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ELAYNE TAKEMOTO

## Hot spot

The eastern Himalaya, encompassing Nepal, is a global biodiversity treasure trove with 353 new species discovered in the past ten years. But this ecosystem is now threatened by habitat destruction and climate change. One of the new species discovered here is the *Impatiens namchabarwensis* (above) which is normally deep blue but changes to purple when it gets hotter. Among the other new species are

**A Himalayan treasure trove**

p10-11

scorpion and a 100 million year old gecko trapped in amber that lived before the Himalaya was even formed.



## Nepal in India



In his meeting with the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Madhav Nepal thanked India for its support for the peace and democratic process. He hoped this support will continue, and assured Delhi that he is committed to India-Nepal friendship. Translation: thank you for helping me get this job, please support this government, look I came here first and not China. I will retain the balanced policy you want at present of keeping the Maoists engaged, but out of the power alignment.

**Mr Nepal's Nepal**  
**A Pragmatic vassal**  
**The other Manmohan**

**Prashant Jha** p2  
**CK Lal** p3  
**Ass** p16

## Times nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll # 465

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

Total votes: 718



Weekly Internet Poll # 466. To vote go to: [www.nepaltimes.com](http://www.nepaltimes.com)

**Q. Will India give more support to Nepal's peace process following the PM's goodwill visit to India?**

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## IT'S A DISASTER

The cholera outbreak is fading from the headlines. Those who died are now just statistics. The country awaits the next disaster, and when it happens the media will unleash a flashflood of coverage, everyone will hurl blame at each other, and an unresponsive state will fumble again.

It is hard to remember a time when there was such a wide gap between what the country and its people urgently need and the petty preoccupations of those who rule it. The peace process has got bogged down and development is at a standstill because of the political stalemate. The rhetoric of our leaders is getting shriller as they run each other down ad nauseum.

There is lots that needs to be done. We have to make up for the decade we lost due to the war, and we have to address the poverty, inequality and exclusion that led to that conflict in the first place. We have to meet an acute food crisis this winter and at the same time address the longer-term need for food security, education, health care, energy, jobs of a population of 40 million by 2020.

Call it a volcano, a time bomb or whatever you like. Yet, we see neither the awareness nor an effort to formulate a strategy to deal with this unfolding calamity at decision-taking and policy-making levels. Those of us attending the launch of the Nepal Human Development Report 2009 at the plush ball room of the Crowne Plaza the other day hung our heads in shame. Nepal has the lowest life-expectancy of any country in South Asia, our maternal and infant mortality in pockets of the mid-west are at sub-Saharan levels.

It's not that there hasn't been progress. In fact, despite the war our overall development parameters will meet most of the UN's Millennium Development Goals by 2015. But this advance has been uneven and unequal. Only 35 per cent of Dalit women are literate, compared to 70 per cent among Bahun/Chhetri females. The trans-Karnali lags behind in all indicators. The eastern Tarai has a Human Development Index almost as bad as the remote northwestern mountains. The Jajarkot epidemic showed a disproportionate number of those who died and were hospitalised were Dalits.

Even natural disasters in this country are manmade, and the poor suffer more: landless settlements along vulnerable flood plains, crowded tenements that flout seismic codes, droughts that lead to health epidemics because of the lack of clean drinking water.

The next big calamity is not a question of 'if', but 'when'. As Jajarkot showed this year and Kosi last year, we are not prepared. In the short-term, a rapid response system with heavy-lift helicopters is long-overdue.

For the future, however, there is really no other option but to raise the capacity of every Nepali family to cope: with education, jobs, food self-sufficiency and health care. It's not too much to ask, and it can be done with better governance and if we muster the political will.

NEW DELHI—Madhav Nepal came, he saw, and he left without as much as creating a ripple in the Indian capital.

If anything, the core message that Mr Nepal should be taking home is that this is a new India. The Indian PMO may be keeping



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

an eye on Nepal because of security interests, but it spends far more time and energy looking out to the west finding ways to carve a space in the world.

The Indian media's interest in Nepal is narrowed to the interest of certain key senior journalists who wield influence in their newsrooms to push a story or interview. The business community may attend the fancy CII lunches but they are increasingly disinterested and frustrated with the political and economic drift in Nepal. And anyway, Kathmandu barely figures on the radar of the big business houses influencing foreign policy.

So who is Nepal, and subsequently Mr Nepal, left with in Delhi? Only a few politicians who have little presence or say in Indian politics anymore (A B Bardhan, D P Tripathi, P A Sangma, Sharad Yadav), and the Nepal desk officers of South Block. The prospect of Nepal and India's Nepal policy becoming a larger issue of public debate in India is growing increasingly dim.

Except for a few dips and cops, no one is interested in Nepal here. But those very few men and women decisively affect our politics.

Madhav Nepal thanked India for its support for the peace and democratic process. He hoped this support will continue.

Translation: thank you for helping me get this job, please

support this government, look I came here first and not China. I will retain the balanced policy you want at present of keeping the Maoists engaged, but out of the power alignment.

The most significant meeting of the trip was between MKN and Manmohan Singh accompanied by Pranab Mukherjee that lasted an hour and in which Singh firmly backed Mr Nepal. The prime minister always saw this as a trust-building exercise and is convinced that objective has been accomplished.

The Indian side expressed its firm support to the government. The idea was to reassure Madhav Nepal that they were with him, he should be bold and assert himself. More importantly, Delhi was warning the other Nepali politicians, Girija Koirala, Puspha Kamal Dahal, Jhlanath Khanal, and Upendra Yadav, not to destabilise the present arrangement. This was also a thank you trip for Madhav Nepal's role during the Katawal crisis.

But a certain Ms Koirala complicated the plot and threatened to convert it into more of a farewell trip for Mr Nepal. Even during her preparatory visit, Sujata queered the pitch for the PM's visit by blabbering in front of the media after each meeting, playing up the discussions, and talking about Indian promises. With the latest tantrum, she undermined her own government.

No one in Delhi is fond of Sujata and she wasn't missed here this week. But they understood that the signal was from Dad, and they don't like the rumours that he is cosyng up to the Maoists. India and the Maoists have themselves started talking at fairly senior levels, but at the moment officials here insist that they support the Nepal government and any talk of an alternative is counter-productive.

"Don't make it a self-fulfilling prophecy. Back this arrangement.



Does Nepal want to just keep changing governments all the time?" asked one official.

There is a growing recognition in Delhi that the constitution may not be written on time. Note that even when all Nepali actors were claiming elections can't happen, India insisted it would and used its leverage to push everyone towards the polls. This time, India seems pretty much reconciled to the fact that the process cannot meet its timeline. What that means is that they may not be using their leverage, beyond the usual rhetoric, to push it either.

Mr Nepal made an appearance and felt good about it. India was warm and hospitable. Beyond that, this trip has done little to resolve either the India-party-Maoist impasse or bring about any substantial change in India-Nepal relations. ●

## LETTERS

### CHITWAN & MELAMCHI

Thank you for your double-barrelled editorial ('Harm reduction', #464) exposing the government's incompetence. I doubt if it will make any difference, though, because as you hint in your editorial both the Chitwan and Melamchi deals are lubricated by kickbacks and the decisions are never going to be rational.

**Tashi Namgyal, email**

● We really appreciate your leader on Chitwan. A clear voice of reason. Many congratulations to you and *Nepali Times*.  
**Leela Chhetri, email**

● I have followed the whole saga of the Chitwan resort controversy from the inside, and I'm afraid Nepal is committing tourism hara-kiri by letting this thing drag on. You probably couldn't be more explicit in your editorial than to say senior bureaucrats and the new ministers want 'a piece of the action', but let me spell it out to your readers that Nepal's tourism industry is being held hostage by a corrupt government and bureaucracy as well as rapacious private sector individuals who want control over the established resorts.  
**Ganesh Shrestha, Chitwan**

● While it might have been a bad idea to suddenly close down lodges inside the park, especially seeing their contribution towards promoting eco-tourism in Nepal, the government's move should not be viewed with such cynicism. These resorts need to adhere to strict guidelines to be able to operate inside the national park. However, that does not seem to be the case. If they have been sticking to the guidelines, then renewing their license should not be a problem. But perhaps these lodges have not been as earnest in their operations and thus they are creating the fuss.  
**Priya Joshi, Kathmandu**

### ARMS AND THE MAN

The Guest Column by Kul Chandra Gautam ('Rollback violence', #460) about arms and their effect on society was well written and articulate. But, the idea that the development of a culture of criminality and armed violence is a side effect or by-product of the political development that have taken place over the past 12 years is

wrong. Rather than being a side effect, armed violence and criminal behaviour was the hallmark of the so-called movement for democracy from its inception. When the Panchayat system was in place, no one would dream of possessing weapons. There was no fear of violence or chaos for ordinary people. Even the police were unarmed. The idea that the political changes in Nepal over the past couple of decades represent some sort of social progress or improvement is absurd.

The situation has been deteriorating steadily since the 1980 protests began the unraveling of the Panchayat system and, finally, the decline of the monarchy. The mere existence of political parties and the holding elections is not sensible proof of positive progress. Nepal's political parties and their supporters only know how to disrupt society. They only know how to incite violence. The armed

violence that is now prevalent in Nepal can be blamed squarely on the netas. The obvious link between the rise to power of political parties and

the simultaneous catastrophic decline in civilised society in Nepal is something that should be seriously examined. His late Majesty Mahendra had very good reasons for exiling or imprisoning the political bosses and outlawing their parties.

**Daniel Birch, USA**

### ENERGY FROM GARBAGE

Ratna Sansar Shrestha's 'Sharing Water Resources' (#464) further illustrates how the years and years of dreaming that Nepal will become rich from its hydropower proves is yet more evidence that it was just that: a dream. The government has been talking about hydropower saving the nation for at least the 20 years, ignoring other possibilities. The major resource that could be turned into energy, that is found everywhere in Kathmandu these days, is garbage. Nepalis are ignoring what is right under their noses while pining away for hydropower that will never come. With global warming and Nepal's amazing glacial rivers too silty to be turned into hydropower without major problems, turning garbage into power is the way forward for Nepal. Check out: [http://wasteage.com/mag\\_waste\\_wastetoenergy\\_chicagoarea\\_facility/](http://wasteage.com/mag_waste_wastetoenergy_chicagoarea_facility/) and let's get moving on a new energy plan for Nepal, instead of sitting in the dark this winter.  
**'Jenny', email**



# A pragmatic vassal



## Reciprocity is now the mainstay of diplomacy even in asymmetrical bilateral relations

**W**hen Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal returns from New Delhi this weekend, he will be grilled about the deals he made.

This is the time-honoured tradition in Nepal. There is no way Nepal can gain something from India without giving



**STATE OF THE STATE**  
C K Lal

something away. And given our trade deficit and our overwhelming dependence, there will always be a pound of flesh. But gone are the days of grand gestures and magnanimity,

reciprocity is now the mainstay of diplomacy even in asymmetrical bilateral relations.

This is not new, the Sugauli Treaty severely curtailed the elbow room of Nepali rulers after the Anglo-Nepal wars of 1814-16. By personally leading the military contingent to assist besieged British troops in Lucknow during Sepoy Mutiny in 1857, Jung Bahadur proved that he led a vassal state.

In recognition of Nepal's assistance during World War I (1914-18) the British elevated their minister in the court of Kathmandu to the level of envoy. But Nepal remained more or less a tributary state. It was

called once again to contribute to the Allied war effort in World War II (1939-45), but the country failed to benefit in any tangible way. Profits of victory accrued to the Rana rulers and their families.

The departure of the British from the subcontinent in 1947 was followed by the replacement of the Ranas by the Shahs in Nepal. But the basic nature of Indo-Nepal relationship remained almost the same. In lieu of Jawaharlal Nehru's help in reinstalling him to the Serpent Throne, King Tribhuvan accepted the patron-client relationship enshrined in the Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950. The overlord had extracted its tribute from the ruler of the protectorate.

There was a brief 18-months interregnum of some semblance of independence in foreign policy during the premiership of BP Koirala. But King Mahendra ended it in December 1960 with a military coup and to consolidate his absolutism, he agreed to abide by all terms set by Delhi. But when the Cold War increased the number of strategic suitors in Kathmandu, and following the Indo-China War in 1962, Mahendra tried to play it both ways, arousing India's suspicions.

Nepal's diplomatic flirtations soon came to an end with the fall of the Soviet Union and the sudden US disengagement in South Asia. When Indians imposed an economic blockade on landlocked Nepal in 1989, no country, not even our northern neighbour, considered it worth their while to come to the rescue. Once limits of Nepal's sovereignty were starkly exposed, every successive government in Kathmandu resigned itself to the inherent asymmetry in Indo-nepal relations.

The 12-point agreement between Maoists and the mainstream parties signed in Delhi in November 2006 set the stage for the fall of the Shah monarchy.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal can rave and rant as much as he wants against bideshi prabhuharu but all his outbursts against foreign overlords are not going to change the ground reality: no Nepali prime minister can survive in Singh Darbar for long by alienating South Block.

In the coming days, Nepal will have to learn to cope with fundamental changes in the outlook of the Indian

establishment. Indian foreign policy is a legacy of the imperial Brits and with the signing of Indo-US civilian nuclear deal, New Delhi has adopted the bazaar model of diplomacy. There is no place for emotions in the marketplace.

It's pointless to talk about age-old linkages of shared culture or of the sacrifices made by Gorkha soldiers to protect the unity and integrity of the Indian Union. Compassion doesn't come into market relationships, all transactions are based on the principle of Caveat Emptor: without a warranty the buyer assumes the risk of quality. ●

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# Lies, damn lies

If the quality of statistics in Nepal is dubious, then so are policies based on them



**COMMENT**  
Bishnu Dev Pant

The release of national accounts data and development reports is often cause for good cheer and self-congratulation on the part of donors and government policymakers.

Barring socioeconomic or political catastrophe, even countries like Nepal can pair the acknowledgement that 'there is much to do' with 'but look how far we have come'. Successive reports reveal that maternal and child mortality rates have been slashed, life expectancy and literacy rates are on the rise, and GDP is growing year by year. But what if these statistics were, as some would have it, pretty lies?

National accounts data provides the most comprehensive overview of a country's economy. Governments use them to formulate budgetary policies, central banks to make monetary decisions, businesses to make investment decisions and financial institutions to make portfolio allocations.



It's clear that if this data is outdated and inaccurate, the decisions that depend on them will be flawed and even disastrous. The quality of statistics in Nepal is dubious because the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) doesn't conduct surveys regularly, and the surveys that exist employ poor methodology.

Quarterly rather than annual national estimates are particularly useful for policymakers. CBS has long been compiling annual national accounts, but Nepal may be the only country in South Asia that does not compile them quarterly. Besides the two decennial population and agricultural censuses, the only household level surveys being conducted by CBS are the Labor Force Survey (LFS) and the Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS). The discontinuation of the only annual regular survey of manufacturing establishments has left little base for the estimation of value added and other aggregates.

Agricultural data is unreliable because

surveys aren't scientific but based on ad hoc field reports. Monetary statistics cover Nepal Rastra Bank and commercial banks but ignore finance companies. The official inflation figure of 13 per cent is inaccurate because the consumer price index does not capture all items, data is collected only from urban centres and does not reflect changing patterns of consumption. Likewise, balance of payments statistics are incomplete and data collection on remittances, foreign direct investment, records of grants, loans and oil transactions, re-exports, short-term inflows, and other private capital flows is seriously flawed.

Matters get worse when you turn to the informal economy, which is even more important for Nepal than the formal economy. The LFS 2008 reveals that about 96 per cent of Nepalis are employed in the informal sector, which contributes over 51 per cent of total GDP. But many economic transactions are not observable

or directly measurable, particularly in the case of those working at home.

This has serious implications for government policy. Official GDP estimates are significantly underestimated and the calculation of the rate of change of economic growth is equally inaccurate. The Ministry of Finance loses billions of rupees as tax revenue each year, raising the tax burden on those who pay tax and reducing the amount available for governments to spend on public goods. Inaccurate data means government policy is based on inappropriate targets.

Statistics has never been a priority for successive governments. Until governments allocate adequate resources to conduct regular, rigorous surveys of both the formal and informal sectors, the statistics on which government policy is based simply cannot be taken at face value. Investment in statistics is no less important than investment in infrastructural development.

From 23-26 September, the South Asian Institute of Management (SAIM) and the International Association for Income and Wealth (IARIW) will be organising an international conference in Kathmandu on Measuring Informal Sector in Developing Countries. Participants from over 40 countries are expected to discuss the problems relating to the collection of statistics in the informal economy. Behind the scenes, statisticians are working hard to fortify the database so necessary to sound policymaking.

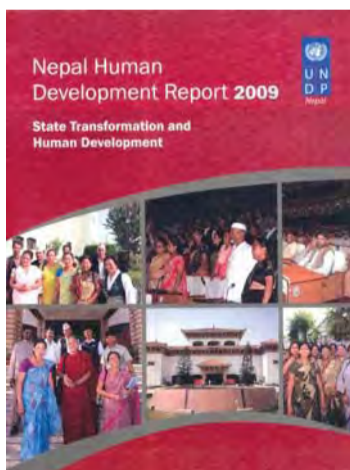
*Bishnu Dev Pant is the former Director of the Development Indicators and Policy Research Division of the ADB in Manila. He is now director of the newly established Centre for Economics and Applied Statistics of the South Asian Institute of Management. ●*

## How far we lag behind

RABI THAPA

The peace process is stalled, development is at a standstill and the poverty, inequality and discrimination that were at the roots of Nepal's conflict have still not been resolved. Politics and the power play in Kathmandu have taken centre-stage to the detriment of development and service delivery.

Nepal has the lowest life-expectancy in South Asia, development parameters in the mid-west are at sub-Saharan



The poverty and inequality that gave birth to the conflict persist, says a UN report

levels. UNDP's Nepal Human Development Report 2009, which was released on Tuesday, shows just how far we lag behind.

It measures the state of Nepal by indices such as the Human Development Index

(HDI), the Human Poverty Index (HPI), the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), and the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and breaks them down across 13 sub-regions and 11 caste and ethnic groups.

Despite improvement as a

whole, glaring disparities remain among regions and population groups. Political democracy has been unable to deliver social transformation, and has suffered as a result.

"Nepal is quite probably undergoing the most profound transformation of any society in the world today," the UN's resident coordinator, Robert Piper, said the launch of the report, "but the absence of war will alone neither assure a lasting peace nor deliver prosperity."

Using the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2006 as a launching pad, the report focuses on socio-economic transformation as a means to achieve human development. 'Without peace, human development is not possible, and without human development, peace is not sustainable,' the report says.

Exclusion and inequality persist and, unsurprisingly, the far-west and mid-west are the poorest as measured by HDI, and GDI mirrors this trend. Once the development regions are disaggregated into eco-development regions, we find that

rural and mountain regions are the least developed. Brahmins and Chhetris lead the pack, the best-off being Madhesi Brahmin/Chhetris, the worst-off being Madhesi Dalits, Tarai Janajatis and Muslims.

An inclusive Constituent Assembly is cited as an important step towards remedying the poverty of disadvantaged regions and groups, including Dalits and women (though the former fall short and non-Dalit Madhesi are represented disproportionately in the Assembly).

But representation alone is insufficient, the report warns. Participation of previously excluded groups is crucial, and this will require democracy to be deepened, including within political parties. The report also addresses the question of federalism and recommends territorial and differentiated rather than ethnic-based federalism to stamp out exclusion and deprivation.

The report looks to the future with a ten-point agenda: by reviewing the mixed electoral system, democratising political parties and bringing governance closer to the people. Peace must

be consolidated, not only through the effective participation of CA members but also the reintegration of internally displaced persons and disqualified Maoist army personnel, the integration or rehabilitation of Maoist army combatants, and transitional justice.

Everything may be up for negotiation, as the preface declares, but this must be achieved through a considered, inclusive, participatory process that fosters good citizenship within a strong nation-state, even one that is a federation. Above all, state transformation must be accompanied by the transformation of Nepali society.

Yubaraj Khatriwada of the National Planning Commission, who launched the report, wasn't very optimistic that its recommendations would be taken seriously given how past reports have been ignored. However, exclusion and inequality consistently identified by the UNDP, may have finally arrived at centre stage. Now, if only the CA members picked up a copy and read it. ●

### Forefront

With the provisional profit before bonus and tax of Rs 1.63 billion and profit after tax of Rs 1.03 billion, Nabil Bank, now in its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is at the forefront of the financial industry once again. Also, the bank reports to have registered a growth of 33 per cent in total operating income, in the fiscal year 08/09.

### Lucky 108

Lucky draw winner of 'Real 8 times more contest- Real Fun, Exciting Prizes' was held on Kantipur Television's live show, 'Call Kantipur – Reloaded.' Launched by Dabur Nepal, the eight week long contest had 108 winners getting free trips to Thailand and Malaysia, Sony Bravia 32" LCD TV and Sony DVD Home Theatre System respectively.

### Honda Activa

Syakar Company, the authorized distributor of Honda Motors Japan in Nepal has unveiled the New Honda Activa. Powered with a 110cc engine, the New Activa is touted as being more stylish and having more mileage.

### Snack time



Smart Food and Snacks launched the instant noodles, YUMYUM, last week. With technical supervision from Wan Thai Foods Industry of Thailand, YUMYUM noodles claims to include all fortified vitamins and minerals.

# Business ecosystem

At Entrepreneurs for Nepal (E4N), a loosely structured organisation that hosts business interactions and assists entrepreneurs and small businesses to scale up, we try to exchange experiences and advice.

Members of this self-selected group have ideas about starting niche businesses within a bigger industry, such as, offering Thakali décor services to hotels and housing companies. Some want to make



STRICTLY BUSINESS  
Ashutosh Tiwari

use of food technology degrees to produce oil from Himalayan olives. All are driven young Nepalis with ideas, vision, enthusiasm and energy. Over cups of coffee, E4N helps them by critiquing business plans, sharing business know-how', coaching on presentations, analysing the numbers, opening networks and contacts, and being business mentors.

Through the E4N work, we have tried to drive home these three ideas that Nepali entrepreneurs need to have when they search for private investment.

**1. Money is not important; credibility is:** Almost all young entrepreneurs talk about money as if lack of it is the only thing that's holding them back from executing their great ideas. This is not surprising. People do equate business with money. But most do not realise that the only way to attract money or investment is to first invest time and effort

in building up their own credibility. This can be done through acquiring the relevant education, experiences and skills, building up a team that can develop prototypes, widening contacts, owning proprietary technologies, and so on. Investors, or people with money, do not want to chase every business idea that needs money. They want to give money to credible entrepreneurs who can send consistent signals saying that the money invested in their ventures is likely to deliver a return. In other words, to attract money for your venture, first, be credible yourself.

**2. Ideas are dime a dozen:** Unsurprisingly, most entrepreneurs tend to fall in love with their ideas. They tend to think that no one else in Nepal has thought of what they have thought. In conversations, they stress on this unique ownership. They even go to great lengths to keep their plan a big secret.

All this is counter-productive. First, most investors do not want to throw their hard-earned money to test someone else's new and unproven idea. They'd rather fund niche ideas, within an established and competitive industry, that come with a high probability of commercial success. Second, smart investors tend to be skeptical: if no one has thought of the idea before, perhaps there is not much to the idea, and the hard burden of proving it otherwise lies on the entrepreneur. Rather than pitching "first time in Nepal" ideas that investors do not know what to make of,

first-time entrepreneurs are better off selling a niche idea in familiarly competitive industry.

**3. Confidence and humility:** Starting a business taps into one's psychological strengths: an ability to take calculated risks, to deal with unknowns, to learn what one does not know, etc. These are all intangible strengths. Through informal questions, investors like to test the limits of an entrepreneur's self-confidence, thought processes and knowledge.

## Let's strengthen our collective entrepreneurial know-how for prosperity

But most Nepali entrepreneurs tend to stick to a script no matter what the questions are: making investors worry that the entrepreneurs are so rigid that they do not understand the very ecosystem of business. Investors look for signs that the entrepreneur is confident of reaching the goal while being humble enough to accept that the road may come with many unexpected turns and twists.

Entrepreneurs make effective use of resources to create jobs. Helping them talk honestly with private investors is the first small step toward strengthening our collective entrepreneurial know-how for our prosperity. ●

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If you think you have the above qualification, we would like to hear from you. Please send us an expression of your interest (Cover Letter and CV) through email at [hr@jainepal.com](mailto:hr@jainepal.com)

# Lame duck

Editorial in *Janadisha*, 18 August

जानदिशा

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal along with the biggest team ever in the history, is visiting India today. People are not told why so much state money is being spent: whether

He has no future in politics and is therefore trying to get back his lost position in the party by spending state money. He organises banquets in his residence everyday.

These are ethical questions. It is up to an individual to decide what is right and wrong. A person in power should be conscious about this. How ethical is it for a person who lost elections to be prime minister? Such a weak person should not sign any treaty or agreement that will have a lasting impact, even if he does it will have no legal or moral ground. According to precedent one third of parliamentary consent is required to sign a treaty with another country. The Maoist members make up 40 per cent of parliament and they have already warned Nepal not to sign any treaty during the visit, which automatically makes any agreement signed by Nepal unconstitutional.



India wants to get things done or Nepal wants Indian grace to sustain the government.

Nepal was defeated in two constituencies, and yet is now the prime minister of Nepal.



Editorial in *Naya Patrika*, 18 August

नयाँ पत्रिका

## Nepal and India

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal's visit to India, especially at this time of political turmoil at home, seems completely purposeless, except probably to revamp his personal relations with the Indian politicians. The UML government seems rather too beholden to India. Last month, Defence Minister Bidya Bhandari's pledge to India to provide weapons for the Nepal Army affected the country's peace process, while the agenda for Foreign Minister Sujata Koirala's trip to India was also ambiguous. The current government is temporary. Madhav Kumar Nepal has to understand that India may be plotting against Nepal, forcing to sign unbeneficial long term treaties or even taking advantage of our unstable situation. Hence, the major priority in Nepal's visit to India should be to right past wrongs like the unequal 1950 treaty and other irritants.

## Wire-tapping

Pratima Banskota in  
*Kantipur*, 18 August

कान्तिपुर

Fed up with the rising theft of telephone wires, the residents of Tikathali, Lamatar and Lubhu in Lalitpur have attached an alarm to the telephone poles so a siren goes off whenever it is touched. There has been a spurt in wire vandalism by thieves who steal them to sell the copper inside. But the burglars have found a way around it: they now steal the wires during power cuts when the alarm is disabled. Three months ago a whole section of telephone wires were stolen in Lamatar. Residents say wire thefts see a rise when the festive season approaches. The police have been accused of not taking action, although the police say they have jailed seven groups involved in stealing wires. One of them was caught stealing a 400 m section of telephone wire surrounding the Lubhu exchange. Residents also blame Nepal Telecom which allows the wires to dangle so they are within easy grasp.



सञ्चै छैन । नपत्याए डाक्टर  
रामशरन वा डाक्टर मिनेन्द्रलाई  
सोध्नु । डाक्टर बाबुरामले नि  
हो भन्दैनुहुन्छ ।

Rajesh KC in *Nagarik*,  
20 August

Not well? If you don't believe me, ask doctors Ram Sharan Mahat, Minendra or even Baburam.

**My kid wins with  
FRUIT POWER.  
Does yours?**

**NEPAL'S No. 1  
FRUIT JUICE**

- More than 60% of a day's requirement of Vitamin C\*
- Contains minerals like Iron & Calcium

\*1 glass = 200 ml. Comparison here is made with children of 7-12 years



KIRAN PANDAY

# Delayed for sure

Unless the leaders shows more political will for change

The deadline for drafting the constitution is drawing near but only six of the ten thematic committees have completed their drafts so far. The Constitutional Committee, which should prepare the final draft of the new constitution incorporating the committees' suggestions, is still without a chair.



**COMMENT**  
**Krishna Khanal**

The aspirations of the people are incorporated in the submitted drafts to some extent. But this alone will not guarantee the writing of the constitution. A political mechanism is required to resolve contentious issues such as these:

- Provision of military training for those of 18 years of age
- Use of term 'people's movement' or 'armed insurgency'
- Debate about official languages
- Using 'federal' or 'national' by constitutional committee
- Structure, name and formation of parliament

Semantics shouldn't make any difference, but there are substantive issues on which positions are rigid. Compulsory military training has no meaning in today's world, but the debate over language is very sensitive. There is a need to set up standard measures to categorise languages for different purposes.

The form of parliament has political importance since it is related to the entire political

system. The federal structure, political system and system of representation are interrelated. There may be differences on these issues within the concerned committees. That is why there is a provision for a joint meeting of the committees in the CA regulations but it has never met so far.

The committees are functioning without leadership, and their chairs are designated without considering the leadership role of the candidate. The CA members just follow the party's instructions instead of using their own knowledge, experiences and conscience. If the people-elected members limit themselves to their party whip, then one person would be enough to represent a party in the CA.

The constitution writing through CA is not an easy task since ensuring people's participation and incorporating their suggestions makes it complicated politically and thus takes time. However, if the political parties and leadership exhibit a desired understanding and compromise, it can be an easy task. South Africa is an example.

Constitution writing is not a common agenda of our political parties. We have never seen the leaders of two parties sitting together and discussing the issues of constitution writing. They do not attend the CA session and committee meetings.

The 12-week time period for the public to comment on the integrated constitution draft has been reduced to seven weeks. The CA members think this is enough time as they collected their

opinions before. This is unfortunate.

There is widespread public scepticism about whether the constitution will be written on time. The people ridicule the CA, and they think it will be written south of the border and we will just endorse it. People presume the PM's visit to India is to arrange for this.

The leaders do not do anything themselves but they see a foreign hand running the government. Despite their rhetoric of democracy, revolution and autonomy, they all have the same 'bidesi prabhu' (foreign overlord).

Nepal is at a turning point for historical political change. Federalism, republic, new political structure, federal and provincial parliament elections will change the polity. Whatever they say to the public, the UML and NC are not willing to see this change. It is difficult to know what the Maoists are thinking. The destination of the Madhesi parties depends entirely on the self-interest of their leaders.

Amid such political uncertainty, the constitution writing process will be delayed for sure. It may be better not to write a constitution than to write a flawed one. This will be a test of the political parties and leaders as well as their political will and commitment for change. ●

*Krishna Khanal is a political science professor at Tribhuban University. This opinion piece is a translated adaptation of the original printed in Nagarik on 16 August.*

## "It will be written on time"

Rupa Chaudhari, Maoist CA member, Kailali

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

We declared the country a federal democratic republic then elected the speaker, we set CA rules and regulations and the agenda. Then we established the committees and picked their brains and went to the villages to collect ordinary people's suggestions for the constitution. We wrote constitutional drafts on the basis on these suggestions and conversations with experts. Six committees have finished their preliminary drafts and concept papers. We postponed the deadline because we worried that we wouldn't finish all the work on time.



**If the CA hasn't met its own deadline, will the constitution be written on time?**

The deadline has been pushed back a couple times but the constitution will be written on time if the parties find common ground.

**How do we make that happen?**

Different parties have different opinions and they stubbornly stick to them. There's a lot of dissent. But, they need to think about the bigger issues and put aside differences. Ordinary people and the media can also help. We'll finish the constitution on time if this happens.

**Aren't party whips operating in these meetings?**

The party positions are being presented unsystematically because there aren't rules to govern them. Of course we have to follow the party line, but there's room for independent thinking too.

## "No party whip"

Krishna Prasad Sapkota, UML CA member, Kabhre



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

We declared the country a federal democratic republic with great enthusiasm and visited villagers and experts for advice about the constitution. We prepared a lot of questionnaires which we distributed to the public and wrote drafts on the basis of the answers we got, but still haven't completed them. Some committees have delivered preliminary drafts with unanimous support from within the committees, but others have

struggled to reach consensus. As a result, we're behind schedule.

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

It's possible, but we are running out of time and the parties are becoming increasingly distrustful of one another. This could further delay the constitution.

**What needs to be done for the constitution to be written on time?**

CA members should obey the rules and parties should make concessions to one another. There needs to be greater cooperation in every region and level. Committee members must work together to prepare the preliminary drafts on time. If all of this is done I see no reason why the constitution will have to be delayed any further.

**Are party whips operating in the committees?**

Our party isn't using its whip. The party leadership obviously has some authority over its members, but for the most part they are free to think for themselves.

# 63<sup>RD</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA

"Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it".

- Bal Gangadhar Tilak



सत्यमेव जयते

भारतीय राजदूत, काठमाण्डू  
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA  
KATHMANDU



On the occasion of the 63rd Independence Day of India, I would like to convey my greetings to all Indians and our friends in Nepal.

63 years ago, our founding fathers launched India on a path to ensure justice, liberty and equality for all its people. Today we remember the sacrifice of those who fought for our freedom from foreign rule, we remember the hard work and dedication of all those who have toiled to build a free and modern India. And we re-dedicate ourselves to that cause. We remember our farmers, our workers and we remember our soldiers - who defend our borders in snowy mountains, in deserts, in jungles, on the shores and in the oceans.

The Constitution we adopted after Independence enshrined democracy based on free elections and the associated principles of tolerance for dissent, freedom for political activity, protection of human rights and the Rule of Law. Indian democracy has been fashioned around our civilisation's fundamental and distinctive character which celebrates diversity. Our society today is the culmination of centuries of assimilation of diverse people and ethnic groups. All the major religions of the world are represented in India. We are enriched by a unique diversity of languages, customs and traditions.

The people of India and Nepal share a special relationship which is anchored deeply in close historic, economic, cultural and societal bonds. This special and mutually beneficial relationship is best symbolised in the Indian Army which employs in excess of 30,000 Gurkha soldiers. India continues to respect, care and maintain enduring ties with our brothers when they return to Nepal from active service. For instance, this year, the Embassy and its offices will disburse in excess of INR. 1000 crores in the form of pensions to more than 1.3 lakh families of ex-Indian Army personnel and other former employees of Government of India living in Nepal. This is apart from the numerous other year round welfare activities undertaken by the Embassy.

The 1800 km open India-Nepal border is another example of this close relationship wherein the border represents not a barrier, but both an opportunity and a responsibility, for the mutual benefit of the citizens of both the countries. What is necessary is that we work together to ensure that this open border facility is not misused by anti-social and criminal elements.

Nepal today stands at a very important stage in its history. The determination of the Nepalese people to carry the Peace Process forward leading to the establishment of multi-party democracy will ensure the emergence of a democratic and confident Nepal. India remains committed to working together with you for peace, prosperity and stability. India and her people are committed as always to contribute to peace, democracy and development in Nepal and for the well-being of the Nepalese people.

15 August 2009

*Rakesh Sood*  
Rakesh Sood

## Moments from 15th August 1947



### We care:

Schools & Colleges  
Museum at Lumbini  
Oldage Homes

### Our commitments:

Healthcare  
Medical Camps  
Telecommunications

### Our initiatives:

East-West Highway  
Power Plants  
Airports

### Developing Human Resources:

Primary Education  
Training Centres  
Women Empowerment



# ENDURING TIES...

The Indian Army best symbolises the special and mutually beneficial relationship between people of India and Nepal. It employs in excess of 30,000 Gorkha soldiers and there are more than 1.3 lakh families of ex-Indian Army personnel and other former employees of Government of India living in Nepal. This year, more than INR 1000 crores will be disbursed by the Embassy and its offices to them as pensions. India continues to respect care and maintain enduring ties with them.

Some of the activities undertaken by the Embassy for the welfare of the ex-servicemen are :

## Nepal Bharat Maitri Vidyalaya

The Nepal Bharat Maitri Vidyalaya started functioning in the year 2000 and is affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi. Presently approximately 300 students are studying from classes I to IX. The school in the last few years has started gaining popularity amongst the locals of Pokhara particularly ex-servicemen due to the quality of education provided. The major activities carried out in the school are as follows:-

- (a) New School Building
- (b) Commencement of Classes
- (c) Opening of Montessori Method of Education for Pre-School Goers

## Electrification of remote villages in Nepal using Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV) technology

A large number of Ex-servicemen (ESM) still reside in remote villages where electricity has not reached. During various tours and visits to the interiors, it was felt appropriate to electrify the villages using SPV Technology. Hence, in 2002, a pilot project of Solar Electrification was undertaken under the initiative of Defence Wing. The project involves providing solar lighting system to the entire village free of cost. This scheme generated immense goodwill amongst the people of Nepal. Continuing with the programme two more villages ie. VDC Jhadewa, Distt Palpa and VDC Helaucha, Distt Bhojpur has been electrified this year with a sum of NRs. 4.62 crores.



So far 15 villages have been electrified benefitting 6053 homes and approximately a population of 50,800 with a total investment of INR. 17.97 Crores.

## Educational Scholarships

To assist the ESMs in imparting quality education to their wards, various educational scholarships are extended from different agencies. This year our ESMs benefitted immensely from the Mahatma Gandhi scholarship and Golden Jubilee scholarships. We are also happy to announce that the rates of Scholarships of the children education allowance (CEA) for war widows & BC's has increased by almost 30%.



HE Shri Rakesh Sood, Ambassador of India in Nepal Presenting Education Allowance (NRs. 2.5 Lacs) to a War Widow for education of her son Babu Ram Dixit (MBBS)

## THIS IS WHAT OUR BENEFICIARIES HAVE TO SAY

*I don't even remember my father's face because me and my sister were very small at that time. At the beginning it was very difficult for us to continue our regular studies and thought our future is over. But when I was in class II, Defence Wing, Embassy of India started to give scholarship to us for education. Presently I am doing my MBBS final year at BPKHS (Dharan) and my sister has completed 10th from NIST College Kathmandu. For the last 17 years we have been getting scholarship from the Embassy of India with which me and my sister are able to come to this position and fulfill our parents dreams. At last I would like to thank the Indian Government for the support to me and my family and hope they continue to do so to all the people like us in Nepal.*

- Babu Ram Dixit (Thapa), S/O Late Mehar Man Thapa of 6/8 GR who died in SRI LANKA.

*My dream was to be a "NURSE" and studying nursing would cost a fortune. My life was in a miserable state until a ray of light came upon me "THE EMBASSY OF INDIA". I have been in receipt of Education Scholarship for the last 10 years and the Indian Government has looked after my education expenses. I just want to say "THANK YOU" to Indian Embassy from bottom of my heart for helping me and my family.*

- Yo Maya Gurung, D/O 5750333 Late L/Nk Kumar Singh Gurung.

## Education assistance to handicapped, deaf & dumb and blind children of pensioners

The scheme was introduced in 1992 and aims at providing education assistance to deaf & dumb, handicapped and blind children of ex-servicemen. In the reporting year, 09 wards of ex-servicemen were benefitted and a sum of IRs. 28,125/- have been paid to the beneficiaries. From this year the rate of scholarship has been increased to IRs. 6,250/- from IRs. 5,000/- per annum for class V to Graduation level student.

## Medicine Pack Scheme (MPS)

The Medicine Pack Scheme (MPS) is a Government of India funded project which started in 60's. This scheme entails giving a Medicine packet consisting of 15 types of basic medicines with prescription in Nepali to each pensioner. Over the years, this scheme has gained enormous popularity. The scheme was initially started for Indian Armed Forces Ex-servicemen living in difficult/remote areas. However, based on popular demand, the scheme was extended to Assam Rifles and other civilian pensioners in 1985-86 and presently all Government of India Pensioners are given this medicine packet.

The Medicine Packet is distributed to each pensioner annually during Seasonal Pension Paying Camps (SPPC), the PPOs located at Pokhara and Dharan and at Bharatiya Gorkha Sainik Niwas, Kathmandu. During fiscal year 2008-09, a total of 1,22,000 medicine packets were distributed amounting to IRs. 1 crore.

## Medical facilities being provided to Indian Government pensioners residing in Nepal

The ageing pensioners are prone to various ailments and their need for medical assistance increases with age. ESM settled in interiors face lot of difficulties in getting proper medical care. Hence, medical cover forms one of the most important welfare aspects for the ageing ESMs. In order to fulfill their requirements and to ensure quality medical care, Gol is taking all possible steps to provide the much needed service as under:-

## MI Room facilities at Pokhara, Dharan and Kathmandu



Annually on an average 1,20,000 pensioners and their dependents are treated in these MI Rooms.

An augmented MI Room functions at both the Pension paying office's (PPO) Pokhara & Dharan under a Medical Officer who is assisted by his qualified staff including a lady Nurse hired locally from welfare funds. To look after the Bhu Puu's at Kathmandu a local General Practitioner has been hired locally from welfare funds and is assisted by a Nursing Assistant. These establishments are well stocked and fully geared to cater to the basic requirements of our pensioners and their dependents. The serious cases are referred to the local empanelled Hospitals and Military Hospitals in India for further treatment.

Government of India provides pensions worth INR. 1000 crores to over 1.3 lakhs ex-servicemen living in Nepal

15 medical teams from India visit Nepal annually to extend specialised treatment to our ex-service men

Assistance worth INR. 17.97 crores was extended towards electrification of 15 villages benefitting 6053 homes.

# Rinchen reaches Ulan Bator



It seemed to the participants of the Mongol Rally that they had one last obstacle to overcome on their epic trip by car from London to Ulan Bator. With 24 hours notice they were advised that the Russia-Mongolia border closes for the weekend. Kathmandu man Rinchen Choegyal and his friends drove nonstop to make the crossing just in time last week. At the border it was a case of either trying some fast footwork with customs officials to avoid paying import tax on their wreck of a car (since the lovingly nicknamed ‘Dirty Yeti’ car was destined to

be auctioned for charity) or the easier option of the one girl team member feigning illness and pretending to be in urgent need of medical attention. Her creative use of makeup did the trick and jubilant at their bluff working they were finally on the home run towards Ulan Bator. Or so they thought: 600km short of Ulan Bator their hitherto (fairly) trusty vintage Skoda broke down for the very last time. The engine had exploded and this breakdown was terminal. Team members knew they were the last vehicle in the convoy. There was no prospect of

rescue. Ke game? At which point a mirage seemed to arise from the desert dust. A coach full of girl students arrived at the scene, their enjoyment of a summer outing being enhanced by a supply of Genghis Khan Vodka that they had on board. Without too much persuasion the team abandoned the Skoda (means “sorry” in Czech) got on the bus and were soon singing with the girls. The final 20-hour leg of the journey was completed in a nine seater bus, with 15 passengers on board. Given that the team members had only managed three showers during the 26 day, 16,000km bash it is hard to imagine the citizens of Ulan Bator welcoming them with prolonged embraces. However they can be sure of a hearty greeting when they do get to Kathmandu and visit friends, family and the project work of Nepal children’s charity, The Esther Benjamins Trust, which has so far raised \$2,000 from sponsorship for ‘Dirty Yeti’. ● See also: *Nepali Times*, #458, 3 July You can add to Rinchen’s challenge target by visiting [www.justgiving.com/rinchen](http://www.justgiving.com/rinchen)

# Citizen Donnelly

Not many who met the late James J Donnelly will ever be able to forget him: his thundering voice and commanding stature, his phenomenal memory of his students. The Cincinnati-born Irish American lad came to Nepal in 1961 as a young Jesuit priest, and spent his entire life serving the country as a teacher at St Xavier’s in Godavari and Jawalakhel. He inspired both awe and fear, especially if you were a growing Nepali boy under his tutelage having had to confront the giant that he was when he was upset with some homework not done. There have been unfortunate ones who have faced the Donnelly fury. But this was because the teacher of English grammar and later principal was a perfectionist who drove his students to achieve excellence. Not a comma could be out of place, and the use of every semi-colon needed to be fully justified. There is a whole generation of Nepalis today in their middle ages whose grammar and punctuation is what it is because of Fr Donnelly. Long before he even decided to come to Nepal, Jim knew that the path he had chosen, to serve God through the Society of Jesus was not an easy one, but he was not a man to falter. This was a character reflected in his personal life. The goal he set himself to, improving the standard and quality of the English language knowledge of his students is one of his biggest contributions to the education sector of Nepal. It was not easy seeing a man one associated with so much of energy and life vegetate into an invalid, forgotten by those whose every detail he remembered and filed, until his death in coma last week. His last wish, to be bestowed an honorary Nepali citizenship was left unfulfilled. ● Alok Tumbahangphey



## In Loving Memory of Fr. James J. Donnelly



1929 - 2009

- |                         |                          |                       |                           |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Rattan Kumar Siddhi     | Bhupendra J. Gurung      | Bijendra Shrestha     | Dr.Roshan Lal Shrestha    |
| Mrs. Karuna Siddhi      | Nara B. Gurung           | Kiran Man Shrestha    | Samson Rana               |
| Sanjaya Kumar Siddhi    | Dhirendra K. Harjanj     | Manoj Bdr. Shrestha   | Tirtha Pun                |
| Rajesh Kumar Siddhi     | Nayan Dhoj Joshi         | Narendra Bd. Shrestha | Navin Joshi               |
| Deepak Kumar Siddhi     | Dipak Bir Singh Kansakar | Surendra Shrestha     | Sanandan Singh            |
| Prem Singh              | Rajendra Karki           | Birat Keshar Simha    | Gyan Jung Thapa           |
| Shova Singh,            | Dil Krishna Khadga       | Mahesh Man Singh      | Mrs Aruna Thapa           |
| Pravas Singh            | Ashutosh Tiwari          | Pradeep Man Singh     | Samman Jung Thapa         |
| Anamika Singh Bhandary  | Udaya Raj Khanal         | Prakash Man Singh     | Saurav Jung Thapa         |
| Jeevan Shrestha         | Parsuram Kharel          | Siddheshwar K. Singh  | Damodar Shrestha from     |
| Kalyan Pradhan          | Subarna K. Khatri        | Anil Jung Thapa       | Ujjwal Satyal             |
| Dr. KD Joshi            | Binod B. Khatri          | Arun B. Thapa         | Raju Dev Acharya          |
| Prakash Shrestha        | Deep Lamichhane          | Ashok Jung Thapa      | Mahesh Shakya             |
| Mahesh Busnet           | Dinesh Lohani            | Eakraj Jung Thapa     | Bijaya Man Sherchan       |
| Deepak Man Sherchan     | Tilak Bdr. Malakar       | Kalam Thapa           | Mrs Prava Sherchan        |
| Pushpa Vilas Tulachan,  | Kiran Manandhar          | Kiran Thapa           | Capt Dipal Sherchan       |
| Manohar Prasad Sherchan | Subodh Raj Pal           | Prem Bdr. Thapa       | Vivek Sherchan            |
| Bhagwan Singh Thapa     | Bimal Raj Pandey         | Subarna Bahadur Thapa | Dishant Sherchan          |
| Dipak Gyawali           | Prithivi Bdr. Pandey     | Mahendra Jib Tuladhar | Dipanker Sherchan         |
| Mukunda Raj Shrestha    | Govind Pokhrel           | Uttam Dhar Tuladhar   | Kiran Krishna Shrestha    |
| Ananta Raj Baidya       | Devindra Pd. Pradhan     | Kanak Dixit           | Bijay Bahadur Manandhar   |
| Milan Bikram Shah       | Deepak SS Rana           | Ashok Agrawal         | Shree Man Singh           |
| Saroj Basnyet           | Pradeep SS Rana          | Bijaya Bahdur Mali    | Umang Jung Thapa          |
| Kunda Dixit             | Subodh SJB. Rana         | Bhushan Kr. Shrestha  | Rajendra B. Malla         |
| Arun Kumar Acharya      | Govind Pd. Rauniar       | Bijaya Bahadur Mali   | Rajesh Tuladhar           |
| Narendra Basnet         | Hemant Regmi             | Binod Kr. Shrestha    | Bijaya Krishna Shrestha   |
| Buddha Basnyat          | Suraj Nath Rimal         | Bigyan Pradhan        | Prabhu Krishna Shrestha,  |
| Suraj Bista             | Yogendra Sakya           | Dipak Rajbhandari     | Sanjaya Krishna Shrestha, |
| Sunil Chandra           | Deepak Bikram Shah       | Kamal Ratna Tuladhar  | Ajaya Krishna Shrestha    |
| Sanjeev Kumar Dahal     | Prakash Shah             | Kishore Lal Manandhar |                           |
| Jyoti Ratna Dhakhwa     | Sudamshu Satyal          | Lok Bhakta SJB Rana   |                           |
| Pravin Mani Dikshit     | Arun Man Sherchan        | Madhav Regmi          |                           |

Memorial ceremony to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 5 P.M at G.A.A



Himal Khabarpatrika  
17 - 31 August

### COVER

The Maoists’ Four Fold Path  
The Maoist roadmap

### DANGEROUS ROADS

How many more people have to die?

### FOOD SHORTAGE

WFP and government disagree

### PREJUDICED REPORT

Superficial and anti-democratic ICG report on Nepal’s transition

### CONSTITUTION SUPPLEMENT

Debates on the formulation of new parliament  
Which districts are ahead in agriculture?  
The Charikot Debate

### BACKPAGE

Simulating flights over virtual Nepal

# Re-inventing Tij

On Sunday, Hindu women in Nepal will be decked up in different hues of red as they make their way to temples to worship Shiva and Parbati, the divine couple who epitomise the ultimate conjugal bliss.

Tij starts with *dar khane din*, the day of feast, as women get together and eat into the night to prepare for the next day



**INTERESTING TIMES**

**Mallika Aryal**

of fasting. Tij is when the women replicate the fast observed by Parbati in order to ‘obtain’ Shiva as consort, and later that night the fast is broken with puja and fruits.

Tij is the day Nepalis celebrate womanhood. Single, married and even widowed women, break out in songs about relationships, their daily lives, pining for their husbands who have gone abroad, loneliness, inequality, discrimination, abuse, bigotry and war. It is Nepal’s own version of International Women’s Day.

As the structure of our society changes, so does the way we celebrate our festivals. Till a few years ago, it was only Bahun and Chettri women who observed fasts, today women from different ethnicities have embraced this custom as their own as well. And there are even some husbands who mark Tij with a

‘solidarity fast’.

“I will fast for my husband’s long life if he fasts for me, why is it that only women have to give pain to their bodies?” asks an educated married Bahun woman from Kathmandu. She says she is not a feminist, “but unlike our rural sisters I see this as a practice started by men so that they can feel good about themselves.”

She has a point. But what she finds repressive is found to be liberating by many. In rural Nepal women look forward to this day so that they can pack their bags and go to their maternal home where their mothers and sisters are waiting. It is the time women reconnect, vent their feelings and find comfort in other women. And in the cities, women are not frowned upon if they are not wearing red on Tij, if they observe the fast or if they do Shiva puja.

In the last few years, private institutions and NGOs working on women’s issues and small women’s groups have started celebrating Tij together. It has been used as an opportunity to raise funds through ‘Tij mela’ where they eat, buy goods, play dohori and other games and dance all day.

Tij may have started out as a male construct, but it doesn’t have to remain that way. It can be the day when women celebrate each other’s successes. Nepali women’s rights groups, and even

## Women dressing in red are using the colour of liberation



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

individuals can use this day to push for more political and economic rights.

In Kathmandu and other urban areas, Tij may be becoming a consumerist festival, but there are ways to turn this around as well. Renting a space out so that women can get together and dance, play games and eat is one way of being creative about the festival but it doesn’t have an impact.

Valentine’s Day in the US is a very consumerist affair, and those who find that unacceptable have come up with a different way to celebrate it. Instead of celebrating romantic love, they talk about issues relating to women: domestic violence, rape, discrimination against women. Campaigns such as “Take back the night” and staging of the *Vagina Monologues*, are examples of how they spread awareness.

Giving or not giving up meals for a day is fine if that is what you want to do, you can sulk about the ‘maleness’ of the festival or find liberation in hunger. Nepali women have known for a very long time that they have to fight their own battles: let us use this day to spread awareness in our circles about maternal mortality, domestic violence, health, and celebrate the big and small victories of Nepali women.

Perhaps by coming out in red, the colour of revolution, in large numbers outside Singha Darbar every year we will achieve what years of lobbying hasn’t. ●



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the printed word. now word of mouse !



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## ABOUT TOWN

## EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **'In Unison With God'**, photo exhibition by Pasang Sherpa at Yala Maya Kendra, Patan, till 25 Aug. 2307751

## EVENTS

- ❖ **Teej Party**, red yellow and green for women and anything sensational for men, at 1905 Regal Hall, 21 Aug, 7PM. 4225272
- ❖ **Heat and Dust**, movie screening at Lazimpat Gallery Café, 22 Aug, 5.30 PM. 4428549.

## MUSIC



- ❖ **Musical bash**, concert by Astha Tamang Maskey and band at the House of Music, Thamel, 21 Aug, 6PM. 9851102337
- ❖ **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 barbecue, 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**, until 15 September, Kilroy's Thamel. 4250440
- ❖ **A cafe's cafe** Dhokaima Cafe, Patan Dhoka. 5522113
- ❖ **Jazabell Café**, relaunched at Jhamsikhel. 2114075
- ❖ **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 biryanis, 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, offer valid to Nepalis and local residents only. 4489800
- ❖ **Spa package**, Ayurvedic massage and access to the pool and spa with either breakfast or lunch at The Cafe or hi-tea at the Lounge at the Hyatt Regency. 4491234.

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

## Quest Entertainment



In the thriller Agyaat, a film unit travels deep into a forest to shoot a movie where they stay in abandoned house run by a lonely and eccentric man. When their cameras malfunction, they stop work and wait for replacements but are quickly bored because there isn't anything to do. They decide to camp even deeper in the forest just for kicks. Things get scary when one member of their team, Setu, is brutally and mysteriously murdered. But he is only the first to meet this end. As their numbers dwindle and panic sets in, they reveal their true selves and feelings for one another.

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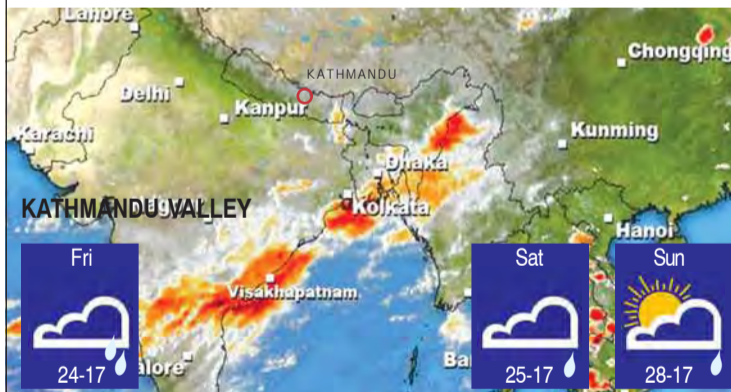
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## WEEKEND WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

The monsoon is getting a "second wind" as it were with low pressure troughs coming off the Bay one after another. There have been lulls, too, as there was on Wednesday when a brisk westerly wind chased away the moisture. But by this weekend, the monsoonal pulse currently over Bangladesh is expected to regroup and charge across Nepal again. This will bring drizzles over the next few days with moderate night showers. The maximum and minimum temperatures will drop a notch, but the afternoons will be clammy and hot when the sun does come out.



## RECIPES

by GRAHAM SYDNEY

## Peri-peri Chicken Gizzards

(Serves 6)

This Portuguese influenced dish requires little effort but takes a while to make. It's worth it! Gizzards are eaten around the world although in the southern US they are commonly deep fried and served with a honey and mustard or barbecue sauce.

1 kg	cleaned chicken gizzards
5	medium sized onions, peeled
8-10	cloves of garlic, peeled
1 teaspoon	fresh rosemary
1 teaspoon	fresh thyme, sage or oregano
3	bay leaves
1	medium sized carrot, peeled
1½ lt	chicken stock
2 cups	dry white wine
1	small tin tomato paste
2-4 tablespoons	red chilli paste or to taste
1 tablespoon	sugar
¼ cup olive oil	
salt and pepper to taste	

Roughly chop 3 of the onions and the garlic. Finely chop the remaining onion.

Place the garlic, roughly chopped onion, gizzards, rosemary, thyme, bay leaves and carrot in a large pot with the chicken stock and simmer over a medium heat for 2-2½ hours, topping up with water if necessary, until the gizzards become tender. Remove the bay leaves and blend the remaining stock until smooth. Once the gizzards are tender remove them from the stock and cut into bite sized pieces. Fry the gizzards in the olive oil for 2-3 minutes before adding the onion and chilli paste. Add the wine and allow to reduce to half before adding the tomato paste, sugar and the remaining stock. Allow to simmer for another 5-10 minutes and season with salt and pepper. Serve with steamed rice or crusty fresh bread.



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MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**OLD IS GOLD:** Novel Kishore Rai unveils the 'Tony Hagen House' transformed from a concrete block to traditional Newari style in tribute to renowned geologist Toni Hagen.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**HELPLESS:** A UN employee looks on as Tibetan protestors are rounded up after demonstrating for 'Free Tibet' in front of the UN building in Pulchowk last week.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**FACE OF HOPE:** A child wears a headband proclaiming 'freedom' to mark the Pakistan's independence day on 14 August at the Pakistani embassy in Maharajgunj.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**MAHATMA LOOKS ON:** The Indian embassy's Counsellor of Economic Cooperation Puneet R Kundal signs a pledge to grant Nepal Rs 25.9 million to build three schools in Doti district.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**THE REAL THING:** Elton John look-a-like Eldon John browses the *Nepali Times* on Sunday in Thamel where he helps to run a hotel.

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