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**RAM AND KRISHNA:** President Ram Baran Yadav arriving at the Krishna Mandir in Patan on Thursday for the ritual worship on Krishnasthmi. This ceremony used to be performed by Nepalis kings.



KIRAN PANDAY

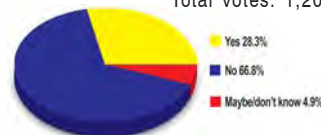
**Times**

nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll # 464

Q. Should the PLA integration happen after the constitution is written as the Maoists say?

Total votes: 1,209



Weekly Internet Poll # 465. To vote go to: [www.nepaltimes.com](http://www.nepaltimes.com)

Q. Has someone you know been injured in a traffic accident in the past year?

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## THINK GLOBALLY, ACT INDIVIDUALLY

What can we do ourselves as private citizens to curb global warming and slow the melting of the Himalaya? Miki Uprety runs a marathon to raise awareness about retreating glaciers in the Khumbu.

What can I do? p8-9

## NEW, IMPROVED, MELAMCHI

The Melamchi project can be adapted to generate 265MW of electricity and irrigate large tracts of the Tarai besides supplying water to the capital. So why isn't the government doing it?

Editorial p2

## RAJIV TO THE RESCUE

The descendant of the Raja of Jajarkot, Rajiv Shah, was so impatient with the slow response to the epidemic in his district, he launched his own relief mission.

Post mortem of an epidemic p10-11



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## HARM REDUCTION

Trust our rulers to try to wreck what is working. In a country where there are so many other priorities (ensuring there is no famine by winter, planning now to avert next year's cholera epidemic, keeping prices down, creating jobs) you'd expect any sane government to be in permanent crisis management mode. Not here. Here, we are too busy trying to fix things that ain't broke.

## CHITWAN

One of the few things this country can be justifiably proud of is the setting up of national parks like Chitwan which rescued tigers and rhinos from the brink of extinction. Chitwan is cited the world over as a model for people-park relations and in community mobilisation for buffer zone protection.

Credit goes to Nepal's visionary conservationists, who in the 1980s had the creativity and foresight to find home-grown solutions, and had the integrity and management skills to implement them. Chitwan became synonymous with ecotourism: the healthy symbiosis between private sector entrepreneurship and the state's responsibility to protect the environment.

World-renowned, award-winning resorts like Tiger Tops pioneered responsible conservation tourism and set standards for others not only in Nepal but internationally. The area around these resorts have the richest biodiversity within the park, and the presence of tourism helps stop poaching. Other parks with no eco-tourism have been decimated by poachers.

And now, on the pretext that their contracts need to be renewed, the government has closed down the lodges inside the park. We understand there is a lot of vested interest at work here: buffer zone lodges want the resorts inside parks closed down, or they want to be inside too. Resort owners inside the park are trying to run each other down, and there is evidence new ministers and senior bureaucrats want a piece of the action.

Nepal's reputation for being an eco-tourism pioneer is at stake here. Income for conservation from royalty, jobs for villagers in the buffer zone are threatened as tour groups cancel peak season bookings. Our recommendation: immediately reopen the lodges inside the park while the longer-term issues are worked out rationally.

## MELAMCHI

Sometimes, the lack of logic in our planning defies logic. Kathmandu Valley's population has doubled to 3 million in the past 10 years, outstripping its limits to growth. The summer water shortage has turned into a year-round crisis. Back then, there was a workable and affordable plan: building a necklace of storage reservoirs on the Valley rim, upgrading antiquated mains to cut loss and improve distribution.

But, of course, we decided 30 years ago to opt for the much more grandiose \$500 million Melamchi project to divert snow-fed streams from Helambu to Sundarjal through a 26km tunnel. It was foolhardy to go for a white elephant when cheaper, more sustainable, alternatives were available but we went ahead anyway.

Today, one could make the argument that with the present rate of urbanisation, Kathmandu will need Melamchi in future. But by hurriedly inaugurating the tunnel last week Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal's government has compounded the original mistake by making another.

If Melamchi is inevitable, then it makes much more sense to increase the radius of the tunnel from 3.7m to 5, add hydropower and irrigation components in the Bagmati for very little additional cost and reap huge side-benefits. (See: 'Revisiting a multi-purpose Melamchi', *Nepali Times*, #379)

You kill three birds with one stone with this plan that has been floating around for five years, and yet successive governments and the mandarins in Manila have over-ruled it over turf-battles and possible payoffs.

There isn't that much of a cost differential for a wider tunnel because it can accommodate trucks, making it cheaper than rail for drilling and debris removal. Adding water from Larke, Yangri and possibly Balephi will allow the generation of up to 260MW of power and feed into Bagmati irrigation in the Tarai. This way, it won't just be Kathmandu's pampered citizens that usurp benefits from Melamchi, rice farmers in the plains will benefit and the power will feed into the national grid.

Our hunch is that in both Chitwan and Melamchi the possibility of kickbacks sway decision-making in times of political transition. Fine, we'd be naïve to assume that corruption can be eradicated. The least our MPs investigating Chitwan, Melamchi and other issues this weekend in the Parliamentary Accounts Committee can do is to ask that the government's decisions, however lubricated they may be by payoffs, meet the broad national interest.

Let's at least try to minimise the harm caused by mismanagement, poor planning and corruption.

# Win-win-win

## MKN should use his India trip to take Kathmandu-Delhi-Beijing ties to a new plane

Madhav Kumar Nepal can either do what every PM before him has done in Delhi: bargain on a few bilateral issues, win some concessions, go out on a limb to prove that his will be a friendly government, and in the process criticise his domestic opponents.



**PLAIN SPEAKING**  
**Prashant Jha**

He has another, more statesman-like, route. Besides discussing the peace process and India's bottom-line on army integration and constitution writing, Nepal has the opportunity to take the contentious China-Nepal-India relationship to a different level.

One of the unsaid, but apparent, causes for the India-Maoist falling out in May was the latter's attempt to fiddle with the geopolitical balance of power in South Asia. As a former ambassador told Nepali delegates at a Track Two event in Delhi last month: "There is a Laxman Rekha, a red line, on China. The Maoists crossed that."

If Madhav Kumar Nepal wants to rise above petty party interest, he could say that Nepali and Indian political leaders need to discuss China's

role. Enhanced Chinese engagement is a fact, and Nepal would like to use the economy to the north for growth but without hurting India's legitimate security interests.

Mr Nepal may think this is too risky an approach to adopt with a Delhi dispensation that has been kind to him. But such an open and frank approach is necessary for the sake of future political stability and economic development in Nepal. Otherwise each time a government here gets cosy with Beijing, its political rivals will cuddle up to Delhi and attempt to dislodge it. This is also a good moment to raise the issue because lots has been happening between India and China.

In a path-breaking policy speech this week, Indian Navy chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta spoke about the prospect of China consolidating its comprehensive national power and being more assertive in its immediate neighbourhood.

"The gap between India and China is too wide to bridge and is getting wider by the day," he said, "in military terms, both conventional and non-conventional, we neither have the capability nor the intention to match China force by force."

Mehta emphasised that cooperation rather than competition or conflict would be preferable since it would be "foolhardy" to compare India and China as equals in terms of economy, infrastructure and military spending.

Some critics dismissed the statement as defeatist. But as retired Commodore C Uday Bhaskar, director of the National Maritime Foundation where the chief spoke, explained to *Nepali Times* in an interview: "The lecture was a reality check,

empirically noting that there is an asymmetry in China's favour on all tangible determinants of national power. India cannot and ought not seek any kind of military equivalence but innovate through astute use of technology."

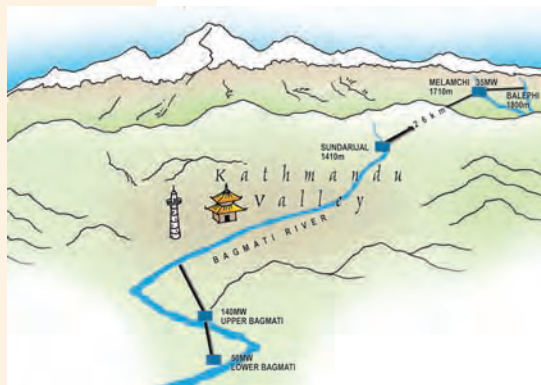
Combine this strategic realism in Delhi with its diplomatic offensive. Last Saturday, India and China decided to set up a hotline between their two leaders. To observe the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of relations, the two countries decided to hold the Year of Friendship with China in India, with Beijing reciprocating with similar celebrations.

Bilateral trade is now \$52 billion, the two are close allies on the climate change issue and the fact that India's new foreign secretary, Nirupama Rao, is an old China hand will also help in shaping a nuanced bilateral relationship.

Of course, there is still deep distrust, border disputes remain. The rhetoric has got sharper from the Chinese side over Arunachal Pradesh. 'Non-official' media and academic circles have called India a paper tiger, and highlighted India's fissiparous tendencies.

Nepal has to know how to tap into the realism and diplomatic wisdom of the Indian establishment, while allaying its concerns. Analyst Uday Bhaskar advises: "Nepal could engage India in sustained talks about where and how it plans to increase ties, one presumes economic, with China and assuage concerns that this is not yet another way of 'encirclement'."

He has a warning though, "Most nations that deal with China aver that it strives for a win-win, but in such a manner that both wins are with Beijing." ●



## LETTERS

### FOOD

I would like to thank the *Nepali Times* for its timely articles on the consequences of this season's failed monsoon (#463). I was lucky enough to work with the Nepal Red Cross and the Home Ministry 37 years ago as they prepared, what I believe, was Nepal's first national disaster preparedness plan.

The warnings of the recently released UN World Food Programme report, *The Cost of Coping: A Collision of Crises*, paint a dire worst case scenario for Nepal, as early as this winter. Already, according to the WFP, 48 per cent of children under five suffer chronic malnourishment, 60 per cent in mountain areas. Malnourishment is a major

contributor to disease in Nepal and further reductions in the food supply will only put greater pressure on an overburdened health system.

In the current tragedy of cholera in western Nepal, we have seen the media take the government to task for lack of preparedness and inadequate response. This time I hope they will not wait till disaster is already upon us to critique the government's response, but instead will investigate and report what actions the government is taking in advance of a possible catastrophe. My hopes are that the ministries are doing everything possible to prepare for a worst case scenario, but I can only know what the media reports. It is in exposing the government's deliberations and plans that the



expertise of Nepal's greater civil society can be brought to bear.

**Fred Shepardson, email**

### CHOLERA

While I concur with most of what Mallika Aryal has to say in her column, I do not agree with the statement, 'the best doctors need to go, not interns' ('Confusion in



# The theatre of life

Theatre makes life understandable, and to understand is to endure



KIRAN PANDAY

Sunil Pokharel is tall and lanky, with a hungry look and ascetic demeanour. He is an intense person, but speaks softly. While talking, he sometimes vigorously shakes his head and sways like a weed in the wind when he wants to emphasise a point. His eyes are often lost in thought.



## STATE OF THE STATE C K Lal

During a conversation, the theatre legend ends up giving the impression that he hasn't really been paying attention. But you realise later that he uses every word as raw material for the stage. Watch your words and mannerism when you talk to this man: he eats, drinks, sleeps and dreams theatre.

It's impossible to think of Sunil being married to anybody other than Nisha Sharma. If he is fire, she is earth. Nisha's deep eyes complement Sunil's penetrating gaze as they plan their next show, mentor apprentices for the stage, interact with counterparts from the other arts or chat with friends under the thatched gazebo inside Gurukul premises.

The couple has stayed afloat during most trying times, including censorship under the royal-military regime. The landlord wants them to relocate Gurukul without realising that

it's impossible to take Indrachok or Dharahara and replant it somewhere else. The evolution of the Gurukul Complex in Baneshwar is a part of Nepal's theatre history.

In these times of drought, diarrhoea and stillborn revolution, it may appear silly to talk about the state of theatre. But the arts are a society's soul. Theatre explains life, makes it understandable, and to understand is to learn to endure. Perhaps that could be the reason theatre is possible even when poetry becomes painful, paintings begin to frighten and music is declared blasphemous. That is why dictators fear the stage so much.

For over 20 years now, Aarohan has maintained its commitment to theatre because of people like Sunil and Nisha. The only other group with a similar track record is perhaps the Janakpur-based Mithila Natyakala Parishad where members spare time from day jobs to keep the tradition of Maithili theatre alive. With Gurukul, the Aarohan movement became an institution that had bred its own competitors. With competition come rivalry, jealousy, antagonism and attendant pathologies.

The charge that Sunil is highly individualistic is perhaps true: great art is seldom a collective enterprise. All of

Soviet Empire could not produce one Tolstoy and Alexander Solzhenitsyn was created by Stalin's oppression. Lu Xun never joined the Chinese Communist Party and the regime since then has failed to inspire a single narrator worthy of his mantle. Most artists do what they want to do rather than what the headquarter or the politburo tells them to do.

Over the years, presentations at the Sama Theatre have been

eclectic. From traditional to happenings, all kinds of shows have been staged at a place that has become a popular landmark despite being located at an unremarkable place.

For reasons that only Sunil can convincingly explain, a great number of his presentations are adaptations of western classics. Even then, there are enough plays where Bertolt Brecht's belief (that theatre should appeal not to the spectators' feelings but to their

reason) finds resonance.

Sunil and Nisha are too engrossed in their art to lobby with politicians, industrialists, military generals, militant leaders or gatekeepers of the media. But that doesn't mean they don't need everyone's support in keeping the theatre going in these difficult times.

For the collective sanity of at least a section of highly stressed Kathmandu society, the curtains should not close on Gurukul. ●

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media concepts

the time of cholera', #463).

What we are dealing with in the mid-and far west is diarrhea and cholera caused by unsafe water and poor hygiene and sanitation, and spread over a difficult terrain. The 'best doctors' may treat some patients who visit health camps but they normally do not go door-to-door to put an end to the cause of the epidemic. So what we really need are many interns, health assistants, public health students, female community health volunteers or just trained professionals who can reach every household and spread the word on the need for safe water, hygiene and sanitation and how water can be treated at the household level. We need doctors and helicopters but more than that we need to reach out to every household so as to contain the spread of the epidemic. Just treating patients in health camps is addressing the symptoms but not the root cause of the problem.

Some youth groups have recently started a campaign called Paschim Paaila, which is sending trained volunteers, mostly public health students to the epidemic affected areas, along with chlorine solution for water treatment and packets of oral rehydration salts, to raise awareness on safe water and sanitation, and help in treating water at the community or household levels. They may not have the 'best doctors' with them, but they are definitely making a difference.

**Bhushan Tuladhar**  
**Environment and Public Health Organisation**





PICS: DAMBAR K SHRESTHA

# Electric transformation



DAMBAR K SHRESTHA  
in DOLAKHA

Fifteen years ago, the village of Kirne in Dolakha was as far down the development ladder as you could get in Nepal. There were no roads or health posts, the child mortality rate was double the national average, villagers lived in total darkness.

Today, Kirne is surrounded by lush irrigated paddy terraces, its twinkling CFL lights can be seen from right up the valley. There is no load-shedding, there is cable

television, internet and the village has the district's best school and a hospital that even the poorest can afford.

Looking at Kirne's success story, there seems to be no reason why it can't be replicated nationwide. This tiny village has also shown us what works: investment in hydropower infrastructure to create jobs through public-private partnership and ploughing back some of the profits for community development.

"Our world changed completely with the road and electricity," says Narayandhoj Khadka, the former chairman of Sahare VDC, "our boys and girls became literate, our incomes jumped."

All this has been made possible because local community development was integrated into the design of the \$140.2 million Khimti hydropower project which started selling 60MW of

## Himal Power energises the local community in Dolakha for development

electricity to the national grid nearly ten years ago. The project has now become a model for future private investors in hydropower in Nepal. Khimti is the largest private hydropower project in the country and is run by Himal Power Ltd and owned by Nowray SN Power, Butwal Power Company, BKK, Alstom and GE Energy.

Over the past ten years, Himal Power has invested nearly \$10 million in local community development which includes a local electricity cooperative, the first of its kind in Nepal. Two mini-hydro plants generate one megawatt of electricity for about 8,000 households in the valley. Income from the sale of power is used by the cooperative for community development.

The uninterrupted power supply has set off a cascade of downstream industries, generating jobs. Five hundred local dairy farmers have set up a milk chilling plant with 3,000 litre capacity, others have put up poultry farms, bakeries powered by electric ovens, and even a furniture factory.

One of the most dramatic changes has been in the irrigation of formerly rainfed farms along the Khimti and Tama Kosi valleys. This has made the region of Dolakaha and Ramechhap not

**BEFORE AND AFTER:** By the banks of the Tama Kosi, Kirne today wears more prosperous look than it did before the project started 15 years ago (*inset*).

just self-sufficient but also able to grow surplus food.

In Sahare, for instance, 105 households have benefited from a two km irrigation canal from a nearby stream. Farmer Keshab Bahadur KC says 60 per cent of the land in Gagantar used to lie fallow in the dry season. "Fields that used to be suitable only for maize and millet now have two rice crops a year," says KC.

Tom Solberg is the Norwegian manager of Himal Power and says: "Our cooperative model is an example of how a hydropower investor can work for local development." Himal Power says it hopes to adopt the same model when its partners develop the Tamakosi 2 and 3 projects upstream. ●



## The power of a good example

For those in government and elsewhere who find giving people access to quality education and affordable health a formidable challenge, the schools and health posts managed by Himal Power at its Khimti plant site are an example of how easy it is if the work is properly managed.

And it's not even a question of resources, since the money required is not much and most communities are able to mobilise the subsidies.

The Khimti school started out during the construction phase of the project for the children of workers, but has now been upgraded to a secondary school that is managed by the local community and has now become a model for the district. Himal Power has also helped upgrade 11 other schools in the valley.

The result of the quality education was seen in this year's SLC results in which Kiran Ghimire and Rajan

Adhikari topped the district first and second with distinction.

Today, only a quarter of the nearly 500 students (*picture, above*) in the school are children of Himal Power staff and the company has allocated Rs 4 million a year to subsidise fees and for school administration.

Khimti's health post (*pictured, below*) has now turned into a small hospital that can treat up to 60 patients a day. More complicated cases are referred to the district hospital in Charikot and an ambulance is on standby. What is remarkable is that patients have to pay just Rs 10 for a checkup and the medicines are subsidised.

"For us, this hospital is a great gift, I paid just Rs 35 for checkup and medicines," says Ganga Bahadur Thapa who brought his daughter Sanu for treatment last week, "if I'd gone to Charikot I'd have spent Rs1,000." ●



## Toshiba launch

Dickson Poon, regional manager for South Asia at Toshiba Singapore talked to *Nepali Times* last week about the market in Nepal.

**Nepali Times: How important is the Nepal market?**

**Dickson Poon:** We don't think Nepal is a small country, and we have launched our products targeting the mass market here. We have all kinds of mini as well as large and high performance products catering to all kinds of users. We have launched L510 series as well as M900 and M500 models.



**How did you see business prospect in Nepal?**

As I see it, the economy of the country is not in bad shape and is picking up. This is expected to get better. We found a good business partner here in Nepal so we are optimistic.

**What is Toshiba's market share globally and in the region?**

We have almost a quarter share of the notebook market globally. It is one of the popular brands around. We hope it will fare well in Nepal. We have targeted the mass cutting down the price without compromising on quality, reliability, performance and service. The products are available for fair price through an authorised distributor.

## Money management

Laxmi Bank and Beed Invest signed a Memorandum of Understanding last week to introduce portfolio management into their range of services. Under this agreement the two will develop financial and investment products for the customers of Laxmi Bank keen on investing in the stock market.

## Best accounts

Himalayan Bank Limited was awarded the 'Best Presented Accounts Award 2008' by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal. The evaluation of annual report was done according to the criteria

set by South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA). Now the Himalayan Bank will also be nominated in 'SAFA Best Presented Accounts Award 2008'.

## Prosperous

Chaudhary Group (CG) last week launched a corporate social responsibility project 'Educated Nepali, prosperous Nepal and energetic Nepali, prosperous Nepal' to support the education and sports system in Nawalparasi. The conglomerate of 50 industries and social units, CG has been sustaining social and health service sectors and the development of Nepali literature.

## Local hero

Morang Auto Works, the sole distributor of Yamaha Motorcycle in Nepal announced its 'Alba Ratna' - the person the company thinks has made the most generous contribution to society this month. The local hero, Tulsi Ram Ghimire from Butwal, was chosen by a selection committee from *Kantipur Publications* and was awarded a cash prize of Rs 50,000.



### NEW PRODUCTS



**GOING GREEN:** Avco International launched Yo Byke, an electric two wheeler, last week. Considered to be an economical option in an era of ballooning petrol prices, the bike operates via a rechargeable battery.

Currently Avco International is marketing the model YOspeed with a year's warranty. These bikes have also bagged the award of 'Overdrive Automotive Product of the Year 2007.'

**WHITENER:** Sujal Dairy launched Alpine Dairy whitener for the first time in Nepal. Using local milk from cows and buffaloes, Alpine is said to make the perfect tea and coffee. The product is available in 900gm and 450gm packs.



**NOTEBOOK:**HP announced the launch of its new brand of notebook PC, the HP ProBook series on 30 July. Designed for small business owners, this series is advertised as functional, stylish, and reasonably priced.

# Exit strategy



## Leaving a business venture is just as important as entering

Not till the liquidation of Nepal Development Bank did the government realise that companies need sound exit strategies. In 2006 they passed the Insolvency Act but took many years to decide how it would be implemented. So now, shareholders and creditors of failed companies can recoup some part of their investment. Lawyers can handle insolvency and perhaps revive the flailing companies. This will attract foreign investors who are just as concerned about entering an industry as exiting one.



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

Supreme Court judge Bharat Upreti and the Nepal Insolvency Practitioners Association (NIPA) worked tirelessly to institute the law. NIPA has sought help from the International Association of Restructuring, Insolvency & Bankruptcy Professionals (INSOL) to determine how Nepal can work with other countries on the matter.

After the 2008 financial crisis, governments worldwide are waking up to the threat failed companies have on their subsidiaries in other countries. How will bankruptcy of the magnitude that Lehman Brothers suffered impact the world? How would we in Nepal react? How would our workers respond?

As competition becomes cut-throat more companies will fail, but their owners can still start new ones. So it's important that proprietors be able to quickly exit dying industries and compensate their shareholders and creditors. Creditors and shareholders of our defunct airline companies would have greatly benefited from sound insolvency laws.

Struggling and idle firms can also use insolvency laws and procedures to decide whether it would be more profitable to exit or a stab at recovery under new management.

But, all eyes will be on Nepal Investment Bank to see it springs any surprises on us. Nepalis have a knack for unique and sometimes dubious legal interpretations. Let's hope we make proper use of the law. ●

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# Community education

Sudarshan Ghimire and Anita Siwakoti in *Sikshak*, July-August 2009

रिक्त

All five students who had appeared in this year's SLC examination from Samata Siksha Niketan passed with distinction. The school was founded eight years ago for those children who could not afford to go to private schools. When Uttam Sanjel founded the school, promising quality education for Rs 100 per month, people scoffed. "What kind of English will they teach for Rs 100? No one will pass the exam," they said at PABSON meetings. Uttam is happy, he says: "Our students did not let us down. The results proved the nay-sayers wrong."

Sanjel once went to Mumbai to become a Bollywood hero and director. He tried his hand in Nepali film industry but could not achieve much. On the side, he started running informal classes for

Samata Siksha Niketan sets an example of quality education at low cost.

students of poor families in his neighbourhood and in 2001 established Samata Siksha Niketan in Jorpati.

The school has now expanded to Bhaktapur, Gwarko, Banepa, Melamchi and branches are being set up in Narayanghat, Kawaswati, Pokhara and Butwal with the student body crossing the 12,000 mark.

"We are very happy," says Mohan Yonjan of Jorpati, whose two children study in the school adding, "This is a big thing that we can provide our children with quality education for such low cost."

Doma Moktan, a resident of Boudha, originally from Dolakha says her eight-year old son, Phurba used to study in a school



KIRAN PANDAY

run by foreigners. But she got him enrolled in Samata as she found her daughter Lhakpa, who studied in Samata, to be far ahead of him.

This school is founded for the poor children but children of better families are also enrolling. Ninth grader Sarita Lama says weak students get special attention from all teachers. Some teachers have left because of low pay, but others see their profession as their contribution to society and not just for money.

There are challenges: there is a lack of extra-curricular activities, there is no science laboratory or computer lab and classroom management is sometimes weak. But what Sanjel and his Samata school network have shown is that rather than blame the government and wait for it to do something, we can all contribute to society. It's not money that makes quality education, and everyone can make a difference.

## Treatment by torture

Himal Khabarpatrika, 31 July-16 August

हिमाल

The Maoist YCL has been torturing drug addicts as a way to wean them off drugs in a self-styled 'rehabilitation center' in Pharping. The General Secretary of the National Alliance of ex-Drug Users and one-time victim of YCL 'rehabilitation' Ekata Mahat recalls: "We were hung upside down, beaten with mallets and pulled to the ground and stamped on".

After the government removed the YCL from its main base in the Balaju Industrial Estate many assumed the torture would stop. But, they're now using the drug rehab center in Pharping as a revenue source, where they have 70 addicts at a time whose fees are paid for by their families. The families are charged up to Rs 30,000 per addict. Eyewitnesses in Pharping say they hear wild screams from the YCL centre when the addicts are mercilessly beaten.

## Cantonment tales

Drishti, 11 August

दृष्टि

The Maoist fighters, who have been languishing for the last three years in various cantonments, are being exploited by their commanders. The party that wants a classless society is showing double standards. The former fighters have had enough and are planning a revolt. Just last month over 50 fighters from seven cantonments defected to Matrika Yadav's party.

Battalion commander of the Rambriksha Memorial Brigade, Mahottari Kumar Rai had misused power for a very long time. When his fighters mutinied last month the Maoist top-brass took action against him. Similarly, the fighters at Bishal Kumar Memorial Brigade have also complained of exploitation by

their commander Subir. Fighters say this happens in all the cantonments. Kali Bahadur Rai ('Bibid') was transferred from the Third Division to the Fifth but the exploitation hasn't stopped.

Some fighters are showing



KIRAN PANDAY

signs of trauma and depression and are under medication. High-level commanders do not live in the cantonments, although they should. The fighters never receive the Rs 5,000 allowance that the government provides them in full amount. In addition up to Rs 110 is provided as 'mess expenditure'.

The commanders have said that the amount is not enough and have started deducting from the fighters' allowance. They also say that a part of the allowance is to go to the YCL, but the YCL commanders complain that they haven't received anything. More money is deducted from the fighters when a family member comes to visit and stays with them for a few days. No such rules apply to the high-level officers in the PLA when their family members visit. Moreover the commanders have started different canteens where they cook better food than the kind the fighters eat.

"The government pays us all the same amount of allowance, yet we can't even save Rs 400 to send home and the commanders never seem to run out of money," says another disenchanted fighter from the First Division. The Maoist leadership is well aware of this exploitation, which is why some commanders are transferred.

## Include whom?

Prakashchandra Lohani and Balgopal Baidya in *Kantipur*, 11 August

कान्तिपुर

According to a table of Nepal's Human Development Index (HDI) broken down by ethnicity, the highest ranking are the Kayastha of the Madhes, but it is the Muhasar of the Madhes who are at the bottom. With the Muhasar, it is the Chepangs who are at the bottom of the HDI heap in Nepal.

The most marginalised communities in Nepal are Dalits, Adivasi and Muslims. These communities should therefore be prioritised in any government services and any future affirmative action programs. The others who happen to have HDI levels higher than the national average do not need any special treatment and will have to compete. Then there is also the question of the status of women and the inequities within ethnic groups. How to prevent the powerful within the marginalised groups from taking advantage of programs weighted in that community's favour?

One rule of thumb could be that even within a marginalised group, 33 per cent of the services should be set aside for women, and those living below the poverty line can be prioritised. However hard we try, it will be difficult to be completely fair in addressing this country's complex ethnic and socio-economic make-up. Targeting people with special needs can be done broadly under the HDI rubric in order to remove inequality, poverty and exploitation but it can't be the end of the story.

These strategies must now rise above the level of party slogans and be transformed by deep research and into political will.

Human Development Index by selected ethnicity  
National average: .5121

Kayastha	.9049
Marwari/Jain	.9018
Pahad Bahun	.7650
Newar	.7262
Tarai Bahun	.7224
Thakali	.6402
Chhetri	.5492
Thakuri	.5454
Gurung	.5247
Limbu	.5033
Sherpa	.4114
Thami	.3902
Tamang	.3894
Yadav	.3911
Damai	.3622
Muslim	.3553
Other Dalit	.2874
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Dushad/Paswan	.2008
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KUNDA DIXIT

# Sharing water resources

Water resources will be the next contentious issue in a federal Nepal

Nepal's forests are no longer a natural resource to be tapped for development, water is. Only 12 per cent of Nepal's 4 million hectares of arable land is irrigated, that too mostly during the rainy season. Most of the rivers are snow-fed, so if we construct reservoirs and cannel networks, we can irrigate land in the hills and the Tarai all year round. Farms can have three, even four harvests, a year. There is no need for Nepal to be food-deficit.



**COMMENT**  
**Ratna Sansar Shrestha**

Water resource has multi-dimensional utilisation (irrigation, drinking, transportation, tourism, industrial) and therefore it shouldn't just be understood as a source of energy. We can earn more from rafting-based tourism than generating hydroelectricity from the Bhote Kosi, for instance. Kosi, Gandaki, Karnali including Bagmati can be used as waterways, the cheapest means of transport. Nepali leaders often talk about the country's hydropower potential, and dream of exporting it to India. Even if hydro-electricity is generated, its most productive use would be domestic, to power industries and generate employment locally. By exporting raw power to India, we can earn some cash in the form of

royalties of under three per cent, which will not help domestic economic growth. In a federal system, there is a bigger chance that federal units will independently negotiate to export power to India. Electricity rich provinces can sell power to those who pay the most. Majority of Nepal's hydro-energy sites are in the mid-west, which generate over 300MW but only half of it is consumed in the region. At present, the central development region generates over 250MW, of which almost all power is consumed here. But the eastern region generates only 14MW but this is the region which consumes the highest amount of power. The mid west will export to the eastern region only if it is ready to pay the amount it demands or else it will export to India for a better price. Melamchi is in future Tamsaling province. If the Newa province wants to bring Melamchi water, it should be ready to pay the price Tamsling demands. Kathmanduites who are paying Rs 50 per month for water will have to pay a lot more as the price of water. If Newa fails to pay the price, Tamsaling is free to sell it to whichever province pays the price. Nepal Mandala has no potential for hydro electricity. If it is declared a separate province, either people will have to live in the dark or import the power at a high price. For energy and regulated water, we need to build reservoirs on our

ivers, which will inundate the fertile valley floors. The upper riparian province will therefore be deprived of using the water, and the lower riparian will benefit. A federal Nepal will face the same issues we now currently face vis-à-vis India about river basin development. How will it be possible to irrigate Jhapa without submerging valleys in the Limbuwan province? When two provinces compete, a third province can benefit, and these disputes can weaken the nation. Decisions on water resources should therefore not be devolved to the provincial units but be the prerogative of the centre, like foreign policy and defence. But the proposed ethnic-based provinces will not accept this idea. Nepal has already signed the ILO Convention 169, which allows indigenous communities control over the natural resources. In other words, this convention goes against the argument that there should be central jurisdiction over water resources. The bottom line is that a federal system will not be conducive to Nepal's national interest with regards to sharing benefits from water resources, and it will affect our development process. ● *Ratna Sansar Shrestha is a water resource analyst. This opinion piece is a translated adaptation of the original printed in Nagarik on 9 August.*

## “Total totalitarians”

Kuntikumari Shahi, RPP-Nepal CA member

**How did you spend the last year in the CA?**

First, we established the rules and agenda. Then we wrote preliminary drafts on the basis of suggestions we collected from ordinary people. Some committees have already finished their drafts, but we're still behind schedule. We've betrayed people's expectations, partly because the big parties have been power hungry.

**Will the constitution be written on time?**

We must write it on time otherwise there will be a crisis. Since we set the deadline hastily, we keep making revisions. The big parties bring their disputes to the committees, which has delayed things further.

**What form of rule should we have?**

My party and I think that the Westminster system with a constitutional monarchy is best for Nepal, although it's now illegal. But only general referendum can make that decision.

**But the Maoists haven't said they aren't even willing to reopen that debate.**

The Maoists are hardliners and deny anyone the right to voice opinions they think is 'status quoist', but this is undemocratic.

**Why do you think they want a 'people's assembly'?**

They want a total totalitarian communist regime. But only a bicameral legislature will be fair to Nepali minorities who can be appointed into the upper house.



## “A people's assembly”

Keshab Rai, Maoist CA member, Okhaldunga



**How did you spend the last year in the CA?**

We've done a lot. The people gave our party an emphatic vote of confidence, but the regressive forces in parliament are pulling us back against the people's wishes. This has caused restlessness.

**Will the constitution be written on time?**

We must write it on time.

**What form of rule should the country have?**

We want an executive president. Some are saying there should also be a prime minister under him. There have to be provisions to control and recall a powerful president.

**What kind of legislative assembly do you support?**

We've tried a House of Representatives and that hasn't worked, so we need a 'people's assembly.' We can make the legislature more inclusive if we have two assemblies.

**On what basis should we make the provinces?**

To be more inclusive of all groups we should form provinces on the basis of language and ethnicity. I'm from Okhaldunga, which should be divided between the Sherpas and Kiratis.

**Why is the State Restructuring Committee's meeting postponed indefinitely?**

The chief minister of the state should be nominated unanimously. Elections will be expensive. But NC and UML don't agree. They argue that if nobody gets required majority, re-elections should be held. That's why the meeting has been postponed.





# What can I

MIKI UPRETI

Many of us feel helpless when we hear about climate change. The problem is so vast, so global in scale that we tell ourselves: "Nothing I do will make a difference, so why even try?" Nations also say the same thing. Small countries are having to suffer for the sins of others. They face a disproportionate share of the punishment for the big, rich and powerful nations burning all that fossil fuel. And they say, let the rich countries do something to curb emissions, it's not our problem. They say: "No matter what we do, the seas will keep rising, the glaciers will keep melting."

I used to think the same way until I participated in the Imja Action Run, the 35km marathon on 18 July. Imja is the glacier below Chomolungma

where the melting glacier has created a lake 2km long and 500m wide where there was just snow and ice 50 years ago. The length of the lake is growing at 75m every year.

Across the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region, there are more than 9,000 glacial lakes, including 200 potentially dangerous ones like Imja. They have been formed because of the earth's warming trend since the last ice age that has been accelerating because of man-made emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere in the post-industrial age.

Almost two months have passed since the Imja Action Run, and I have been thinking about what it meant for me personally and what it achieved in spreading awareness about the melting of the Himalayan mountains.

The marathon was called 'Beat the GLOF Imja Action Run' and

was organised by the Kathmandu-based NGO, iDEAS, and local youths in Khumbu. GLOF is an acronym for Glacial Lake Outburst Flood, which is what happens when a glacial lake gorged with melting ice bursts and unleashes a tsunami in the valley below.

Glaciologists say there is a GLOF in Himalayan region every 3-10 years. GLOFs can cause huge damage not only to the settlements and inhabitants, but also to roads, bridges and power plants built along the rivers.

Yet many people don't know what causes GLOFs and few have heard of climate change. So, 130 runners, including 13 women, took part in the marathon that started from just below the Imja Lake at an altitude of 5,000m and we ran down to Dingboche,

Tengboche, Namche, Khunde, and ending in Khumjung.

For long stretches of the marathon, we were running along the Imja Khola, the route of a possible future GLOF and we could see the trails, bridges and settlements that would be directly in the path of the wall of mud, boulders and water that would come crashing down if the Imja Lake burst. Actually, it isn't a question of "if", but "when".

The world famous trekking

That's me with the northwest face of Ama Dablam in the background.



ROB SANDERSON





# do?



On climate change, time to think globally and act individually before it is too late

route to Everest Base Camp would be washed away by the massive debris flow. The water would reach Dingboche, the first settlement below Imja Lake, in 14 minutes and the village would be swallowed up. Thankfully, Tengboche and Namche will be spared, but the flood would reach Lukla in one hour, destroying everything on its path. On 4 August 1985, the Dig Tso GLOF and another one on the Imja Khola a few years later caused huge damage in the Khumbu, so the phenomenon is not new.

A day before the run we climbed the moraine wall to look at Imja Lake. I was shocked, it was huge, really huge: much larger than I had ever imagined it to be. To think that all this water and sand and boulders could go crashing down the narrow valleys below was unthinkable.

Soon after starting the run, I was gasping at the thin air. My

lungs were working like they'd never worked before, my heart was pounding so hard I could hear it as I ran. I wanted to give up, but passion for the cause kept me going. And with every step that took me down the mountain, the air became thicker and sweeter.

I was greeted warmly by village children who ran along with me. I got to Khumjung in 6 hours 58 minutes, behind most of the Nepali runners. This wasn't a race, and the important thing was to have participated. And as I crossed the finishing line, a deep feeling of fulfillment came over me, for having proved to myself that I could do it. And also a feeling that I had at least done my bit to raise awareness about this global crisis.

As a Kathmandu-based journalist, I have been covering news about the impact of climate change on the

Himalayas, and I will be covering the SAARC Ministerial meeting in Kathmandu from 31 August to 1 September to fix the agenda for the United Nation's Copenhagen Summit in December.

This meeting could very well be another one of those talk-fests where ministers generate a lot of carbon dioxide to travel long distances to deliver long speeches. But my mind will be far away on the wind-swept moraine ridge looking down at

Imja Lake, pondering if we will indeed act before it is too late.

We will also be forced to ask ourselves, what can we do to act as individuals or as nations to do something on our own? ●

*Miki Upreti is a journalist, mountaineer and runner who is originally from Japan and has been living in Kathmandu since 1990.*



PICS: MIKI UPRETI



Participants gather at the Imja Tso the day before the marathon.







BILASH RAI

## Jung Bahadur's "tip"

How foreign words have entered the Nepali lexicon

When Jung Bahadur Rana applauded gustily to an opera singer's melodious aria in *Covent Garden* in 1850, *Queen Victoria*, bemused, was said to have leaned over to ask whether the Maharajah of Nepal understood the music.

"I do not understand the nightingale either," Jung is said to have retorted, "yet I find its song beautiful." After the encore Jung Bahadur threw gold coins to the singing star, and at the startled looks all around, exclaimed in Nepali: "Tip!"

He meant 'pick it up' in Nepali. But, as legend has it, that is where the English word 'tip' had its origin, meaning the small change we leave behind as a token of our appreciation for service rendered. This apocryphal story is probably absolutely untrue, but wish it was.

Words in one language are in the process of dynamic transfer to another, and we can never stop that. Nepali has been infused with

Turkish, Persian, Arabic and English words throughout history.

Bir Bhadra Kunwar captured state power in Nepal following the Kot Massacre of 1846 and

reinvented himself as Jung Bahadur Rana, a Persian formulation in which 'Shumsher Jung Bahadur' infers a martial inclination: 'Brave with the Sword at War'

Persian words entered Nepali through the palaces, bureaucracy, and the courts. Even words that we think of as quintessentially Nepali came from Persian: 'subba', 'kaji', 'khardar', 'baidar', 'hukum', 'labeda suruwal'. Till 50 years ago the word for 'holiday' in Nepali was the Turkic word, 'tatil'.

There are plenty of Arabic words in our everyday Nepali language. 'Huzoor' is one we use a word used to address someone higher up than you, and now used universally for 'hello' when picking up the phone.

We have seen many faded photographs of Rana ladies resplendent in Victorian dresses and bedecked with 'Lucknow-loot' vintage jewellery. They posed for the 'tasbir', a derivative of the Arabic 'tasveer' and many were liberally sprinkled in 'attar', the alcohol-free essence of flowers the Arabians called 'ittar'.

'Kitab', book in Arabic, is what we read in Nepal today. We also read 'akhabar' for our news and the word 'khabarpatrika' is a mixture of Sanskrit and Arabic meaning 'newsmagazine'. 'Akhir' is the end, probably where Nepal is headed towards if the constitution writing does not meet the deadline. Even if we get a new constitution it should be 'asali', an original one suited to our soil.

Interestingly, all three Nepali words for 'pocket' are foreign: 'paket', 'goji' and 'khalti'. probably because Nepali dresses never had any pockets. So the idea of taking the pockets out of kleptomaniac staff at Kathmandu airport is probably based on tradition.

Perhaps some of the most hilarious words we have come from English, or at least from the mishearing or mispronouncing of the English words. The nobility were carried around town in 'William Carts', which became 'ulingkhat' in Nepali, and it fit well because 'khat' already meant 'bed' in Nepali.

The tandem became 'tamdana'. The waist-coat worn by the British colonialist was 'ista kot' passed on to the Nepali hill dwellers because we couldn't quite pronounce 'waist'. So, in the end, a 'west' coat ended up sounding like an 'east' coat.

The transfer of English words into Nepali continues to this day with a lot of military terms like 'ambush' and 'RPG' entering the Nepali lexicon. With Nepali students migrating for higher studies 'abroad study' has also become a Nepali phrase, as had the earlier 'jel' (jail) and 'byrot' (traveling by road).

'Cheroot' the small cigar with cylindrical ends became 'churot', and now a generic term for all cigarettes in Nepali. The Duke of Wellington, the British hero of the Napoleonic Wars always pictured in sartorial splendour, curiously enough, came to symbolise the dandy without substance in the rather derogatory Nepali term 'dukalanthan'. Napoleon would have been pleased.

Any other examples, kamreds?

# Post mortem of

KALENDRA SEJUWAL  
in JAJARKOT

On 29 June, Bhim Bahadur Shahi was home in bed in Punma village wracked by diarrhoea. The nearby health post had no doctors or nurses, and no medicines. A neighbour named Tikhu, himself suffering from the disease, volunteered to carry 23-year-old Shahi to the nearest health clinic in Syaulibajar, three hours away.

After struggling for one hour up the trail, Tikhu stopped for a rest, and died of exhaustion. Half-an-hour later, Bhim died too.

Three months ago, when politicians in Kathmandu were pre-occupied with the resignation of the Maoists and the formation of a new coalition, people were already starting to die of gastric infections in Nepal's mid-western hills. The deaths weren't taken very seriously because people here are used to an annual spike in diarrhoea-related deaths before the monsoons. But because a severe winter drought and a late monsoon had dried up all water sources, people were forced to drink contaminated water.

In remote Nepal where health services, even where they exist, are rudimentary the best way to



NEPAL ARMY

tackle diarrhoea and cholera is through prevention. In a roadless district with low literacy, the epidemic spread like a brushfire.

Eight-year-old Dilsara Nepali's house in Thana Suwanauli is three minutes away from the local sub-health post. On 30 June she died after struggling with severe diarrhoeal dehydration. Dilsara's mother is distraught. "There was no one at the health post so we had to take her to Thala," she said, "but she left us on the way there."

There are many causes for this year's killer epidemic, and they start with decades of government neglect that has kept the mid-western hills the country's

least-developed. Then there was the war, and the six districts of the mid-west were in the vortex of the conflict: health posts were abandoned, village councils were bombed, doctors and health workers refused to go to remote areas.

The present government failed to react fast enough. Two months into the epidemic the government hadn't yet revived local health posts let alone sent medicines and health personnel. The health assistants were on leave.

Social worker Dil Bahadur Shahi at Phalaha says: "Those who could afford to buy medicines at private clinics

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# an epidemic

A lethal combination of decades of state neglect, the war, and slow-moving government machinery

survived, most others perished. Karbir Chunara of the District Network of Dalits says the lack of education and safe drinking water has affected his community the most. Among the

141 people who have died in Jajarkot, 64 are Dalit and 24 are Janajati. Among those currently ill and receiving treatment, 60 per cent are Dalit. Now, there is the added challenge of taking care of the children orphaned by the epidemic. Bhim left behind an 18-year-old wife and one-year-old son, and Tikhu had four children, whose future now looks bleak. Tikhu's wife, Jayanta Shahi, says: "My husband used to work in India and sent money home, and that is how we survived. Now I don't know what to do." On 20 July Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal visited

Jajarkot and announced up to Rs 15,000 for families of cholera victims, and the Health Minister said they would get 10 kg of rice and 1 kg of salt. No one has got anything yet. Man Bahadur Buda in Lewa says: "There was an announcement on the radio that we would get help soon, but we've seen neither doctors nor medicines." In recent weeks, the army has also mobilized its air wing. The people of Jajarkot used to flee when they heard army helicopters during the war, this time they rush out as the green choppers crisscross the district rushing medicine and doctors. ●

## Beating malnutirion

Twenty one civil society organisations across South Asia won grants for their proposals to battle malnutrition in the region during a program called 'Family and Community Approaches to Improve Infant and Young Child Nutrition.' The winners received up to \$40,000 each to implement their ideas on how to improve nutrition in the next 18 months in their respective countries. Among the winners were four Nepali proposals. Vijaya Development Resource Center won for their idea to improve feeding practices for young children with micronutrient supplements. Equal Access Nepal was recognised for its proposal to enhance birth weight and survival rate of infants. MaxPro won for its idea to develop a community based distribution network for iodised salt and Helen Keller International Inc won for its proposal to reduce malnutrition among children less than two years old. A Bangladeshi proposal to promote nutritional status of malnourished children of commercial sex workers and families of people living with HIV/AIDS won the People's Choice Award. Bangladeshi Finance Minister Abhdul Maal Muhit handed out the awards. The South Asia Regional Development Marketplace was sponsored by UNICEF, World Food Programme, PepsiCo, the Micronutrient Initiative (MI), GTZ and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). ●

## Rajeev goes to Jajarkot

When news first filtered out in May that people were dying in his home district of Jajarkot, and increasingly impatient with the slow government response, Rajeev Shah decided to do something about it. As a descendant of the rajas of Jajarkot, Rajeev (pictured) was worried that the name of his district had become synonymous with disease and death. So far, he has spent \$15,000 to charter private helicopters to rush doctors and more than 500 kg of medicines to remote parts of Jajarkot. "The death toll just kept rising and nobody seemed to be bothered," Rajeev recalls, "I decided that as a native it was my responsibility." Rajeev formed the Jajarkot Cholera Disaster Coordination Committee and lobbied the prime minister for a more substantial relief package since the Rs 10,000 promised to relatives of the dead was just about enough for the funeral. Shah is also miffed by a health ministry that isn't taking the lead in relief missions. Nepali Times caught up with Rajeev on return from his last trip to Jajarkot this week with 10 doctors, four health assistants and a chartered chopper full of medicines. "I need to raise another

\$15,000 and whatever shortfall will have to come from my pocket," he says. SOS Manpower, HAN, CNI, FNCCI, various Rotary Clubs and Nirvana Chaudhary have promised help. Embarrassed by this private effort, last month the government belatedly sprung into action. The health minister tried to fly in but was thwarted by bad weather. The army has now been flying all over, and things are improving. "In Rame Danda, 10 people had died when I first went there and now only one person has died in the past month," Rajeev says. Rajeev's great grandfather Hari Bikram Shah was the youngest of seven sons of the Jajarkot Rajas and came to Kathmandu in 1913. His family has since been trying to help with education in the district. Shah himself was born in Kathmandu and studied abroad, but notes ruefully that things have hardly changed since he first visited his district in 1985. He says: "If an individual can make such a difference, imagine what we could achieve if we all united for the country's development." ● Dewan Rai



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# Afghans go to polls

ANITA ANAND in KABUL

**O**n August 4 about 1,500 women collected in the Loya Jirga tent in Kabul. They wore green caps, a green, black and red scarf (the colours of the Afghan flag) in various styles, chatted with each other and listened to the speakers.

They came into Kabul from all over Afghanistan for the launch of the 'Five Million Women Campaign' initiated by the Afghan Women's Network (AWN). The next day they went back to their provinces to organise similar gatherings before Afghanistan's national and provincial elections on 20 August. The goal is to get registered women to come out and vote. Despite Taliban threats, many of Afghanistan's 17 million registered voters of the country's

## A peaceful election on 20 August critical for South Asia's security

population of 30 million are expected to vote next week.

Nepal and Afghanistan have many things in common. Their populations are about the same size, both are ethnically diverse and both are trying to emerge from conflict. Afghanistan has been more of a battleground for proxy wars, and there has been non-stop conflict since 1978. In 2001, the Taliban were ousted



and a provisional government was set up.

The first elections in 45 years took place in 2004 and Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun backed by the Americans, won half the votes and became president. This year, Karzai is running for president against 40 other candidates. There are only two other serious contenders: Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah,

both of whom served in the Karzai government. Two women are also running: Shahla Ata, a Pashtun MP from Kabul and Frozan Fana, a Tajik and widow of a minister killed in 2002. People here vote along tribal, linguistic or regional lines. In a country so new to democracy and policy making, issues take a back seat. The campaigning is done through hoardings, posters

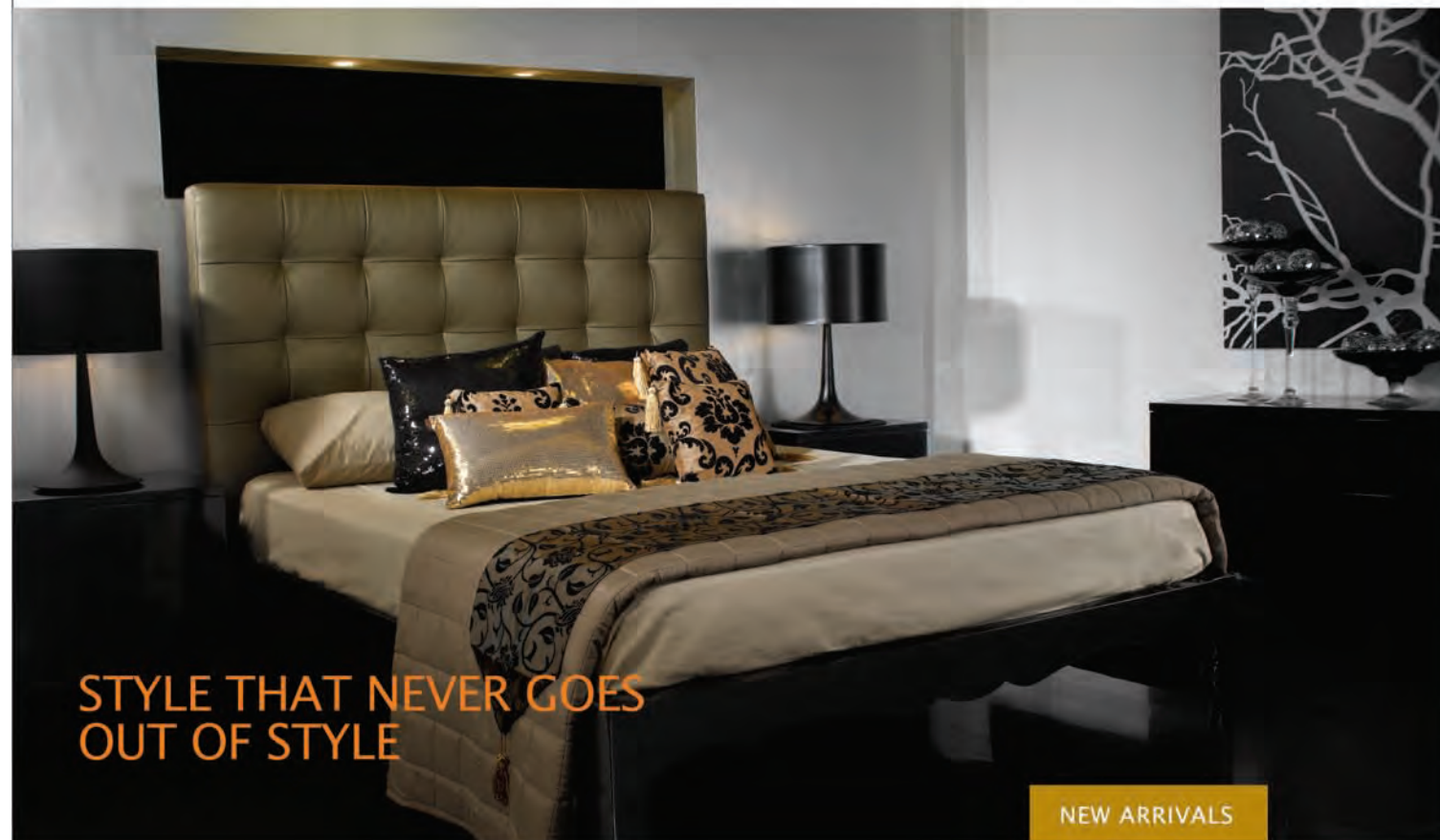
and stickers, there are tv debates but no public canvassing, no jeeps with supporters shouting slogans and garlanding candidates as is common in South Asia. Women campaign door to door, often in burqas, due to threats. Some have had their homes bombed and their husbands have threatened to leave with the children.

There are issues: many feel that there is insufficient progress in building schools, hospitals and creating jobs, and that billions in aid have been misused. Corruption is rampant, inflation is high. The presidential system of governance chosen for Afghanistan in the 2004 constitution suggested the creation of a modern state. A major challenge is the status of women. Despite this, one-fourth of the parliamentarians and Provincial Council members are women, as mandated by the constitution.

The election exercise is an amazing feat of logistics, managed by an Independent Election Commission with the assistance of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the UN's election support project UNDP/Elect. About 160,000 polling staff have been recruited, thousands of women and men have been trained to staff the polling stations, learning how to frisk, assist voters and ensure the elections are fair and free. Bringing peace and stability and reconstructing Afghanistan has a direct bearing on the security of Pakistan, India and the rest of the region, and next week's elections will be watched keenly. ●

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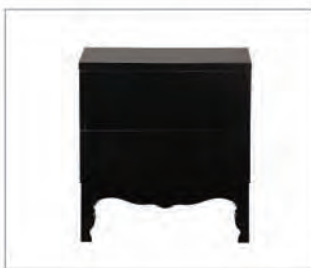
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## Chandra

Twenty-eight-year old Chandra from Kathmandu works as a waiter at one of Kabul's Lebanese restaurants. The restaurant has armed guards, some of them also Nepali, and a delightful garden with fruit trees. "I don't care much about elections or politics," says Chandra, who earns three times his salary in Nepal. The discussion among the waiters and management is always about security, especially in the runup to elections. People are tired of the bombs and rocket attacks and desperately want peace and stability. Chandra takes the security risks in his stride, and had got used to it during the war years in Nepal. But such was his economic desperation that he risked coming here because of the higher pay. There are an estimated 5,000 Nepalis in Afghanistan working for the United Nations, as Gurkhas in the British Army, private security guards, cooks and waiters. Four Nepalis were among 16 killed in a helicopter crash in Kandahar last month, and also Nepali workers have been abducted by the Taliban.



# Picking up tempo

A tempo driver is caught up in an impromptu chukka jam on his daily Lagankhel-Baneswor route. Student protesters beat him up for defying their traffic ban and try to set his three-wheeler on fire.

In order to save his vehicle, which he bought with a bank loan, the driver tries to flee the attackers but in the process mows down a group of students, killing one and injuring two others. The streets erupt in protest, and the students want Rs1 million compensation, the police and the government are mute spectators.

Sound familiar? During a week when students have been setting government vehicles on fire outside campuses in Kathmandu and a young man was arrested for a hit-and-run in which six people were killed outside Bir Hospital, the above story could very well be an actual event.

And in a way it is. Fiction so resembles the raw reality of everyday life in Nepal’s lawless nationscape today that one doesn’t have to make anything up.

The story of Tek Bahadur Karki, the driver, in the new radio drama *Tempo Tragedy* is so close to this country’s everyday reality that it is like listening to the evening news bulletin. Only this time it is told from the perspective of the



people involved. Which is actually what news should be: it should tell us the stories of ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances, but media resorts to a purposely depersonalised event-driven format.

In each episode we live through the tragedy of Tek Bahdur Karki’s life. The 30-year-old comes from Sindhupalchok, can’t afford college fees and becomes a tempo driver. He takes care of his brother and sister, who are studying. His mother, a health volunteer, lives in the village. The only thing that is perhaps different

from reality is that Tek Bahadur says he can’t, and won’t, pay the money. He decides to take the matter to court, and let the rule of law decide his fate, not the rule of mob.

The subscript in the plot of *Tempo Tragedy* is the prevalent lawlessness in the country, the culture of impunity and of citizens who only demand rights but know nothing of responsibility. There is a strong message that a banda may push for a group’s rights, but it often infringes on the rights of others.

As with the rest of the award-winning

## New series puts drama in real life on radio

*Katha Mitho Sarangiko* radio drama series, professional actors like Suresh Chand (who plays Tek’s part), Asha Magarati, Dayahang Rai and Rajan Khatiwada have done a superb job. And there are five personalities who play themselves: CA member Gagan Thapa, (pictured, above) lawyer Rajendra Salav, consumer rights activist Jyoti Baniya, former CDOs Tulashi Prasad Bhattarai and Khaga Nepal. The series is directed by Deepak Rauniyar and produced by the BBC World Service Trust.

The earlier series of *Katha Mitho Sarangiko* won the BBC Global Reith Award in 2009. Tempo Tragedy irons out the kinks in the previous series, has world class production values and it’s message will pierce the heart of every Nepali. ● *Kunda Dixit*

*Tempo Tragedy*, *Katha Mitho Sarangiko* broadcast on BBC Nepali Service 103 FM in Kathmandu and 110 partner stations around the country on Fridays and Saturdays at 8:15PM. For further details: 01-5549590



**Kajuhi Takamatsu is the head of Export Business Marketing at Sony’s Singapore branch. He talked to *Nepali Times* last week.**

***Nepali Times:* What do you think of the market for digital cameras in Nepal?**  
**Kajuhi Takamatsu:** Because of the growing demand for digital cameras here, Sony is doing well. With 60 per cent of the local market, Sony is the biggest supplier of digital cameras in Nepal as well as Asia. Last year, we sold 11,000 units in Nepal and expect a 15 per cent increase in sales this year. Here, we target youth and families. Outside Kathmandu, our cameras sell well in Pokhara, Butwal, Dharan and Biratnagar.

**What are the special functions of I-Auto?**  
It is user-friendly and the pictures are clear and sharp. Because it has 3200 ISO and an inbuilt SImOS sensor, it takes good pictures at night as well. It also has a ‘smile feature’— a sensor that takes pictures after it detects smile of the person whose picture is being taken. It can even tell a fake smile from a genuine one. It has a backlight so anti-light doesn’t ruin its pictures.

**What do you expect from the Nepali market?**  
We expect the I-Auto to be received as well as the Sony Smile camera was last year. We’ve introduced these models not only to expose Nepalis to new technologies but also to bring a smile to their faces.



## Vacancy Announcement

### The World Bank Office, Kathmandu

The South Asia Social, Environment and Water Resources Integrated Division (SASDI) of the World Bank invites applications for the position of an Extended Term Consultant (ETC) which will be based in Kathmandu, Nepal. The position will initially be a local one year ETC appointment, with a possibility for renewal for another year.

The ETC, who will be a Senior Conflict Specialist, will serve as a key member of the Nepal Country Team. She or he will be responsible for gathering information and advising the country team on issues of security, conflict dynamics, governance, and political economy, and on how these issues influence and are influenced by Bank supported operations. Specific duties will include: (1) liaising with a wide range of stakeholders to assess conflict-related issues and security concerns that impact on Bank operations, (2) working with Bank teams to analyze how conflict may affect specific operations and identify appropriate mitigation measures, (3) participating as a member of task teams to prepare and supervise Bank supported operations with particular focus on conflict areas or issues, (4) organizing training and capacity building programs for Bank staff and other stakeholders; and (5) overseeing the work of an independent monitoring agency to assess the progress in the implementation of the conflict work in the Nepal Country Program.

### The successful candidate will have the following qualifications:

- A university level degree in social science, political science, public administration, economics, or other relevant area of study;
- A minimum of eight years of relevant professional experience in the field of conflict, reconciliation, governance, social accountability, and community development;
- Experience in managing or overseeing development projects desirable;
- Excellent people skills and a demonstrated capacity to participate in and contribute effectively to multidisciplinary teams;
- Strong analytic skills and the ability to gather and analyze data;
- Demonstrated ability to develop and maintain professional relationships with government counterparts, local communities, donors and other stakeholders;
- Understanding of the development process at national level, including the roles of different Ministries and agencies in resource allocation and implementation;
- Knowledge of and experience with sub-national actors and development processes;
- Demonstrated ability to explore with communities and user groups issues around development assistance, development actor performance, and local conflict dynamics;
- Knowledge of various development partner programs at national and sub-national levels;
- Excellent writing abilities and oral communication skills in English and Nepali; skills in other languages of current areas of insecurity a distinct advantage; and
- Proven capacity to work hard and independently with minimum supervision.

This is a country office position in Nepal subject to local recruitment under the Nepal compensation plan. The World Bank offers a locally competitive package and is committed to attract and maintain a diverse, highly qualified and dedicated workforce. Equally qualified women and members of disadvantaged groups are encouraged to apply.

The details of the post are available at [www.worldbank.org/jobs](http://www.worldbank.org/jobs). Qualified candidates should apply on-line referring to job # 091382 by 28 August 2009.



ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Calendered.** photo exhibition of cotton textiles of Southern China and Thai fashion design at Indigo Gallery, 7-16 Aug, 6PM.

EVENTS

- ❖ **Modern Times**, movie screening at Lazimpat Gallery Café, 15 Aug, 5.30 PM. 4428549.
- ❖ **Pani Jatra**, Bagmati festival at Teku Dhoban, 22 Aug, 12PM.
- ❖ **'Patan Press club'**, meets every Thursday at Dhokaima cafe, 6PM.

MUSIC

- ❖ **Classical music series**, featuring Gurudev Kamath on vocals and Prem Chandra Ojhaya on tabla at Yala Maya Kendra, 18 Aug, 5PM. 5553767.
- ❖ **Baja gaja**, every Tuesday at Moksh, 7.30 PM onwards, Pulchok. 5526212
- ❖ **Live band** every Friday and rooftop bbq everyday at Kausi Kitchen, Durbar Marg. 4227288
- ❖ **Sunday Jazz brunch** barbecue and live jazz music at the Terrace, Hyatt Regency from 12-3.30 PM. 4491234
- ❖ **Jazz evening** at Delices de France Restaurant every Wednesday, 11AM-2PM. 4260326
- ❖ **Some like it hot** every Friday BBQ and live music by Dinesh Rai and the Sound Minds, 7PM onwards, Rs 899 at Fusion, Dwarika's Hotel. 4479488
- ❖ **Happy cocktail hour**, 5-7PM, ladies night on Wednesday with live unplugged music at Jatra Café & Bar.
- ❖ **Live Sensation**, performance by Yankey every Saturday, 9PM, Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu. 4491234
- ❖ **Live Band Sensation** performance by Aprilrush, every Saturday till late, Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 4489362
- ❖ **Sunday Jazz Brunch** by Inner Groove with barbeque, Sunday, 12PM-3.30 PM, The Terrace at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu. 4489362
- ❖ **Nepali Ghajals** and songs at D'Lounge Beijing Duck Restaurant, every Thursday 6.30 PM onwards. 4468589

DINING

- ❖ **Asparagus mania**, enjoy all flavours at the Rox Restaurant, all through August. 4491234
- ❖ **Wine Festival**, til 15 September, Kilroy'sThamel. 4250440
- ❖ **A cafe's cafe** Dhokaima Cafe, Patan Dhoka. 5522113
- ❖ **The Corner Bar**, 3-11PM, 5-7PM, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu. 4411818
- ❖ **Mango Etagere** with hi-tea at The Lounge from 4.30-6.30 PM. Hyatt Regency. 4489362
- ❖ **Al Fresco**, for home made pastas, steaks and fresh water trout, Soaltee Crowne Plaza. 4273999
- ❖ **Kakori**, for varieties of biryani, curries and Kebabs, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 7-10.45 PM.
- ❖ **Chez Caroline** for French and Mediterranean cuisine, Babar Mahal Revisited. 4263070
- ❖ **Mediterranean cuisine** every Friday from Greece, Italy and the Middle-East at The Café, Hyatt Regency. 4491234
- ❖ **Teppanyaki** meat items and garlic rice right at Le Resturant, Gairidhara. 4436318
- ❖ **Plat Du Jour** at Hotel Shangri La, Kathmandu, Rs 600. 4412999
- ❖ **Reality Bites**, The Kaiser Café, Garden of Dreams, operated by Dwarika's Group of Hotels, 9AM-10PM. 4425341
- ❖ **Starry night barbecue** at Hotel Shangri-la with live performance by Ciney Gurung, Rs 999, at the Shambala Garden, every Friday 7PM onwards. 4412999
- ❖ **Himalayan Rainbow Trout** at Hotel Yak and Yeti, Darbar Marg. 4248999
- ❖ **Tiger for Breakfast**, breakfast everyday at 1905, Kantipath. 4215068.

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **Dhulikhel Lodge Resort**, offers an overnight stay for Rs 1600, from 24 July-30 September. 4222389
- ❖ **Relax Package** at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu for Rs 5555 plus taxes, for a night on double occupancy with breakfast, complimentary use of spa and, offer valid to Nepalis and local residents only. 4489800

For inclusion in the listing send information to editors(at)nepalitimes.com

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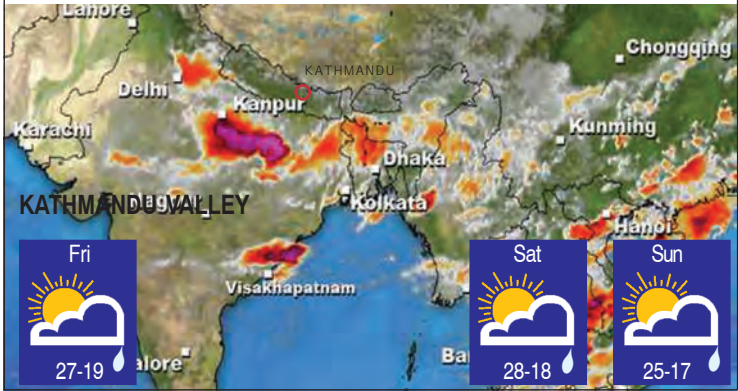


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WEEKEND WEATHER by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Those were two massive low pressure troughs sitting on either ends of Nepal, one that emanated from the Arabian Sea and the other from the Bay of Bengal. There is rarely such a dramatic illustration of the two arms of the southwesterly monsoon in the subcontinent. The two systems collided over central Nepal and dumped 78 mm of rain overnight on Wednesday-Thursday. Sometimes these low pressure areas cancel themselves out, as seems to be happening as we go to press on Thursday afternoon. Expect more night squalls into the weekend, hot and sultry afternoons and cooler mornings.



RECIPES

by GRAHAM SYDNEY

Salmon Involtini with a Balsamic Vinegar

(Serves 6)

This dish makes a perfect starter or the perfect addition to a salad. One can make various combinations using the same method. I used poppy seed leaves and garnished it with some toasted poppy seeds.

- 500g smoked salmon
- 500g cream cheese
- 500g fresh green asparagus
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar
- juice of 1 lemon
- salt & pepper to taste
- plastic wrap



Pour the balsamic vinegar into a small saucepan and allow to reduce over a low heat until its volume becomes ¼ of the original quantity. Blanch the asparagus for 1-2 minutes in some boiling salty water. Remove the asparagus and place into a bowl of ice cold water to stop them cooking. Lay a sheet of plastic wrap of about 30cm on a dish towel or a piece of baking paper. Place the salmon carefully to cover the plastic wrap without any holes showing. Season the cream cheese with a little lemon juice, salt and pepper and carefully spread an even layer on the salmon. Place the asparagus on the cream cheese to cover a surface of about 10cm deep and to cover the cheese/salmon from left to right. Roll the salmon over the asparagus to form a sausage like roll. Refrigerate for at least an hour before slicing the wheels into your desired size and serve with some of the balsamic reduction.



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MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**LOOKING BACK:** President Ram Baran Yadav unveils a picture during an exhibition on Kathmandu Valley's history to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Sampadha Photovision Collection on Saturday in Sital Niwas.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**DEMOCRACY IN FULL SWING:** Maoist MPs obstruct house proceedings for the seventh straight day, lobbying to get back into government. Parliament has been suspended till 16 August.



KIRAN PANDAY

**YOUNG AND RESTLESS:** Members of Association of Youth Organisations Nepal take out a rally to celebrate International Youth day on Wednesday bearing a youth sign on their cheeks.

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# To Russia with love

The Donkey's quote of the week is attributed in the local press to a Kangresi student leader at TC who, after being apprehended with a khukuri in class, told police: "If the eh-Maleys can come here with guns, why can't I carry a sword to college?"

Nuf said about the state of education (and the country at large). What does one make of student unions belonging to the two main parties in the ruling coalition battling it out with guns 'n' knives over who should get the contract to expand their college's chemistry lab? When the Ass was a student at TC way back when, the chemistry lab was where one tried to impress students of the opposite sex by conducting experiments lighting bunsen burners under round-bottomed flasks to generate hydrogen. Today's students live in a technologically superior age and probably need a bigger lab so that they can take their arms race to the next level by installing **plutonium enrichment** centrifuges.

✽

Foreign Minister Suzy Koirala sure knows how to win the hearts and minds (and last but

not least, the stomachs) of us Nepali hacks. She organised a "lunch cocktail" at the Raddision as a curtain-raiser for her India visit the other day. Predictably, us jourmos had our priorities right and made a bee-line for the cocktails rather than the buffet, and promptly proceeded to get plastered. ("Payeko belama khai halnu." - Nepali proverb). Mustering the nerves to ask provocative questions that comes only after there is sufficient **Madeira** coursing down the bloodstream, we asked Suzy Didi: "Sho, mantrijee, whash duh agenda for the Bharat bhijit, hic, be sho bheri kind and tell ush?" Must give it to the former First Dotter, she is quick. Without batting even one of her eye-lashes, Suzy replied: "Since India invited me, I don't have to worry about the agenda-sagenda, they will give us the agendas to discuss. *Akhir malai Bharat le bolako, hoina, uniharulai nai thaha hola ke ke agenda chhan.*"

By this time, most of the hacks were too intoxicated to realise what a great sound bite that was. Which is why the quote never got into the national press, and it's a good

the thing the Ass was only half-smashed, it's all there in my notebook.

✽

So what if the Revolutionary International Movement refused to meet Chairman Tremendous in London? It looks like the real destination all along was Minsk, where the NRN contingent had laid out the Red Carpet.

Unlike last year's official visit to the UN General Assembly this wasn't a fun trip, but a fund trip. The Maoist coffers are a bit depleted, and Chairman Overwhelming is out to replenish the **war chest**. But taking Comrade Wife Sita and Dear Leader Prakash along has opened up Awe-Inspiring to a great deal of ridicule within his own party for breaking his own recently-promulgated Code of Conduct. One senior comrade said snidely to the Ass the other day: "Prakash has tagged along this time as computer assistant cum official camera person."

PKD then goes on to Moscow, where he will meet Comrade Vladimir Ilyich in his mausoleum. But a pilgrimage to Georgia to pay

respects to Uncle Joe's birthplace (which has always been on Comrade Astounding's 'things to do before I retire' list) has been scrapped because Russia is massing troops in Abkhazia for another putsch into Georgia again any day now. On the whole, though, it's a good thing PKD has gone to the Land Where Communism Collapsed. Maybe it'll be an eye-opener.

✽

JNK now thinks he's waited long enough and is making his move against MKN and KPO. In so

doing, he is either knowingly or unknowingly playing right into the hands of the **Mau Mau** who can only get into govt if they manage to split the Eh-Malaise. The party is already running parallel district committees with pro and anti-JN cliques. With Upadro Yadav and Jhallu both speaking Maoist lingo, it is pretty clear what PKD meant by "strategic offensive" before he jetted off to the Woolwich Town Hall.

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