Bank has opened a new branch at Golfitar- It's 28th. It will be connected to other branches through its ‘Any Where Banking System.’

Prime service
Prime Bank has opened new branches in Pokhara, Dharan and Bhaktapur. It has also introduced ePrime Gold Certificate. City specific names have been designed for the accounts which offer all standard services of the banks.

Smooth print
Astral Computers Nepal, the authorised distributor of Hewlett Packard, has launched new high-end and low-end HP printing solutions in Nepal. Astral also provides pre-sales and post-sales support along with HP standard warranty for the products.

Carry gifts
American Tourister, a range of suitcases, has introduced an offer to give away free DVD players or vacuum cleaners to customers. The offer is valid at Samsonite outlets in Khichchapokhari, Jamal, Kupondole and Bluebird.

Shopping bank
Laxmi Bank's new Maharajganj branch, located inside the Bhatbhateni Supermarket complex, is now open for business. The branch will offer full range of retail banking services. Laxmi Bank now has a branch network of 7 branches inside the valley.

Starting people
People Bank Ltd. got approval to operate as a commercial bank. The bank has Rs 2 billion paid up capital and will start operating next year.

Integromatics
The Beed likes to stay away from pontificating on politics. So, this week he will not get into the political side of the integration of the two armies, but from an economic standpoint the deal doesn’t look at all viable.

ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed
Ten years ago, a finance minister had said the pension costs of security personnel will be a major fiscal burden in 15 years. Looks like it will happen sooner than that. A 100,000-strong national army means the state has to be ready to dish out a big chunk of regular expenditure towards pension costs of retired soldiers. When the current prime minister abandoned the jungle and entered the peace process, in one of his fiery speeches he had pointed out how he would reduce the army to just 10,000. If perhaps it turns out that rhetoric into action because the country just can’t afford to keep such a bloated army. But maybe he needed to analyse what is the minimum size of the army we require. The questioned needs to be not only answered from the political perspective, but also from a budgetary standpoint. Along with the size and costs, the other issue is accountability. For decades, the Nepal Army has managed to stay outside the normal accountability structure - not due to lack of procedures but the manner in which it operated, especially with the Supreme Commander in chief, the accountability of last resort.

Prime minister generally took the ceremonial Defence Ministry and Palace Affairs which literally meant that there were no competencies or systems to regulate army. The Auditor General’s offices paid token visits to look through army accounts.

Nobody is looking at the economics of army integration thereby building a competency in global policing and disaster management capabilities. Therefore, from an army that will never be called to fight its neighbors and hopefully never its own citizens, it will develop into a war-making part of the government.

On the accountability front, a lot will depend on the attitude of the current and future governments that will really take the onus of serious reforms within the system to take care of accountability. This practice has been used by Singapore after independence, but then one has to have the accountability levels of Singapore to pursue a system like this. This second is like the one in India—having the Ministry of Defence regulates the armed forces. This perhaps suits the Nepal’s democratic republic model. The key caveat of course is that the Ministry of Defence can exercise control in internal sense or the extremity of the minister, becoming the virtual Commander In-Chief and replacing the head of the King. For the numbers, there are solutions. A division can be created that literally gets outsourced by the UN and other humanitarian rescue operations.

www.arthabeed.com
PLA fighters, who have been living in the cantonments since the signing of the CPA in November 2006, say they are beginning to feel like prisoners. Many think that although during the war years they were scared for their lives, living as PLA fighters was much better than being locked up in the cantonments. They want army integration to begin soon so their lives can return to normal again.

There are seven cantonments and many other sub-cantonments in Lam, Sindhu, Chitwan, Nawalparasi, Rolpa, Surkhet and Kailali. These are full of small, makeshift huts covered with blue plastic sheeting and corrugated tin roofs. According the UN there are 39,604 fighters in the cantonments. They are busy from 4AM-9:30 PM every day and spend time on sentry duty, studying and in military training.

"Commanders, platoon commanders and all the fighters are busy with one duty or another throughout the day," says PLA fourth division sub-commander Madan.

"I feel useless and distanced from the battle front," says the platoon commander in Sakram sub-cantonment, Mina Oli "Sarala."

"We used to remain hungry for days, used to eat whatever the people gave us in the villages. Still, that was better than these camps!" Kul Bahadur Oli "Patroth" feels the same: "We went to war with the dream of peopleís liberation. How can we be happy living like prisoners in the cantonment!"

PLA fourth division fighters in Hatikhor sub-cantonment are also disappointed by the slow progress of army integration. Fighter Putala Sunar "Swarnim" describes how difficult it is to live in the camps: "This is like a modern jail. The government hasn't done anything for us. Only those who are living in this hell know how difficult it is!"

Those living in the Jhyaltung Danda cantonment in Nawalparasi also talk about their difficult days in the cantonment. "This place is like a cage, we feel like we have been dumped here," says Sarita DC "Namuna."

"It is very lonely here."

They say that if the process of army integration doesnít start soon, they want the government to make regulations to manage the camps better.
Kick start
The constitution-drafting process can’t be delayed any longer

DHRUBA SIMKHADA
I t has been six months since the constitution-drafting process cannot start until the Rules and Procedures are agreed to and finalised. Only then can the process of drafting a new constitution begin.

The 601-member CA has been meeting at its rented premises at the international convention centre, but so far it has been engaged only in its parliamentary functions. None of the work on the constitution has started, even though there are now only 17 months to go. Even if the committees are finally decided upon, there will still be the issue of physical space. Besides the main plenary hall, the only other meeting room available is the Lhotse Hall. The rest of the complex is occupied by UNMIN and may be available only in January when its mandate expires.

In the past, parliamentary committees used three rooms in Singha Darbar but their capacity is no more than 80 people each. Speaker Nembang says the secretariat is talking to the government to make available at least ten new meeting rooms presently used by various ministries for committee meetings. Since the legislative assembly and constituent assembly will have different meetings they would need additional secretariat employees.

The rules and procedures state that the formation of the committees, drafting of the constitution and public hearings will have to follow strict timelines. Nembang is confident that once the schedule is made, it will be followed and it will give the Nepali people the perception that work has begun. He assured us: “The new constitution will be ready on time but there has to be very good understanding between the political parties.”

Drafting committees
The various drafting committees can only be formed once the Rules and Procedures are agreed to and finalised. Only then can the process of drafting a new constitution begin.

Will CA members of your party obey party whip?
CA members must remain under their party’s discipline. That is not a negative thing. Because the constitution will guarantee the rights of the people, it is imperative that the members use their wisdom.

What are some of the gender issues that must be included in the new constitution?
We are going to the people to ask them for suggestions on what should be included in the constitution. One thing remains clear: men and women need to be equal.

You have been talking about a people’s republic. What would that look like?
To write a constitution in favour of people and sections that have been discriminated against is the most important aspect of a people’s republic.

For equity
Why is the constitution writing process delayed?
We are worried that it may be getting too late. We should have been able to do quite a lot in these last six months. We have been told that the constitution writing process cannot start until the Rules and Procedures are ready. But I think it is because of the wrangling between the political parties that the process is being delayed. Since the Maoists are leading the government they are responsible for this.

But the Maoist leaders are saying that NC has refused to cooperate.
Thats not true. We may be in the opposition in parliament but not in the constituent assembly. Whatever they say, we will not stop pursuing for a democratic constitution.

Your party has said that its CA members must obey the party whip.
It is only if the members are in the legislative assembly that they have to obey their party’s whip, not in a constituent assembly. The constitution can’t be re-written again and again, which is why the members need to be allowed to use individual discretion. A party doesn’t send someone they don’t trust to the assembly. It is high time the parties understood that their members have a mind of their own and can vote wisely.

What kind of constitution are you envisioning?
The NC wants a constitution that can establish Federal Republic of Nepal. The right of all ethnicities, language, regions, religious minorities and discriminated groups must be protected. Discrimination with regards to education and property between men and women must end. There must be reservations for women for a short period of time in all sections of the state.

Against discrimination
Interview with Tara Gharti Magar (Maoist)
There is a feeling that although your party is leading the government you are still not serious about writing the constitution. These are baseless accusations coming from the NC. In fact, they are the reason why it has been delayed. Since the Maoist-led government was formed, they are looking for excuses to foil and delay the process.
Two

Nepal is on the international mountain biking map

Chobhar Track

AIR-BORNE: Padam Sabenhang (Limbu), 23, flies with his bike during practice in Chobar before the championship.
hhimi Urkyen Gurung, president of the Nepal Cycling Association (NCA), puts it best: “Mountain biking and Nepal were made for each other.”

With its endless rocky trails, tough climbs and steep descents, Nepal is the perfect place for mountain biking. And you only need to ride a few minutes outside Kathmandu’s Ring Road to get there with the added bonus of a splendid mountain backdrop.

A few years of lobbying by the NCA, Nepal finally signed a contract this summer to host the XIV Asian Mountain Bike Championships, the first such event the country has hosted. If it goes well, this should open the door for Nepal to host other sporting events, including the 2010 World Mountain Biking Championships.

Dhanjit Rai, one of Nepal’s top riders, is keen for the country to put on a good show: “We all hope that this will heighten the interest in mountain biking as a sport for both tourists and Nepalis here.”

About the competitors

Eight riders will represent Nepal. The seven men and one woman, have been training for the first time, and learning from each other. For some, it is their first time in an international competition.

Sajjan Rajbanshi and Padam Sabenhang (Limbu) are two of the brightest riders in the squad. Rajbanshi, nicknamed the ‘Himalayan Hurricane’ in the US, spent six years in cross-country races before switching to downhill two years ago. He has participated in two Asian Championships, and finished 12th in 2001 in the championships held in Thailand.

Sabenhang, though one of the youngest contenders, is considered one of the strongest. He started racing for fun five years ago but began to take it more seriously after he kept finding himself on the winners’ podium. As reigning national champion and the best cross-country racer in the team, his medal chances look bright.

Among the international competitors, China, Japan and Korea are all fielding very strong teams.

About the race

From 6-10 November, more than 60 competitors from Nepal and 12 from other Asian countries will take part in the XIV Asian championships. The winning team will qualify for the 2012 London Olympics. In the cross-country race, 30 men and 11 women will compete in their respective elite categories over the steep, rocky five-km track at Chobar. There will also be a downhill race, with 22 men and three women competing.

PEDAL AWAY: Nepali participants practicing for the cross-country category in Chobar on Monday.

TEAM NEPAL: (l-r): Dipendra Raijacharya, Surendra Rai, Padam Sabenhang (Limbu), Suresh Kumar Dulal and Dhanjit Rai are participating in the upcoming XIVAsian Championship.

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ALL OTHER PICS: SUNDAR SHRESTHA
Health for those without
Four facilities in Kabhre prove medical care needn’t be unaffordable

B

anepa and Dhulikhel are towns that most people drive past on their way to Jiri or Kodari. But in recent years, the townships, 25 km east of Kathmandu, are developing as centres for model health care.

At a time when most medical facilities are based in the capital and are profit-oriented ventures, Dhulikhel and Banepa have shown the way to provide affordable and world class health care to Nepalis.

The four hospitals in Banepa and Dhulikhel run on one philosophy: quality health care need not be expensive. These self-run institutions can be a model for Nepal’s private and state-run health care system.

Children first

Eighty-year-old Yasodha aims her strike on the cordon board. Her 80-year-old eye is the black hole. It’s easy not to notice the metal braces on her right leg. The other children have white bandages on their hands and legs.

Yasodha Iyer suffers from cleft foot deformity and is receiving treatment at Hospital and Rehabilitation for Disabled Children (HRDC) in Banepa.

“Because we deal with children, we have to use a different approach,” explains Binod Bijukchhe, as he takes visitors inside the ésoft roomí where patients play. This is a specialised hospital for children with physical disabilities, the only of its kind in Nepal.

It focuses on reconstructive surgery, rehabilitation of the children and their integration into the society.

HRDC was established in 1985 with support from Terre des homes and Friends of the Disabled. It now has 72 beds, which are usually all occupied and a staff of 132. Every year, the hospital treats over 9,000 children. HRDC has had patients from not just Nepal but also from India, Pakistan, Tibet and even Mongolia.

For those who donít make it to the hospital, HRDC conducts medical camps every month, reaching out to 40 districts all over Nepal. The camps with specialised teams treat children and bring ones who need specialist attention to the hospital, a charity fund covers the costs of needy patients.

More than often, rehabilitation takes a long time and is expensive. To use the tools, the hospital has classrooms for children and vocational training.

Physiotherapist Sudip Ranjit says: “Although it is a challenge working with children, they heal much faster.”

The four hospitals in Banepa and Dhulikhel run on one philosophy: quality health care need not be expensive. These self-run institutions can be a model for Nepal’s private and state-run health care system.

Backbone of health care

While treatment is understood as a necessity, the significance of rehabilitation is often ignored in Nepal.

“Rehabilitation is crucial in spinal injuries which can completely change the life of the patient,” says Esha Thapa of Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre (SIRC), the newest medical facility to open in Banepa.

SIRC is the first rehabilitation centre in Nepal for spinal injury. The lifestyle of the rural people in Nepal makes them very prone to accidents that can result in spinal injury which can paralyse patients.

Survival becomes difficult and most patients lose hope.

“It is possible to restore normalcy in their life through proper care, therapy and training,” says Thapa. SIRC strives to help individuals with spinal injury through physical therapy and occupational therapy, counseling and nursing. It takes an average of 3 months for most patients to recover.

SIRC also gives vocational training that the individuals have means to sustain themselves later on.

The centre has helped over 550 patients to lead normal lives again. SIRC is moving this month from Jorpati to its purpose-built facility in Banepa. This building is wheelchair-friendly and is much better equipped for the treatment needs of patients.

Says Thapa: “Even if they can’t walk again, patients who have lost hope of living normal lives get back their hope.”

We treat, God cures

“No matter what, a sick at the doors of the hospital should not go unattended,” says Milan Gurung of Scheer Memorial Hospital in Banepa. In a country where patients are often turned away from hospitals because they are poor, this is a motto that can make a difference between life and death.

Scheer Memorial is a missionary hospital started by Seventh-day Adventist medical missionaries in 1958. What started out as a one-room facility is now a 25-bed hospital with a staff of 196 and two ambulances.

Says Thapa: “Even if they can’t walk again, patients who have lost hope of living normal lives get back their hope.”

The United Nations now

The interests of the UN and Nepalis coincide in making the peace process a success

S
dertary General Ban Ki-moon’s visit to Nepal was so short it is hard to remember when he came and when he went.

When he flew down to Bhairawa in route to Lumbini on his Bombardier jet, he was remembered by all nepali.

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wealth

A hospital with a heart

Man Bahadur Tamang, a 63-year-old patient at Dhulikhel Hospital is worried. He has cancer but no money for treatment.

“Don’t worry about anything, Buwa, we will operate on you on Monday,” Ram Shrestha assures his patient. Shrestha set up Dhulikhel hospital precisely to provide affordable health care. But he tells us later he doesn’t know where he will find the money for Tamang’s operation.

He adds simply: “I can’t deprive him of a chance to live just because he can’t afford it. Something always comes up.”

Shrestha started the hospital in 1995 with support from the Dhulikhel Municipality in land contributed by the locals. The hospital has grown from a two-room facility to a full-fledged 317-bed model community health centre that treats 400,000 patients from all over the country every year.

The heavily subsidised services are as efficient and professional as any in an expensive city hospital. It includes specialised departments with 70 doctors, 120 nurses and 70 support staff with three ambulances.

The policy here is ‘treatment first, bills later’ which is a surprise to many who have heard horror stories of private hospitals demanding incapacitated victims buy their own bandages and medicines before treating them.

“If someone is unable to pay, the hospital has a charity fund that covers expenses,” explains Dipak Dahal, the hospital’s administration officer. About 17 per cent of patients come from extremely poor families.

Dhulikhel runs eight outreach health centres in remote areas that provide basic, 24-hour services and are equipped for minor operations. Once a week, a specialist supervising team visits each centre. Regular mobile health camps are also organised.

While international grants were used for the buildings and equipment, treatment is subsidized by bachelor-level courses in medicine that Dhulikhel Hospital has started in collaboration with Kathmandu University.

Says Shrestha: “This hospital is proof that nothing is impossible. What is required is honest implementation.”

Cancer patient Man Bahadur Tamang (right) with his doctor, Ram Shrestha, at Dhulikhel Hospital. Tamang wouldn’t have been able to afford his operation elsewhere.

Dahal, the hospital’s administration officer.

The election support have been completed by UNMIN, and its extended term is about to expire on 23 January. It is not likely that the ‘integration’ and ‘rehabilitation’ of Maoist combatants will be completed after that.

After their success in the April elections there is an attempt in some Maoist quarters to shift the goalposts when it comes to the complete peace process. The wholeness of the peace process is a sine qua non, since the whole purpose of the process is to ensure a lasting peace in Nepal and to ensure a return to being a society where political violence is rejected absolutely.

There can be no lasting peace, nor democracy, without them.

A denouement which is respectful of the people’s desire to live in a violence-free environment, and which responds to the humanitarian needs of individual Maoist combatants, will leave Nepal at peace and the United Nations Secretary-General with the satisfaction of a job well done.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is recruiting

Urdi/English translators/Interpreters

The ICRC has vacancies for strongly motivated candidates wishing to commit themselves to humanitarian work outside Nepal.

- ideal age: 25 to 45
- Prepared to accept unaccompanied posting for a 12-months mission
- Excellent command of Urdi/Hindi and English; French is an asset
- University education or minimum 2 years of professional experience
- Ability to work abroad in conflict situations

Generous social benefits will be provided to the right candidates. Interested candidates are asked to apply to the following address:

ICRC
19 Avenue de la Paix
CH 1202 Geneva, Switzerland
or
Web page: www.icrc.org

Kindergarten Teacher Wanted

KATHMANDU INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTRE

We are looking for a part-time person to teach a class of five years olds in the afternoons Mondays to Fridays.

Minimum Requirements:

- To operate according to the KISC mission, vision and values
- At least one year of experience in teaching young children
- Good oral skills in English
- Experience of working in an expatriate environment
- Excellent skills in behavior management

Qualities required:

- Friendly and enjoyable working with small children
- Works well with a teachers’ assistant
- Punctual
- Able to follow through on lesson plans
- Able to take initiative

The job will include:

- Communicating with the morning teacher on a daily basis. Teaching some curriculum for young children. Working with students in an ITI. Monitoring center time each day. Ensuring children are present at the end of each day.

For further information see the KISC website www.kisc.edu.np

To apply send a copy of your Curriculum Vitae and a covering letter of application to the KISC Personnel Administrator:

Alice Colbon admin@kisc.edu.np

Applications must be in by Monday, 17 November 2008

Interviews will be held on Thursday, 20 November 2008.

Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview.
The uncomfortable answer that Obama is likely to confront is this: nobody, America may be damaged, but no replacement is on offer. Europe is self-absorbed, focused on whatever kind of entity it ends up deciding to be. China’s standard response to any suggestion that it exercise global leadership is to hide beneath its vast internal agenda and placid poverty. No other country comes close to having either the capacity or the ambition.

In the face of the familiar list of desperate global problems — not just financial instability, but also climate change, energy insecurity, potential pandemics, terrorism, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction ñ the prospect of a ruleress world is more than alarming. What is it to be done? And by whom?

Given that the United States has not been playing much of a leadership role on many of these issues recently, it is worth taking a look at what happens when no one country exercises effective leadership.

Consider climate change. It is now clear that avoiding catastrophic climate change requires dramatic and rapid reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions, cuts that would lower annual emissions to 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050. Yet emissions are not just rising, but accelerating. The coming recession may stem their growth temporarily, but not only. The necessary reductions imply a rapid and radical transformation of industrial, energy, and land-use systems around the world.

Supposedly, by December 2009 in Copenhagen governments will agree on a new treaty to set limits on emissions. But the prospects are close to nil. The new Obama Administration will have only a few months to develop meaningful proposals that can win domestic support, and will be preoccupied with the aftermath of the current financial debacle and the Iraq war. Europe is pushing for ambitious targets but is having trouble with its own vested interests in large emerging countries, although they will suffer disproportionately from wider weather and rising sea levels, show little interest in picking up the slack. Negotiations term the current American-Chinese dance of mutual blame a suicide pact. In short, the process is a mess.

This is hardly surprising. An inter-governmental system that falls apart under the challenges of trade negotiations and proliferation threats is unlikely to master the deep complexity and multidimensional vested interests that the issue of climate change entails. Traditional diplomacy will at best devise a face-saving but meaningless accord next year.

There are many ways to put matters on the global agenda, as shown by Bonn’s campaigns on Africa’s development and Al Gore’s on climate change. While enforcement in the coercive sense remains the domain of states, coercive enforcement is rare even when it comes to inter-governmental agreements. Whether countries abide by agreements has far more to do with international processes of persuasion, socialization, and capacity-building and those can be done by anyone with a good argument.

One big question today is whether all these alternative approaches can add up to more than a bit of desperate floundering around the edges. Standard international-relations thinking does not even entertain the question, and those conventional ways of seeing the world have blinded us to looking at this crucial question.

As a result, we do not yet know the answer. Data remain scarce. There are hundreds of global public-private partnerships working on various global ifs but few have been examined to see what good they do. The mishmash of initiatives, actors, campaigns, and appeals creates opportunities for major progress if and mass confusion. If there is to be real progress toward more effective and efficient global governance that can address the unprecedented challenges posed by climate change and the rest of the global agenda, we must do much more than look for an easy replacement for American hegemony. We must figure out how to make sense of the extraordinary processes of ways of saving the world.

Project Syndicate

Ann Florini is Director of the Centre on Asia and Globalisation at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore.

Three-dimensional chess

One of the first challenges that President Barack Obama will face is the effect of the ongoing financial crisis, which has cast a pall over American power in the world. Wall Street’s crash-up is seen in Asia as a premonition of global tectonic shift. The beginning of the decline of America may be damaged, but no replacement is on offer.

Barack Obama understands that even the most powerful country can’t go it alone. America may be damaged, but no replacement is on offer. Europe is self-absorbed, focused on whatever kind of entity it ends up deciding to be. China’s standard response to any suggestion that it exercise global leadership is to hide beneath its vast internal agenda and placid poverty. No other country comes close to having either the capacity or the ambition.

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SINGAPORE ñ Barack Obama’s election at a moment when a new set of conventional wisdom is congealing. It concerns the end of America’s global dominance. True, freemarket American-style capitalism has not acquitted itself proudly of late. And America’s military superiority has not proved all that useful in accomplishing American ends. But who may pick up the slack in providing global leadership?

The uncomfortable answer that Obama is likely to confront is this: nobody, America may be damaged, but no replacement is on offer. Europe is self-absorbed, focused on whatever kind of entity it ends up deciding to be. China’s standard response to any suggestion that it exercise global leadership is to hide beneath its vast internal agenda and placid poverty. No other country comes close to having either the capacity or the ambition.

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**The other brother**

In a memoir, MP’s new memoir shows us how little Nepal has changed since 1950.

**Jazz carnival**

The Kathmandu Jazz Festival, held from 22-27 October at various venues in the city, was a huge success. The festival seemed to have touched many souls and turned some into jazz lovers. Suresh Limbu, band supervisor of the Greg Lyons Trio, said: “I didn’t critic jazz music before but now I seem to love it. I even got some CD to listen to.” Abhaya Subba of Bhagya and the Steamin’ Nine said they enjoyed and loved Global Unity—the Mumbai-based band.

The event drew a mix of local and foreign jazz lovers who came from various parts of Nepal.

**Of crime and punishment**

**Boy A** has paid for his sins, but perhaps he hasn’t paid enough.

By A opens with an exchange between a paternal social worker and his charge—a young man, almost childishly exculpation what seems to be the eve of his release from prison. We have no idea what his crime might have been, though it is apparently sufficiently serious to warrant a new identity to protect him from vigilantes.

The name he picks for himself, Jack, offers the promise of a new future, a way to separate himself from what came before. Yet despite his own hopes and his guardian Terry’s cautious optimism, it is clear the stubborn past will be hard to escape.

One narrative strand follows Jack’s adjustments to adulthood as an active member of society in a community that appears willing to give him a chance, while another revisits his troubled childhood and the inexorable march towards a fatal mistake.

Director John Crowley adeptly builds the tension in both story threads, raising the possibility that the Jack of the present may lose the new life he is building for himself as events from his dark past catch up with him. Inevitably, the gruesome moment from his childhood produces a narrative collision that throws up a mixed bag of ethical questions and emotions.

**Boy A** is curiously reminiscent of last year’s Stephanie Daley, which took a tabloid headline story in that case, the story of a girl who abandoned her child, and turned it into a story that throws up a mixed bag of ethical questions and emotions.

Both films involve knotty ethical problems in situations that requires a character with the ability to escape one’s past. It implicates a society that is unable or unwilling to accept a prison sentence as a debt paid, or give a second chance.

As with Stephanie Daley, Boy A is greatly dependent on the strength of one or two performances. Andrew Garfield illuminates each fractured facet of Jack’s personality, his broken, tenacious grip on himself with a raw, life-like intensity. During the interval of Jack’s incarceration, which is completely absent from the film, he has grown physically into an adult but lacks any experience and knowledge of society outside prison.

There’s a skittishness, a cautiousness coupled with a sensitivity that justifies the title. Garfield displays a scintillating intelligence not simply in playing the powerful emotions that Jack experiences, but also in the tiny dissonances with an unfamiliar reality. Similarly, Terry, the protective and proud father-figure to Jack is a three-note character, but actor Peter Mulan plays them very well. Terry’s faith in Jack confirms our sympathies, and Mulan’s performance amplifies our distress when tragedy strikes.

Even as Terry urges Jack to let go of the past and embrace the future he tells him he has earned, his own memory and guilt stubbornly dog the present. Yet ultimately, **Boy A** is not simply about the inability to escape ones past. It implicates a society unwilling or unable to accept a prison sentence as a debt paid, or give a second chance to someone who made a mistake, however awful that may have been. The film incriminates the sweeping, judgmental nature of the tabloid press that ignores nuance and depends on facile fear-mongering. This is a small film, easily overlooked amid the buzz of bigger-budget fare but **Boy A** delivers a searing drama of redemption.

**Jazzmandu podcasts are available for download**

www.jazzmandu.com

Prajit Gurung

**Stephanie Daley**

**Boy A**

**Times**

7-13 NOVEMBER 2008 #424
EXHIBITIONS

- Wild, an exhibition of paintings by Wayne Edwards from 2-18 November at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, Tuesday – Friday 12AM-16PM and Saturday 12AM-4PM. 4218048
- Chance Encounters, a group art exhibition of artists from Bangladesh, France and Nepal till 19 November, Kathmandu Gallery, Lazimpat. 981050495

EVENTS

- Divinity of the common life, an artistic performance by Pierre-Alain Hubert and Karl Knapp, 7 November, 6PM. Open Theatre, Kuka Manch, free event. 441163
- New session of French classes, admissions on 11 November, next session starts on the 10 November-22 January at the Alliance Francaise. 4451163
- Nepali Music Centers International Folk Festival 2008: An ode to life and culture, till 8 November. 4526090

MUSIC

- Tuesday Melody at Jazzahead Café. Happy hour 6-8PM. 3114075
- Poesie and Fags a jazz vocal trio from Holland, Saturday at Patan. 5322708, Sunday at Thamel.4700736. New Orleans Café, Thamel, 7PM
- 74 Twister playing live every Tuesday at Nolok, Pulchok. 5332122
- Robin an New Revolution playing live every Tuesday, 7PM onwards at Bamboo Club restaurant, Thamel. 4700137
- Some like it hot every Friday BBQ and live music by Dinesh Rai and the Sound Minds, 7PM onwards, 89 at Fusion, Dwarki’s Hotel. 4479488
- Happy cocktail hour, 5-7PM. Ladies night on Wednesday with live unplugged music at Jatra Café & Bar
- Hy Jazz club every Tuesday and Friday from 8.30 PM, Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu. 4489860
- Dance and Cocktails at Cube Bar, Kamaladi. 4438017
- Fusion and Bossa Band every Friday night, Bhumi Resto Lounge, Lazimpat. 44512193
- Rudra night fusion and classical Nepali music by Shyam Nepali and friends, every Friday, 7PM at Le Meriend.Gokarna. 4451222
- Sufi music by Hemanta Rana, every Friday at 7:30 PM at Dhaba Restaurant and Bar, Thapathali.
- Fusion and Classical Music by Anil Shahi every Wednesday, rock with Rashmi Singh every Friday, Sufi & Raga with Hemant Rana every Saturday, 8 PM onwards, Absolute Bar. 5551408

EATING

- Coffee & Chocolate at the Lounge in Hyatt Regency. 4.30-6.30 PM. 4491234
- Take away at Te Restaurant from Bluebird Food Court and Welcome Food Plaza at Bakhundole, Sanepa. 5549331
- Organic Salad Bar and Steak at jon al an restaurant every Friday from 6PM, Rs 650
- Fusion of Marcela Reganís new menu and Mami’s new bar at Dhaba lounge. 5551213
- Plat Du Jour at Hotel Shangri-la, Kathmandu. Rs 600. 4412999
- Pizza & Pasta every Monday and Tuesday at Rox Restaurant. Hyatt Regency. 4498936
- Pasta pesto passionate at La Dolce Vita, Thamel. 4700612
- Steak special with free Irish coffee at K-Tol Beer & Steakhouse. Thamel. 4700403
- Continental and cafe item with Live band every Friday at Vintage Cafe and Pub, Woodland Complex, Durbar Marg
- Unlimited wine offer for Rs 990 at La Maison wine and cigar lounge. 9843336628
- Home made pasta at Alfresco, Sooltee Crome Plaza. 4279399
- Reality Bites, The Kaiser Café, Garden of Dreams, operated by Dwarkas Group of Hotels., 9AM-10PM. 4425343
- Steak escape with Kathmandus premier steaks at the Olive Bar and Bistro, Hotel Radisson. 4411818
- Cocktails, mocktails and liqueurs at the Asahi Lounge, opening hours 1-10PM, above Himalayan Java, Thamel.
- Retro Brunch Barbeque with live acoustic music by Sound Chemistry every Saturday, 12-3PM at LeMeriden-Kathmandu, Gokarna. 4451212
- Starry night barbecue at Hotel Shangri-la with Liver performance by Gini Gurung, Rs. 666, at the Shambala Gardens, every Friday 7PM onwards. 4412999
- Kebabs and curries at the Dhaba, Thapathali. 9842996019
- By Expression Cafe at Hotel Shangri-la and Mandap Hotel, Thamel.
- Socially Responsible coffee at Himalayan Java, Thamel

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ABOUT TOWN

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WEEKEND WEATHER

Weather-wise there is no significant change this week. This season of westerlies has begun, and our forecasts from now till April will be based on frontal systems moving in from the Mediterranean and how much moisture they still contain after traversing the deserts of Iran and Afghanistan. There was a slight fall in the pressure pattern last week, but aside from a few light showers in eastern Nepal it didn’t do much. The nearly stationary high pressure over northern India means the winds are from the southwest, this will raise the day temperature much moisture they still contain after traversing the deserts of Iran and Afghanistan. There was a slight fall in the pressure pattern last week, but aside from a few light showers in eastern Nepal it didn’t do much. The nearly stationary high pressure over northern India means the winds are from the southwest, this will raise the day temperature
CHEQUE THAT: Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal receives a cheque for Rs 1 million on Sunday at Singha Darbar from Kamran Bakr (right), managing director of Unilever for the rehabilitation of those displaced by the Kosi. Unilever director Ravi Bhakta Shrestha is at left.

THE SON ALSO RISES: Prakash Dahal was a stand-in for his father, Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, at the Nepal Sambat ceremony during the Peace Photo Exhibition at Basantapur on 29 October organised by the National Photo journalists’ Forum.
Will someone please give Parmananda something to do before he goes and does something silly again? Over Tihar, the office of the president of vice summoned the press for a tea party and told them he was bored stiff. But no one could think of anything for him to do. So, just to be noticed, this week the vice-prez went to the Reporter’s Club to demand that he be given the same chores as the president: inaugurate schools, launch books and visit flood victims. After that he promptly threatened to resign if the government didn’t take him seriously. Don’t think anyone would notice even if he did. He met Prez Yadav the other day to see if he could wangle a book launch somewhere. Although both the presidents may be from the Tarai, however, one is a Jha and the other is a Yadav and their mutual animosity runs deep. Besides, Yadav is said to take a dim view of his deputy’s recent outspokenness.

There is an old practice that if a government can’t solve a problem it forms a committee and outsources it. At the rate our Commissars in the committees coalition is forming committees, pretty soon we will need a mother of all committees to keep track of what all the committees are doing. Why not just dissolve the government and rule the country by committee? Setting up a committee is also a great way for the political parties in government to neutralise troublesome party colleagues. PKD is getting rather irritated by Comrade Vaidya’s constant whining, so he kicked him upstairs to the UML-Maoist Joint Coordination Committee. That seems to have given Jhallu Bau the idea to get Makunay off his hair by appointing him also to the committee. But how a baddie hardliner who can’t even stand Comrade Terrific will work with someone he has in the past reviled as a “revisionist royal lackey mongrel” remains to be seen. Will the infighting in the coalitioon stop just because they now have committees to sort out the pesky details of day-to-day government, constitution writing procedures and army integration?

PKD knows that GPK hates SBD so much that the Old Fox would just love to cut a deal with the baddies on army assimilation behind Lionheart’s back and pull the rug from under his kangresi nemesis. I know, it’s totally crazy.

The pressure on PKD from his coalition partners to recall kangresi-nominated ambassadors seems to have gotten too much to bear. Being Mahathir’s student and having organised high-level meetings in Delhi for his prime minister last month wasn’t enough to save Durgesh the Man his job. Dr Suresh in DC got the sack despite having hosted the finance minister in the embassy guest room so BRB could save his WB/IMF DSA. Why not just dissolve the government and rule the country by committee?