In full retreat

Kathmandu sees a slew of international meetings on climate change this week as scientists confirm that the effects of global warming on the Himalayas is actually much more serious than previously thought. The melting of the polar ice cap and permafrost in the Himalayas (Mt Tumboche in the Khumbu with a glacial lake at its base, top) are already affecting water availability and sea level rise is threatening to drown Male (below), the capital of the Maldives.

Why is Kathmandu full of Che stickers and t-shirts?

In full retreat

Kathmandu sees a slew of international meetings on climate change this week as scientists confirm that the effects of global warming on the Himalayas is actually much more serious than previously thought. The melting of the polar ice cap and permafrost in the Himalayas (Mt Tumboche in the Khumbu with a glacial lake at its base, top) are already affecting water availability and sea level rise is threatening to drown Male (below), the capital of the Maldives.

Why is Kathmandu full of Che stickers and t-shirts?

In full retreat

Kathmandu sees a slew of international meetings on climate change this week as scientists confirm that the effects of global warming on the Himalayas is actually much more serious than previously thought. The melting of the polar ice cap and permafrost in the Himalayas (Mt Tumboche in the Khumbu with a glacial lake at its base, top) are already affecting water availability and sea level rise is threatening to drown Male (below), the capital of the Maldives.

Why is Kathmandu full of Che stickers and t-shirts?

In full retreat

Kathmandu sees a slew of international meetings on climate change this week as scientists confirm that the effects of global warming on the Himalayas is actually much more serious than previously thought. The melting of the polar ice cap and permafrost in the Himalayas (Mt Tumboche in the Khumbu with a glacial lake at its base, top) are already affecting water availability and sea level rise is threatening to drown Male (below), the capital of the Maldives.

Why is Kathmandu full of Che stickers and t-shirts?

In full retreat

Kathmandu sees a slew of international meetings on climate change this week as scientists confirm that the effects of global warming on the Himalayas is actually much more serious than previously thought. The melting of the polar ice cap and permafrost in the Himalayas (Mt Tumboche in the Khumbu with a glacial lake at its base, top) are already affecting water availability and sea level rise is threatening to drown Male (below), the capital of the Maldives.

Why is Kathmandu full of Che stickers and t-shirts?

In full retreat

Kathmandu sees a slew of international meetings on climate change this week as scientists confirm that the effects of global warming on the Himalayas is actually much more serious than previously thought. The melting of the polar ice cap and permafrost in the Himalayas (Mt Tumboche in the Khumbu with a glacial lake at its base, top) are already affecting water availability and sea level rise is threatening to drown Male (below), the capital of the Maldives.

Why is Kathmandu full of Che stickers and t-shirts?

In full retreat

Kathmandu sees a slew of international meetings on climate change this week as scientists confirm that the effects of global warming on the Himalayas is actually much more serious than previously thought. The melting of the polar ice cap and permafrost in the Himalayas (Mt Tumboche in the Khumbu with a glacial lake at its base, top) are already affecting water availability and sea level rise is threatening to drown Male (below), the capital of the Maldives.

Why is Kathmandu full of Che stickers and t-shirts?

In full retreat

Kathmandu sees a slew of international meetings on climate change this week as scientists confirm that the effects of global warming on the Himalayas is actually much more serious than previously thought. The melting of the polar ice cap and permafrost in the Himalayas (Mt Tumboche in the Khumbu with a glacial lake at its base, top) are already affecting water availability and sea level rise is threatening to drown Male (below), the capital of the Maldives.

Why is Kathmandu full of Che stickers and t-shirts?
Climate crisis

In the run up to the Copenhagen Summit in December there is going to be a flash-flood of media attention on climate change. And, as is often the case, the reporting will focus on the skeptics, procedural matters and the political strategy of blocs of countries. Business-as-usual companies will get on the bandwagon to showcase slick campaigns to greenwash themselves without really cleaning up their activities.

What will be lost in all this hype will be the need for a paradigm shift in energy use if we are to save the biosphere from the accelerated impact of global warming. There will be a lot of haggling over emissions, but no real plan of action.

Poor countries will hem and haw about compensation for adaptation, technical assistance for mitigation, and insist on their historical low per capita emissions abate from doing anything. Rich countries, still in the throes of economic crisis, will continue to try to push back the deadline for emission cutbacks or reduce their minimum threshold levels.

There are only 16 hours of negotiation time left in the preparatory meetings in Bangkok and Barcelona where leaders gather in Copenhagen to pontificate from the pulpit. By then, we need the United States to agree to an agreement that emissaries have been working on since 2009, as the Europeans have. Even this way is below the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change’s recommendations of up to 30 to 40 per cent. This can only keep average global temperatures from rising more than 2 Celsius in the coming decades.

Nothing we do (or don’t do) in Nepal will affect global temperatures. But whether or not we switch to renewable energy as the mainstream of our economy will determine whether we survive economically as a nation. Nepal needs to reduce its carbon footprint not to save the planet, but to save itself.

As the world approaches Peak Oil (the maximum rate of petroleum extraction possible) and our petroleum import bill widens our huge trade deficit with India, continued dependence on fossil fuel and climate change will exacerbate all the economic, developmental and social challenges we already face.

Nepali politicians have such short time horizons that the long-term issues they are bothered about is glacial retreat.

The prime minister had a hard time filling the slot for environmental minister because no one wanted it.

Our elected representatives, think tanks and the climate experts in the bureaucracy must exert pressure on the politicians and persuade them to begin the switch to a hydro-economy.

It’s not the ecology, statesmanship or the economy.

REINVENTING TJ

Madhukar's "Reinventing Tij" (#465) is misleading. TJ is part of our religious and cultural heritage and can never be used for revolution. The word is not a component of our culture, not a catalyst to mingle women and Honda/Link the country. To some extent, I agree with her in the sense that the tyrants have dared to tag Tij with commercial culture. Let's use for revolution.

It is under attack: the lack of guarantees. Otherwise, what we promised to the SC at some point or the other, where rules are bent at will, is not with retrospective effect, amendment or ordinance. Even if the VP amends it, it is not with retrospective effect, amendment or ordinance. Even if the VP amends it, it could allow the VP to retake the oath in Hindi or create future controversies.

There is a possibility of an amendment or ordinance. Even if it is not with retrospective effect, it could allow the VP to retake his oath in Hindi or create future guarantees. Otherwise, whatever we are doing, it will use its leverage with all sides to push for a compromise.

The UML, in a comment that the VP take his oath in Hindi, to appease his paladins and create trouble for his own PM. The fact that India wants the government to survive will make it use its leverage with all sides to push for a compromise.

There is a possibility of an amendment or ordinance. Even if it is not with retrospective effect, it could allow the VP to retake his oath in Hindi or create future guarantees. Otherwise, whatever we are doing, it will use its leverage with all sides to push for a compromise.

OFFENSIVE TITLE

Make love, not war

There is a common sense when you give titles to your pieces (‘Nepal goes to India’, #463). Do you have any common sense, and any common responsibility to the Nepali people, that you would say it should be shut down immediately when you write this nonsense. I hear the GVL vandalized your house and beat you up. You deserved it. How much is the Indian government paying you?
ew will have noticed Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal’s honeymoon period has come to an end. He earned the sobriquet of ‘Premier of Rautahat’ by visiting his constituency more often than ministries under his charge. He decided to outgrow the image of being too tied to the ground by flying off to the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Sharm El-Sheikh first. He may be in New York next month to address the UN Summit. In between, he managed to pay the customary respects to the Delhi Darbar.

Nepal’s pilgrimage to New Delhi hogged the limelight at home but was completely ignored by the media of the host country. At the end of the trip, a long and tedious joint communiqué had to be issued. Diplomats know that successful agreements speak for themselves while failed negotiations need to be hidden behind a veil of verbiage.

If Premier Nepal were to vacate the jinxed Baluwatar premises tomorrow (as he must sooner rather than later like all his predecessors, none of whom ever got to complete a full term) what will the country remember his term of office for? Even Raghu Pant, a former journalist and current adviser to Prime Minister Nepal, when Madhav Kumar Nepal took oath of office at the head of the anti-Maoist coalition on 25 May 2009 below the ramparts of Sital Niwas presidential palace, nobody expected anything from him. That he was being sworn in as the successor of Maoist chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal was an achievement in itself for the forces of status quo in the country. He took immediate steps to show that the old order was back in the saddle at Singha Darbar. Dissolved army chief Rookmangad Katawal, continuing to function on the basis of the midnight missive from President Ram Baran Yadav, was promptly restored to his post. Retired army generals, stayed by court orders, were given extensions even as their cases remained sub judice. Maoists may be overdoing their ‘civil supremacy’ act, but it’s clear they have neither the motivation nor the determination to face. Whether he has the political strength or the moral authority to introduce security sector reforms is also an open question. Nepal revived the royal dress code and labeda-suruwal became the authorised dress of the anti-Maoist coalition. The Supreme Court has since declared that only Nepali has legal status as the official language of the country. Premier Nepal let the word ‘god’ lapse in his oath, but the hoary tradition of welcoming high dignitaries at the airport by Five Virgins is back. Welcome to the good old days of One Language, One Dress, One Religion, and One What-have-you of unitary Nepal because Prime Minister Nepal is proud of the past.

Since no one expected much from his government, Nepal hasn’t disappointed anyone
**A climate for change**

Someone once said that whatever made you successful in the past may not in the future. Sustainability is not just being alive today, it is also being alive tomorrow.

Climate change represents one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats facing the planet, and we in Nepal are among the most vulnerable although we are probably the least responsible.

But as a young Nepali businessman I am worried we may not be doing enough ourselves to avert the impact of climate change. To address climate change we first have to change the way we do things.

In recent years there have been economic fluctuations, dramatic environmental changes and shifts in population dynamics. Our traditional methods of adaptation are quickly losing their efficacy. The impact of global warming, pollution and the loss of biodiversity exacerbates existing problems of poverty, underdevelopment and the degradation of nature.

With changing rain patterns and an expected increase in temperature, the unique plants that grow in fragile environments may die out as well as the fauna that depend on them. This has serious implications for the livelihoods of the people who use them.

Human activity, the burning of fossil fuels and the destruction of forests have contributed to the situation we find ourselves in today. It can’t be business as usual in business. Which is why even industries in Nepal have to change and build a long-term sustainability strategy.

Climate change may result in adverse business outcomes, including business interruption, increased investment or insurance costs, or declining financial measures such as value, return, and growth, or other measures of business success. How businesses adapt to these changes and how flexible they are will determine how well they cope with climate variability in the future.

It can’t be business as usual in business.

It is not just a matter of individual responsibility: we are all collectively responsible for climate change. Apportioning blame or singling out rich or poor countries will not help us surmount the challenges we face.

The Chaudhary Group (CG) has always been a big supporter of giving back to society and making changes happen at the grassroots level. We know that although climate change is a global problem, it will have local impacts. It will affect every one of us regardless of geography, caste, creed or profession. At CG, we are determined to lead by example and demonstrate that we can make a difference by working with conservation organisations such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Success doesn’t always mean being first today; it also means being alive tomorrow. Please remember that you may sow a seed today, and tomorrow it will give you shelter.

**COMMENT**

Nirvana Chaudhary

Success doesn’t always mean being first today, it also means being alive tomorrow. Please remember that you may sow a seed today, and tomorrow it will give you shelter.

**Climbing to keep the trekkers alive**

Dawa Steven Sherpa, Managing Director of Asian Trekking, has a lot of stories to tell. At an interaction program to raise awareness about climate change in the Himalaya this week, he stepped up on behalf of the tourist industry to share the evidence he has seen of global warming melting the mountains and what can be done to deal with it.

He certainly qualified to do so, and not just because he’s climbed Chomolungma twice: in so, and not just because he’s climbed Chomolungma twice: in recognition of his wide-ranging and unique personal experiences, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has named him one of their Climate Ambassadors.

Not that being a Climate Ambassador comes with a predefined set of responsibilities. “Just continue doing what you’re doing,” Dawa was told. “And he’s doing plenty.”

He has a bakery at Everest Base Camp that runs an innovative ‘cash for trash’ program for locals, organised the first GLOF Action Run in Khumbu in July, and through Asian Trekking has pioneered the use of Resto portable toilet bags and oxygen-efficient masks for mountaineering. He hopes the trekking industry in Nepal will follow his lead, if not for environmental then for economic reasons.

Dawa feels that as Nepalis, we are in danger of “losing our identity” as a result of climate change. An important part of our identity is the global peak the Himalaya. We may have to rename our mountains, he says, “Some time back at Base Camp, Dawa continues, “I was sitting around with some guys who’d been trekking for thirty, forty years. Suddenly this big black fly started buzzing around us. We just looked at each other and in silence. A fly at 5,360 metres?”

Andreas Schild, Director General of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), spoke to *Nepali Times* this week about climate change and how it will affect Himalayan livelihoods.

Nepali Times: Just how seriously is the Himalaya affected by climate change?

Andreas Schild: The problem with the Himalaya is that environmental science, meteorology and hydrology has never been of great concern. One of the consequences is that the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change hardly talks about this region. The basic data needed to make clear statements is missing. There are fundamental changes taking place: land use, land cover, biodiversity and people-resource dynamics are changing rapidly. But we have difficulties in explaining them in relation to a single factor like climate change.

But climate change has immediate consequences for cropping patterns: honestly, we are not sure how much climate change, the price of commodities, market situations and changing family structures are influencing this and which factors are more important. Talking to farmers, they perceive an increased tendency towards water stress and a higher frequency of extreme events. We definitely see that the glaciers are receding, that there are changing rainfall patterns. Climate change skeptics are very quick to point to the fact that the Karakoram glaciers are growing, though even this is probably due to climate change...
Himalaya alive

But we have to see that the Himalayan countries, and particularly Nepal, are not only losers. They can potentially be winners. We have the right set of policies, programs and the determination to implement them:

How can countries like Nepal be winners?
The mountain regions and the Himalaya in particular are not major contributors to climate change. They can certainly reduce their contribution by switching to renewables. But the country can benefit from international carbon sink facilities. However, the importance of this is generally overestimated: so far international mechanisms do not favour small countries like Nepal. Nepal has a limited land area and a very mixed landscape. The contribution of a country like Nepal in mitigating climate change is globally of little relevance. Nationally and locally, like in the Kathmandu valley, it is of high relevance.

And how can we adapt better?
Assuming that mitigation will have positive impacts only in the second half of the 21st century, we need to learn how to adapt to these changes from a mountain perspective.

In general we have to say that poverty, lack of infrastructure and basic services to the rural population are so important that any adaptation agenda is very close to the traditional development agenda: a sustainable one. That said, there are specific measures possible and necessary. In the short term we have to be aware that changing rainfall patterns, melting glaciers and droughts create new vulnerabilities. Early warning systems, hazard mapping, creating awareness and capacity development are required immediately. Glacial lakes considered a hazard can become a potential source for storage and energy. Hydropower, ecotourism and conservation are unique assets which contribute to strengthening resilience and adaptation. We should move a step further: climate change and global warming on one hand and economic development with the growing middle class on the other. Let us not forget the low-hanging fruits: remittances are four times as important as development cooperation funds in Nepal. Clever policies to tap these resources to target rural areas will give us a good start in adapting to climate change.

Do you see any bright spots, best practices?
I think the bright spots are the most precious goods of the mountains: water, landscape, biodiversity and above all the adaptive people. Nepal will be a water tower also when the glaciers are melting. Water: it will be probably the single most important natural resource for the mountains and for Nepal. Biodiversity: urbanisation means a growing market for specific products with a place and culture branding. Why not sell apples at double the price of apples from China? Landscapes: the landscape is a unique way to attract tourists. The art is to make sure that the development of this resource is benefiting the people and is adding to sustainability and adaptation.

Are we focusing too much on melting glaciers and is this diverting attention from more important issues?
It is important to emphasise the importance of glaciers: they are the most visible and easy to understand indicators of climate change. Glacial lakes with danger of outbursts have received the immediate attention of the donor community. The impression is that raising warning flags is more important than sound analysis. Up to now the danger and loss of life due to floods and landslides has been 100 times higher than that from glacial lake outbursts. We have to understand the difference between potentially dangerous lakes and immediate danger.

Climate week

It’s the week of climate change here. Everyone from school children to the prime minister is getting in on the act:

Kathmandu to Copenhagen 2009:
Regional Climate Change Conference
August 31-September 1, Hotel Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu
http://www.kathmandutoCopenhagen.org/

UK Nepal Climate Change Film Competition Awards
August 31, Hotel Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu
(films to be screened at the end of the day’s sessions, as well as at the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival 2009, 16-14 December)
www.himalassociation.org/climatechange

Nepal Day, Kathmandu to Copenhagen 2009
September 2, Hotel Hyatt Regency, Kathmandu
Open to Nepali institutions interested in learning about climate change.

South Asian Youth Summit on Climate Change 2009,
Road to Copenhagen
September 3-6, Mirabell Resort Hotel, Dillikhet
http://nyca.net.np/saysocc09/
Tharu citizenship

Gajendra Bohora in Nagarkot, 24 August

The Tharuhat council in Dang is preparing to grant citizenship to people living within the self-styled ‘Tharuhat province’. Addressing a ‘Tharuhat army’ of 700 in Deukhuri on Sunday, council president Laxman Tharu announced that a Tharuhat province will be formed in the next 8 months. The council has already declared 22 districts of the Tarai part of the Tharuhat province. “We want our rights, we don’t snatch others’ rights,” Laxman Tharu said. “We will provide Tharu citizenship to non-Tharus too.”

The NC and UML are the main opponents of the Maoists. The latter concluded during their recent central committee meeting that the growing polarisation in Parliament was good for them. Their opponents aren’t as cooperative now as they were back when they thrashed out the 12-point agreement.

Although the Maoists are maintaining decorum for the sake of the ongoing peace process and the formation of the constitution, they are insisting on a new agreement that will allow them to write the new constitution. They are deliberately clashing with other political parties because they feel it will allow them to set the national agenda of the government and give them a basis for the ‘people’s movement’.

The Tharuhat council in Dang is preparing to grant citizenship to people living within the self-styled ‘Tharuhat province’. Addressing a ‘Tharuhat army’ of 700 in Deukhuri on Sunday, council president Laxman Tharu announced that a Tharuhat province will be formed in the next 8 months. The council has already declared 22 districts of the Tarai part of the Tharuhat province. “We want our rights, we don’t snatch others’ rights,” Laxman Tharu said. “We will provide Tharu citizenship to non-Tharus too.”

The Maoists is now the key issue on the Maoist agenda. They are more likely to get their way by protesting about ‘civilian supremacy’ than by raising the issue in Parliament. If Parliament addresses their demands in any way, then their agitation will be limited to just slogans. They have observed that increasing conflict with the government will automatically create the conditions for a people’s uprising. After the central committee meeting, Pushpa Kamal Dahal highlighted ‘the right to revolt’. He said revolution is inevitable if there is no civilian supremacy, which means civil unrest is essential.

The internal conflict of the Maoists following their withdrawal from government has been resolved for good. Mohan Baidhya is happy with Dahal’s roadmap, which envisages establishing a people’s republic through a people’s uprising. Now the Maoists are calling for a national government under their leadership. This is a temporary strategic plan. If they succeed, they will shift to demanding a republican constitution, a move which is likely to be controversial. This really means a people’s constitution.

The former rebels aim to establish a people’s republic through a people’s revolt. They don’t think there is any other way to establish a people’s republic. They will not implement their strategy as yet because any other agenda besides peace, constitution-writing and a democratic republic could be counterproductive nationally and internationally for them. They have studied the possibility of an alliance between the NC and UML and their own subsequent split. This is why they are keen to encourage conflict between the NC and UML.

Maoist gameplan

Ganga BC in Kantipur, 23 August

The NC and UML are the main opponents of the Maoists. The latter concluded during their recent central committee meeting that the growing polarisation in Parliament was good for them. Their opponents aren’t as cooperative now as they were back when they thrashed out the 12-point agreement.

Although the Maoists are maintaining decorum for the sake of the ongoing peace process and the formation of the constitution, they are insisting on a new agreement that will allow them to write the new constitution. They are deliberately clashing with other political parties because they feel it will allow them to set the national agenda of the government and give them a basis for the ‘people’s movement’.

The Maoists is now the key issue on the Maoist agenda. They hope to be successful with a new agenda that includes the setting up of a people’s democratic republic and a pro-people constitution.

The Maoists are more likely to get their way by protesting about ‘civilian supremacy’ than by raising the issue in Parliament. If Parliament addresses their demands in any way, then their agitation will be limited to just slogans. They have observed that increasing conflict with the government will automatically create the conditions for a people’s uprising. After the central committee meeting, Pushpa Kamal Dahal highlighted ‘the right to revolt’. He said revolution is inevitable if there is no civilian supremacy, which means civil unrest is essential.

The internal conflict of the Maoists following their withdrawal from government has been resolved for good. Mohan Baidhya is happy with Dahal’s roadmap, which envisages establishing a people’s republic through a people’s uprising. Now the Maoists are calling for a national government under their leadership. This is a temporary strategic plan. If they succeed, they will shift to demanding a republican constitution, a move which is likely to be controversial. This really means a people’s constitution.

The former rebels aim to establish a people’s republic through a people’s revolt. They don’t think there is any other way to establish a people’s republic. They will not implement their strategy as yet because any other agenda besides peace, constitution-writing and a democratic republic could be counterproductive nationally and internationally for them. They have studied the possibility of an alliance between the NC and UML and their own subsequent split. This is why they are keen to encourage conflict between the NC and UML.
Federal model

Himalkhabar Patrika organised a discussion on the model of federalism in Charikot two weeks ago. People from diverse backgrounds participated in the discussion. Translated excerpts:

What should the structure of federalism be?
Kiran Lama (NC): The demand put forth by ethnic communities is that there be ethnic and regional autonomy with right to self-determination. But provinces should be created not only on the basis of ethnicity but also on the political rights of other non-ethnic groups.

Nara Bahadur Pakhrin (RPP): Without education and wealth, ethnic minorities won’t succeed and will probably have to surrender leadership of their provinces to well-educated higher castes. The Maoists have encouraged ethnic pride, but in the absence of education this will probably only promote ethnic discrimination. An ethnic federal system won’t bring development overnight.

Shankar Lama (Maoists): The rights of all communities living in any particular ethnic province should be guaranteed. This does not mean non-ethnic groups can never come into the political field.

The demand put forth by ethnic communities is that there be ethnic and regional autonomy with right to self-determination. But provinces should be created not only on the basis of ethnicity but also on the political rights of other non-ethnic groups.

Kiran Lama (NC): The demand put forth by ethnic communities is that there be ethnic and regional autonomy with right to self-determination. But provinces should be created not only on the basis of ethnicity but also on the political rights of other non-ethnic groups.

Nara Bahadur Pakhrin (RPP): Without education and wealth, ethnic minorities won’t succeed and will probably have to surrender leadership of their provinces to well-educated higher castes. The Maoists have encouraged ethnic pride, but in the absence of education this will probably only promote ethnic discrimination. An ethnic federal system won’t bring development overnight.

Shankar Lama (Maoists): The rights of all communities living in any particular ethnic province should be guaranteed. This does not mean non-ethnic groups can never come into the political field.

What is the purpose of federalism?
Kiran Lama (NC): The purpose of federalism should be to unite people and discourage secession. We should also study experiences with federalism throughout the world. These experiences teach us that provinces should be owned by all their inhabitants and not just ethnic groups.

Gopal Neupane (UML): What is important is to lift up backward communities, which requires an equal distribution of opportunities and human and natural resources, not ethnic federalism. One group should not suffer in the name of uplifting another. All communities should get equal respect and be represented in all sectors.

What if the federal units are based on and named after particular ethnicities?
Tanka Jirel (social worker): The people do not care about the names of the provinces, they are more concerned with what work is done. The government should help ethnic minority groups, for instance when an SLC graduate cannot pursue higher education due to financial instability at home. How does the name of a state help a minority?

All they want are a few facilities to stop travelling miles to reach a clinic or the district headquarters to receive their citizenship. The marginalised ask for nothing more than these minor privileges.

Kumar Bishwakarma (Dalit rights activist): Fourteen per cent of the population of Dolakha is Tamang. If it becomes a Tamang province, this minority will be ruling the rest, which is unfair. Provinces should be based on economics as well as social factors.

Norsang Sherpa (Federal Democratic Sherpa Association): The Maoist-proposed ethnic federal system won’t be inclusive of every ethnic group and class. They’re considering making an autonomous Sherpa province, which will help me individually, but still won’t be inclusive of every group. So, instead of breaking up the country into ethnic provinces, I propose a regional division, with an autonomous Himalayan region.

Parbati Khadka (Maiti Forum): We need to help women, and think about how to lift them out of poverty and denigration. Also, federalism should be based on geography and not ethnicity. That way we can name our provinces after geographical landmarks, like Gauri Shankar, instead of ethnicities, like Tamangeling.

What needs to be done to finish on time?
First, we have to turn the committees in a more- orderly fashion. The constitutional committee has stopped functioning. It is leaderless, which has stalled the sub-committees too. The big leaders have to devote themselves totally to the constitution instead of fighting their petty wars. If the constitution isn’t written on time, it could invite more trouble.

Has your party used its whip in the committee meetings?
No.

But surely others have?
Gopal Neupane (UML): Some pressure is inevitable. Those committee members who were nominated via the proportional representation system, particularly, won’t agree to anything without the party’s green signal. But those who have been directly elected listen to their own conscience and aren’t scared of their party bosses.

What’s the country’s main problem right now?
Corruption, and all young leaders should be aware of it. It takes Rs 500,000-600,000 to build a culvert in the village. If a politician were involved, the cost would skyrocket to Rs 2,500,000-3,000,000. Youths leaders need to do something about this.
the Bolivian army announced that Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, the Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary, had been hunted down and killed in battle. The New York Times responded editorially, and with evident satisfaction, that if the report proved true, “as now seems probable, then a myth as well as a man has been laid to rest.” It was not the Times’s most accurate prediction. Photographs of Che’s lifeless body soon appeared in newspapers around the globe, putting to rest doubts about his death. He had been executed.

The mythic appeal of the slain revolutionary, known to many today in Latin America as San Ernesto, has only grown in subsequent years. In Che’s Afterlife: The Legacy of an Image, Michael Casey writes, “Unwittingly, the Bolivian military delivered the world a lasting and sympathetic picture of the man they had hunted down, they gave it a crucified Che.” Indeed, John Berger and other art critics have argued that Freddy Alborta’s photo of Che’s corpse bears a startling resemblance to Renaissance depictions of Jesus Christ at the moment he was brought down from the cross by the Romans.

Che hardly ever sat for a bad photo, even in death. But of all surviving photographs of him, one in particular stands out: the head-and-shoulders portrait of a bearded, long-haired, 31-year-old Che, wearing a bomber jacket and his trademark beret emblazoned with the comandante star, taken by Alberto ‘Korda’ Díaz Gutiérrez for Revolución, the official newspaper of Fidel Castro’s 26th of July Movement.

In the aftermath of Che’s death, the Korda photo, or various graphic derivations, became a staple of radical newspapers and left-wing poster art in North and South America and Western Europe. And in an ironic post-1960s development, the image took on yet another life: this time as a marketing device, used to sell everything from air fresheners to condoms to an ice-cream bar called Cherry Guevara.

Che has since become a commodity. The issue is not that Che’s image is without continuing political appeal but that it has too many diverse meanings to be the symbol of any coherent ideology. As one would expect, the Korda photo remains the symbol of choice for contemporary Latin American rebels. It has also shown up in recent years as movement iconography in Palestine, Nepal, East Timor and many other locales caught up in radical insurgencies. But its appeal is not limited to conventional left-wing movements. It has been embraced, for instance, by US-backed Christian rebels in Sudan who are fighting a Muslim regime.

Che’s image is ultimately isn’t about communism, it’s about attitude and sacrifice. A man, a teacher, lays down a code of personal conduct from which to build a just society, a utopia, and then proceeds to live and die according to it. Castro combined the Cuban revolution, Che’s stellar qualities, and the Guerrillero Heroico image into a single attractive product. Just as urban sneaker-wearing teenagers seem susceptible these days to advertisers who encourage them to identify with brands such as Nike or Tommy Hilfiger, in late 1967 radicalised students across the Western world were ripe for the Che brand. And he continues to appeal decisively. His appeal also lies in the purity of his ability to encourage people to dream of a better world.

Maurice Isserman is James L Ferguson Professor of History at Hamilton College and the author, with Michael Kazin, of America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s.
Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Argentine Marxist revolutionary and international statesman, has morphed into a catch-all icon in the half century since the Cuban revolution. When in 1967 Alberto Korda's cropped photograph of Che Guevara was exhibited worldwide, it was titled Guerrillo Heroico. The label has a strange iconographic resemblance: as it indicated a certain subset of Homo sapiens, a kind of dissemblance of the actual person into a rationalised, decontexualised image of Che, Soderbergh's representation retains both the frustating obscuration of Che's visage and his legacy.

Soderbergh focuses on two historical passages: the first film, The Argentine, follows Che with Fidel as a small band of fighters as they start the armed insurrection that culminates in the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The second, Guerrilla, follows Che through the Bolivian countryside in his disastrous and ultimately fatal attempt to spark a similar revolution across Latin America. The two films have a formalistic symmetry: the trajectory of the first is laced with optimism, inescapably heads to victory, while the second, weighed down by divisions, just inescapably leads to defeat and doom.

The director eschews the typical narrative arc of most biopics (like Salles' Motorcycle Diaries, for instance, with its effective, calculated emotional notes), opting instead for a grittier aesthetic resembling a verité cinematic style. Of the two, The Argentine is the more narratively palatable and, despite the expectation the pair of films has earned as being difficult, is surprisingly gripping. Che's visit to New York to address the United Nations in 1964 is one of the interjections, along with interviews, vignettes and fiery speeches, that provides momentum to the first movie and relieves the potential tedium of tropical guerrilla warfare tableaus (which has an appeal in smaller doses). Soderbergh highlights the outsider status of Che, even among his band of revolutionaries. He is the Argentine among Cubans in the first part, and ironically the Cuban among Bolivians in the second. The biopic underscores the guarded persona Che cultivated, projecting the character of a pure and loyal revolutionary, and Benicio Del Toro's exacting performance brings him to life impressively. By the end of the second movie, all that is left of the ragged revolutionary is steely determination in his cause and the pragmatism of guerrilla. In the desolate but transcendent death that inevitably befalls Che when his band is overwhelmed by the Bolivian army, the comparison to the Passion plays enacting Jesus Christ's death is well nigh impossible to avoid.

To his credit, Soderbergh does not avoid the fundamental kernel of Che's method—revolutionary violence. There is a quality in this historical drama that edges towards documentary in the density of its details and the reportage of events. But it establishes its truly historical underpinnings and relieves the potential tedium of tropical guerrilla warfare tableaus (which has an appeal in smaller doses). Soderbergh focuses on two historical passages: the first film, The Argentine, follows Che with Fidel as a small band of fighters as they start the armed insurrection that culminates in the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The second, Guerrilla, follows Che through the Bolivian countryside in his disastrous and ultimately fatal attempt to spark a similar revolution across Latin America. The two films have a formalistic symmetry: the trajectory of the first is laced with optimism, inescapably heads to victory, while the second, weighed down by divisions, just inescapably leads to defeat and doom.

The director eschews the typical narrative arc of most biopics (like Salles' Motorcycle Diaries, for instance, with its effective, calculated emotional notes), opting instead for a grittier aesthetic resembling a verité cinematic style. Of the two, The Argentine is the more narratively palatable and, despite the expectation the pair of films has earned as being difficult, is surprisingly gripping. Che's visit to New York to address the United Nations in 1964 is one of the interjections, along with interviews, vignettes and fiery speeches, that provides momentum to the first movie and relieves the potential tedium of tropical guerrilla warfare tableaus (which has an appeal in smaller doses). Soderbergh highlights the outsider status of Che, even among his band of revolutionaries. He is the Argentine among Cubans in the first part, and ironically the Cuban among Bolivians in the second. The biopic underscores the guarded persona Che cultivated, projecting the character of a pure and loyal revolutionary, and Benicio Del Toro's exacting performance brings him to life impressively. By the end of the second movie, all that is left of the ragged revolutionary is steely determination in his cause and the pragmatism of guerrilla. In the desolate but transcendent death that inevitably befalls Che when his band is overwhelmed by the Bolivian army, the comparison to the Passion plays enacting Jesus Christ's death is well nigh impossible to avoid.

To his credit, Soderbergh does not avoid the fundamental kernel of Che's method—revolutionary violence. There is a quality in this historical drama that edges towards documentary in the density of its details and the reportage of events. But it establishes its truly historical underpinnings and relieves the potential tedium of tropical guerrilla warfare tableaus (which has an appeal in smaller doses). Soderbergh focuses on two historical passages: the first film, The Argentine, follows Che with Fidel as a small band of fighters as they start the armed insurrection that culminates in the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The second, Guerrilla, follows Che through the Bolivian countryside in his disastrous and ultimately fatal attempt to spark a similar revolution across Latin America. The two films have a formalistic symmetry: the trajectory of the first is laced with optimism, inescapably heads to victory, while the second, weighed down by divisions, just inescapably leads to defeat and doom.

The director eschews the typical narrative arc of most biopics (like Salles' Motorcycle Diaries, for instance, with its effective, calculated emotional notes), opting instead for a grittier aesthetic resembling a verité cinematic style. Of the two, The Argentine is the more narratively palatable and, despite the expectation the pair of films has earned as being difficult, is surprisingly gripping. Che's visit to New York to address the United Nations in 1964 is one of the interjections, along with interviews, vignettes and fiery speeches, that provides momentum to the first movie and relieves the potential tedium of tropical guerrilla warfare tableaus (which has an appeal in smaller doses). Soderbergh highlights the outsider status of Che, even among his band of revolutionaries. He is the Argentine among Cubans in the first part, and ironically the Cuban among Bolivians in the second. The biopic underscores the guarded persona Che cultivated, projecting the character of a pure and loyal revolutionary, and Benicio Del Toro's exacting performance brings him to life impressively. By the end of the second movie, all that is left of the ragged revolutionary is steely determination in his cause and the pragmatism of guerrilla. In the desolate but transcendent death that inevitably befalls Che when his band is overwhelmed by the Bolivian army, the comparison to the Passion plays enacting Jesus Christ's death is well nigh impossible to avoid.

To his credit, Soderbergh does not avoid the fundamental kernel of Che's method—revolutionary violence. There is a quality in this historical drama that edges towards documentary in the density of its details and the reportage of events. But it establishes its truly historical underpinnings and relieves the potential tedium of tropical guerrilla warfare tableaus (which has an appeal in smaller doses). Soderbergh focuses on two historical passages: the first film, The Argentine, follows Che with Fidel as a small band of fighters as they start the armed insurrection that culminates in the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The second, Guerrilla, follows Che through the Bolivian countryside in his disastrous and ultimately fatal attempt to spark a similar revolution across Latin America. The two films have a formalistic symmetry: the trajectory of the first is laced with optimism, inescapably heads to victory, while the second, weighed down by divisions, just inescapably leads to defeat and doom.

The director eschews the typical narrative arc of most biopics (like Salles' Motorcycle Diaries, for instance, with its effective, calculated emotional notes), opting instead for a grittier aesthetic resembling a verité cinematic style. Of the two, The Argentine is the more narratively palatable and, despite the expectation the pair of films has earned as being difficult, is surprisingly gripping. Che's visit to New York to address the United Nations in 1964 is one of the interjections, along with interviews, vignettes and fiery speeches, that provides momentum to the first movie and relieves the potential tedium of tropical guerrilla warfare tableaus (which has an appeal in smaller doses). Soderbergh highlights the outsider status of Che, even among his band of revolutionaries. He is the Argentine among Cubans in the first part, and ironically the Cuban among Bolivians in the second. The biopic underscores the guarded persona Che cultivated, projecting the character of a pure and loyal revolutionary, and Benicio Del Toro's exacting performance brings him to life impressively. By the end of the second movie, all that is left of the ragged revolutionary is steely determination in his cause and the pragmatism of guerrilla. In the desolate but transcendent death that inevitably befalls Che when his band is overwhelmed by the Bolivian army, the comparison to the Passion plays enacting Jesus Christ's death is well nigh impossible to avoid.

To his credit, Soderbergh does not avoid the fundamental kernel of Che's method—revolutionary violence. There is a quality in this historical drama that edges towards documentary in the density of its details and the reportage of events. But it establishes its truly historical underpinnings and relieves the potential tedium of tropical guerrilla warfare tableaus (which has an appeal in smaller doses). Soderbergh focuses on two historical passages: the first film, The Argentine, follows Che with Fidel as a small band of fighters as they start the armed insurrection that culminates in the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The second, Guerrilla, follows Che through the Bolivian countryside in his disastrous and ultimately fatal attempt to spark a similar revolution across Latin America. The two films have a formalistic symmetry: the trajectory of the first is laced with optimism, inescapably heads to victory, while the second, weighed down by divisions, just inescapably leads to defeat and doom.

The director eschews the typical narrative arc of most biopics (like Salles' Motorcycle Diaries, for instance, with its effective, calculated emotional notes), opting instead for a grittier aesthetic resembling a verité cinematic style. Of the two, The Argentine is the more narratively palatable and, despite the expectation the pair of films has earned as being difficult, is surprisingly gripping. Che's visit to New York to address the United Nations in 1964 is one of the interjections, along with interviews, vignettes and fiery speeches, that provides momentum to the first movie and relieves the potential tedium of tropical guerrilla warfare tableaus (which has an appeal in smaller doses). Soderbergh highlights the outsider status of Che, even among his band of revolutionaries. He is the Argentine among Cubans in the first part, and ironically the Cuban among Bolivians in the second. The biopic underscores the guarded persona Che cultivated, projecting the character of a pure and loyal revolutionary, and Benicio Del Toro's exacting performance brings him to life impressively. By the end of the second movie, all that is left of the ragged revolutionary is steely determination in his cause and the pragmatism of guerrilla. In the desolate but transcendent death that inevitably befalls Che when his band is overwhelmed by the Bolivian army, the comparison to the Passion plays enacting Jesus Christ's death is well nigh impossible to avoid.
N epal signed a global agreement in 2005 to replace conventional passports with Machine Readable Passports (MRPs), which have the passport holder’s information encoded digitally on a page so they can be quickly scanned. The agreement requires the replacement of all conventional passports by 2010, but our government has done nothing to implement it, meaning Nepalis may face even more hassles at airports around the world.

The agreement, mediated by the UN’s International Civil Aviation Organization, allows for the validity of non-MRP passports until October 2015. But they can’t be distributed until March 2010, which means Nepalis may face even more hassles at airports around the world.

Nepal is behind schedule on a global agreement to phase in digital passports by 2010

Sunday, 30 August, is International Disappearance Day and like all other commemorative days, there will be functions at which dignitaries and donors will gather to make speeches and sip tea before heading home. The families of the estimated 1,500 Nepalis who were disappeared during the war will be forgotten for another year.

The families of the disappeared want the truth about what happened to their loved ones, and they want justice as per the points laid out in the UN Convention on EnforcedDisappearances (2006).

There is an added complication. The relatives of the victims remain divided, depending on which side was responsible for the death or disappearance. Various political parties hold sway over these blocks. In fact, political parties recognise victims only if they were affiliated to them as cadres.

The country may have seen the end of the war, but the families of the disappeared are not at peace. The movement towards reconciliation has become fragmented and the grief of tens of thousands of victims’ families is being held hostage to vested political interests.

Therefore, we must ask, is reconciliation possible at all? As long as the plight of the victims is politicised, we will never find true peace.

No matter how many bills are drafted in parliament on Truth and Reconciliation and Disappearances, they will be buzzwords understood only by donors and their middlemen. Families, relatives and victims in rural areas are never consulted or asked for feedback.

Nepal’s post-conflict period has seen the politicisation and commodification of victims. Says Sakuntala Poudel, whose husband was disappeared by the state: “Many NGO workers ask to take photographs of us and ask for photos of our loved ones, but they don’t understand our needs and the value of our tears.”

Krishna Khanal from Gorkha, who lost his brother during the war, says: “We can’t sacrifice justice in the name of peace and reconciliation. We want to know the whereabouts of our loved ones and punish those responsible.”

The recently formed peace committees across Nepal have, ironically, stirred up more conflict and made victims’ families even more disillusioned. Only 60 of 75 committees have been formed, many are still without a chairperson, and their

The families of Nepal’s disappeared are forgotten

The families of the disappeared are legitimate and must be recognised. The truth about what happened to our loved ones, our struggle continues. We want to know the truth through satisfactory answers and identification of the perpetrators. In addition, families have the right to reparations, as laid out by the UN, including: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition.

Unfortunately, in Nepal reparation has come to be viewed solely in terms of money. The government doles out money to families and considers the matter closed, adding insult to injury. Moreover, the distribution of compensation is political. It is unsustainable and ineffective and contributes nothing to the greater peace process.

Laxmi Bhandari, who lost her husband in 2001, argues: “Instead of justice, the government offers money. We demand the truth.” Prem Neupane, whose brother was disappeared, says, “Until we know the whereabouts of our loved ones, our struggle continues. We are ready to die for justice.”

What is needed is an independent commission with the power to investigate disappeared citizens. The policy regarding enforced disappearances should be framed according to international standards, as laid out by the UN. The various agreements and commitments made by the government and political parties such as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Interim Constitution and Supreme Court verdicts should be implemented without compromise.

The Rayamajhi Commission’s report has never been published or implemented, and ultimately contributed to the culture of impunity in Nepal. Any document prepared in the capital with wider consultation with victims’ communities is not acceptable as the families of the disappeared are legitimate protagonists in the process of change, peace and the reconstruction of a new Nepal.

Unless we address these concerns, Nepal’s peace process will remain fragile.
The government has been liberally issuing replacement passports to people who have damaged or lost their passports—or are pretending to have lost them so they can qualify for a new one. When people lose their passports, they are supposed to print an ad in a national daily and request a police enquiry before applying for a new one, but these investigations are rarely undertaken.

“We cannot investigate even when we’re certain they aren’t genuine,” admits Deepak Adhikari, under-secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he heads the visa section. State authorities guess that a staggering 90 per cent of the petitions are fraudulent, but are under pressure to issue new passports immediately.

“Nepal is probably the only country where a replacement passport is issued so easily,” Adhikari says.

There are four main reasons why people pretend to lose their passports in order to get a new one. Students who apply to study abroad and are rejected worry that the visa rejection stamp in their passports will disqualify them the next time they apply, so seek fresh documents. People interested in working for overseas companies must surrender their passports to them, which means they need a separate passport for every company they are interested in. Those who have been deported are hassled at international airports because their passports have stamps that advertise the fact and can’t be erased. Some simply need new passports to get away with a crime or run illegal passport rackets of their own.

Others deliberately invalidate their passports by ripping pages or smudging information, so they don’t have to lie about having lost a passport in order to qualify for a new one.

The introduction of Machine Readable Passports (MRP) will significantly reduce cases of fraud since their digitally encoded information can’t be corrupted. Although they can be lost, it will be less difficult to replace them. Authorities can digitally invalidate old ones so people can’t illegally hold two passports.

On the other hand, authorities have to inform diplomatic missions and immigration offices abroad of lost non-MRP passports before they issue new passports, which could be very troublesome. Although some people inform the ministry if they find their old passports, this is rare.

Without updated technology, Adhikari laments, “There is nothing we can do to dissuade a dishonest and unethical individual.” And there seem to be quite a few of them about.

Ever wondered about these ads?

The government has been liberally issuing replacement passports to people who have damaged or lost their passports—or are pretending to have lost them so they can qualify for a new one.

When people lose their passports, they are supposed to print an ad in a national daily and request a police enquiry before applying for a new one, but these investigations are rarely undertaken.

“We cannot investigate even when we’re certain they aren’t genuine,” admits Deepak Adhikari, under-secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he heads the visa section. State authorities guess that a staggering 90 per cent of the petitions are fraudulent, but are under pressure to issue new passports immediately.

“Nepal is probably the only country where a replacement passport is issued so easily,” Adhikari says.

There are four main reasons why people pretend to lose their passports in order to get a new one. Students who apply to study abroad and are rejected worry that the visa rejection stamp in their passports will disqualify them the next time they apply, so seek fresh documents. People interested in working for overseas companies must surrender their passports to them, which means they need a separate passport for every company they are interested in. Those who have been deported are hassled at international airports because their passports have stamps that advertise the fact and can’t be erased. Some simply need new passports to get away with a crime or run illegal passport rackets of their own.

Others deliberately invalidate their passports by ripping pages or smudging information, so they don’t have to lie about having lost a passport in order to qualify for a new one.

The introduction of Machine Readable Passports (MRP) will significantly reduce cases of fraud since their digitally encoded information can’t be corrupted. Although they can be lost, it will be less difficult to replace them. Authorities can digitally invalidate old ones so people can’t illegally hold two passports.

On the other hand, authorities have to inform diplomatic missions and immigration offices abroad of lost non-MRP passports before they issue new passports, which could be very troublesome. Although some people inform the ministry if they find their old passports, this is rare.

Without updated technology, Adhikari laments, “There is nothing we can do to dissuade a dishonest and unethical individual.” And there seem to be quite a few of them about.

Dewan Rai
Highway blues

Why is travelling on Kathmandu roads so unbearable? Impromptu chakka jams and landslides seem likely culprits, as do a dysfunctional government and brazen cops. But a closer look reveals that the private sector deserves some part of the blame too.

Don’t get too self-righteous about it, we’re part of the problem as well. Cars park on both lanes of major highways and breakdown mid-road because they carry more than they can physically bear.

Travelling on Nepali roads is tough because of bad drivers, a dysfunctional government, and irresponsible businesses. But if the private sector wants to do a better job than the government, then it must respect the rule of law and keep from launching street protests and hartals that hold up traffic to have their way. It’s in their own interest to show some restraint. Not only do hartals discourage foreign investment but they erode the government, which could then vindictively withhold its protection from the business community.

The Beed’s advice: focus on innovation and cutting costs, not politics. So criminal drivers and negligent cops have certainly done their part to bring about this sorry state of affairs. But the private sector is just as culpable. Next time you rail at the government, save some breath for our businesses.

Nabil is 25

Nabil Bank is marking its 25th anniversary this week. It was the first foreign joint venture bank in Nepal when it started operations in 1984 and has been providing international standard banking services in Nepal since then. “This is a milestone in the history of banking in Nepal, and it shows what can be achieved with professionalism, reliability and dedication,” says Nabil CEO Anil Shah.

As a part of its anniversary, Nabil Bank and the clothing brand, Miss Players, together launched a special saving scheme, “Miss Players Nabil Nari Bachat”. Under the scheme, customers will be offered a Visa Electron Debit card as well as an interest rate of five per cent on a minimum balance of Rs 500.

5000 lumen

Boxlight announced the release of Pro5000SL, projector. Designed to meet the needs of the educational market, the 6 and 7 series of LCD TV are available in 32” and 40” screen sizes.

Oil bank

Cosmic Automobiles, a subsidiary of Avco Holding and Investment Group launched its automotive lubricant - Hyundai Oilbank (HOB). HOB provides an array of reasonably priced lubricants for all vehicles.

X-change

Bajaj Motorcycles organised a swapping offer ‘Bajaj Maha X-change Mela’ yet again, in exchange for their old bikes, more than 20 Bajaj companies provided new bikes to customers at ‘best prices’.

Green Planet

Syakar, the distributor of Honda cars and automobiles in Nepal, organised a painting competition, ‘Green Planet Painting Competition’ for children under the age of 15 last week. With more than 100 participants, the winners were awarded gift hampers from Phillips.

After-sale

LG electronics has introduced an after-sale service campaign, the ‘211 campaign’, in Nepal. Fulfilling its promise of quality even after the sale of goods, LG is offering this service on all LG electronics as well as LG home appliances.

ICT

Catering to the need of Information and Technology Services (ICT) in Nepal, Chaudhary Group has formed an alliance with Singapore-based CrimsonLogic IT Solutions. Operating under the name ‘CG Techno Dreams’, the alliance aims to provide ICT products, solutions, operation outsourcing to Nepalis and implement e-governance in Nepal.

Oodles

Keeping in mind the popularity of Chinese food in Nepal, Wai Quick introduced two new flavours, Chicken Schezwan and Vegetable Manchurian, in the market last week.
September surprise

If you look out the window this month and notice that the sun is setting in a different place every day, don’t worry, the earth is not spiralling out of orbit; it’s tilting toward the sun to welcome the season of autumn, beginning 23 September. This means a new set of stars and constellations will make their debut. A couple of hours after sunset, you will see the Milky Way stretching diagonally across the night sky (you may have to wait for a load-shedding night to see this). Make sure to pull out a set of binoculars and observe this band of stars because it contains some fantastic constellations. You will see the W-shaped Cassiopeia, the Great Summer Triangle, Sagittarius and Scorpius. In the eastern horizon, just below Cassiopeia, don’t miss the constellations of Andromeda and the square-shaped Pegasus. The Big Dipper will be only partly visible in the north-western skies, but the kite-shaped Bootes and the man-shaped Hercules should be clear.

There will be a full moon on 4 September, also called the ‘Harvest Moon’ because it helps farmers harvest past sunset.

Planets

Mars will rise in the north-east just before midnight but the view will be obscured late September when it is directly between the earth and the sun. The planet will drift eastwards through Gemini and head toward the bright twin stars of Castor and Pollux. You can catch a late glimpse of it again at the very end of September when it will be visible in the east just before dawn below a sparkling Venus, which should be clearly visible throughout the month.

Jupiter will be the only planet visible in the evening this month, and will descend toward the horizon as the evening passes. The planet can be best seen late in the evening when it’s sitting a mere 20 degrees above the horizon. Telescope users will have a few chances to catch Jupiter’s closest moons, Io and Europa, eclipsing and occulting one another on September 15, 22 and 29.

Saturn fans have less to cheer about since the planet will be invisible for some part of the month as it hides behind the sun. Since it’s tilting away from the earth, its rings will lose their characteristic sheen as they reflect less of the sun’s light. The last opportunity to view Saturn’s rings is on 4 September at 6:45 pm. Catch the planet close to the western horizon.

Shabana Azmi to play

Renowned Indian actors Shabana Azmi and Farooque Sheikh will be staging the acclaimed play Tumhari Amrita in Kathmandu on 16 September as part of a fund-raising drive for the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre (SIRC) in Kathmandu. Tumhari Amrita was written by Javed Siddiqui and is directed by Feroz Abbas Khan, the well-known Indian theatre personality. The play is a love story in a unique format: the tale unfolds through a series of letters written over 35 years between Amrita (played by Azmi) and Zulfi (played by Sheikh). Beginning in 1940 with an invitation to Amrita’s eighteenth birthday party, the two friends come closer against the backdrop of India’s tumultuous history: from Independence and Partition in 1947 to the Emergency of 1975, and subsequent events. As the two correspondents discuss these and other happenings, their letters are marked by wit, jibes, arguments and inevitable patch ups.

Soon the friends evolve into different and complex personalities. Zulfi is an honest politician in their native Lucknow, while Amrita becomes a painter and a lost soul, travelling through Europe before returning, emotionally unstable, to India. Their bond, however, remains strong throughout, until the play reaches its tragic conclusion.

Says Shabana Azmi: “We look forward to playing before the Kathmandu audience, where I believe the theatre world has advanced greatly in recent years. I am also happy to be putting up a play whose proceeds will go to further the rehabilitation of the victims of spinal injuries.” The proceeds of this play will go toward building halfway homes for the patients of SIRC so they can adjust to their home environment.

“We are happy that the two actors and the director have agreed to our request, and thank the BP Koirala Foundation and the Indian Embassy for their helping hand in making this unique event possible,” says SIRC founder Kanak Mani Dixit.
**MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE**

- **Kakori, Al Fresco**
- **Jazzabell Café**
- **The Corner Bar**
- **Chocolate, Coffee and Caramel**
- **Nepali Ghajals**
- **Sunday Jazz Brunch**

**MUSIC EVENTS**

- **Relax Package**
- **GETAWAYS**
  - **Tiger for Breakfast**
  - **Himalayan Rainbow Trout**
  - **Starry night barbecue**
  - **Reality Bites**
  - **Plat Du Jour**
  - **Teppanyaki**

**EXHIBITIONS**

**WEEKEND WEATHER**

**RECIPE**

**Cheese & Marmite Muffin Tart**

- (Serves 4)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 cup strong cheese, grated
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- A pinch each of salt and pepper
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon of red chilli powder
- 1 spring onion, cooked bacon or cooked ham

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

---

**Did you arrive on time this morning? If not, call our**

**DIRECT LINE**

Himalmedia Pvt. Ltd.
Hattiban Lalitpur

Call 4442220 for show timings at Jai Nepal

www.jainepal.com

---

**KATHMANDU**

---

**Muffin Tart**

- Preheat oven to 180C.
- In a mixing bowl, mix together all the dry ingredients. Add eggs one by one.
- Add the mixture of milk and cheese and stir well. Divide this mixture into small portions and pour it into a greased small dish.
- Bake in a pre-heated oven for 15-20 minutes.
- Serve warm.

---

**LIFE PARTNER**

Life Partner is a story about two couples with wildly different views about marriage and the unique difficulties it causes. Karen (Fardeen Khan) and Sarjana (Gimela D'Souza), who have been madly in love for ages, rush to marry. But traditional Bhuvesh (Tushar Kapoor), and his love Prachi (Prachi Desai) wait obediently for the green signal from their parents. Both couples come across Jeet (Govinda) a playboy and divorce lawyer who thinks marriage is senseless. How they cope with married life is for you to find out.

Call 4442220 for show timings at Jai Nepal www.jainepal.com

---

**EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED**

- Movie screening at Lazimpat Gallery Café, 5.30 PM, 4428549
- Live band every Friday and rooftop bbq everyday at Kausi Kitchen, Darbar Marg, 4227298
- Sunday Jazz brunch and live jazz music by Dinesh Rai and the Sound Minds, Rs 899 at Fusion, Dwarka’s Hotel, 7PM onwards, 4479488
- Happy cocktail hour, ladies night on Wednesday with live unplugged music at Jala Café & Bar, Thamel, 5-7PM
- Live Sensation, performance by Yankie every Saturday 9PM, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 4491234
- Live Band Sensation performance by Aprithrush, every Saturday till late, Rox Bar, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 4493962
- Sunday Jazz Brunch by Inner Grove with barbeque, Sunday, 12PM-3.30 PM, The Terrace at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 4492963

**DINING**

- **Dhaka Biryani Festival**, by Birek Bawarchi from Bangladesh at The Café, 30 Aug-12 Sep, 4491234
- **Indra Jatra dinner** at 1905, Kantipath, 5-7PM, 4225272
- **Asparagus mania**, enjoy all flavours at the Rox Restaurant, all through August, 4491234
- **Wine Festival**, until 15 September, Kilroy’s Thamel, 4250440
- **Chocolate, Coffee and Caramel**, every evening at The Lounge, 4-30 PM-6.30 PM, 4491233
- **A café’s café**, Dhokaima Café, Patan Dhoka, 5522113
- **Jazzabell Café**, relaunched at Jhamkhali, 2114075
- **The Corner Bar**, 5-7PM, 3-11PM, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu, 4418181
- **Al Fresco**, for home made pasta, steak and fresh water trout, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 4273999
- **Kakori**, for biryanis, curries and kebabs, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 7-10.45 PM
- **Chez Caroline** for French and Mediterranean cuisine, Babar Restaurant Revised, 4288070
- **Mediterranean cuisine** every Friday from Greece, Italy and the Middle-East at The Café, Hyatt Regency, 4491234
- **Teppanyaki** meat items and garlic rice at Le Restaurant, GandhiKha, 4430318
- **Plat Du Jour** at Hotel Shangri-La, Lazimpat, Rs 600, 4412999
- **Reality Bites**, The Kaiser Café, Garden of Dreams, operated by Dwarka’s Group of Hotels, 9AM-10PM, 4425341
- **Starry night barbecue** at Hotel Shangri-La with live performance by Citray Gurung, Rs 999, at the Shambala Garden, every Friday 7PM onwards, 4412999
- **Himalayan Rainbow Trout** at Hotel Yak and Yeti, Darbar Marg, 4418181
- **Tiger for Breakfast**, breakfast everyday at 1905, Kantipath, 4215068

**GETAWAYS**

- **Dhulikhel Lodge Resort** offers an overnight stay for Rs 1600 till 30 September, 4222389
- **Relax Package** at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu for Rs 555 plus taxes, for a night of double occupancy with breakfast, complimentary use of spa. Offer valid for Nepali and local residents only, 4498900
- **Spa package**, ayurvedic massage and access to the pool and spa with either breakfast or lunch at The Café or hi-tea at the Terrace, Hyatt Regency, 12-3.30 PM, 4491234
- **Baja gaja** yurvedic massage and access to the pool and spa with either breakfast or lunch at The Café or hi-tea at the Terrace, Hyatt Regency, 12-3.30 PM, 4491234
- **Tewari**, Shangri-La hotel, Lazimpat, 30 Aug-6 Sep, 11AM onwards, 4479488
TRUSTY HANDS: Caretaker Army Chief Chatrman Gurung mills about at Tribhuvan International Airport on Saturday as he waits for the prime minister to return from his five-day visit to India.

GOTCHA: Foreign Minister Sujata Koirala outside NC Parliamentary Party Office at Singhadarbar on August 25 where she was summoned to explain her last-minute decision not to accompany the prime minister on his trip to India.

WHITE KNIGHT: Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal denounces the government’s delayed response to the Jajarkot epidemic and announces an independent Maoist relief program during a speech at Ratna Park on Monday.

EARTH SHAKER: Flash floods from a swollen Aduwa river sweep away a store in Birtamod bazaar, Jhapa, on Friday. Eight people have already perished in Jhapa during floods brought on by this season’s erratic monsoon.

WISE WORDS: Two men greet one another on Monday at Kashmir Masjid near Ghanta Ghar. Muslims worldwide began fasting for the holy Islamic month of Ramadan on 22 August.
Love triangles

The Irrigation Minister, of all people, has decided that he doesn’t like the international security call signs used by his bodyguards and especially his code name: “Zulu 21”. The cops recently were at the receiving end of the Minister of Irritation, who fumed: “Why are they using these English-sounding names? Let’s use Nepali codes.” So it has come to pass that the Special Security Force is switching call signs. The PM is henceforth “Gurans One” and former PM GPK is “Himal Two” and not “Foxtrot Tango” as previously.

But it seems Comrade Awe-inspiring has suddenly got the hots for Geezer Babu. PKD figured out he can use Makunay’s falling out with Suzy Q to drive a wedge in the ruling coalition and made desperate attempts to court Koirala, who played hard-to-get for a few days. But then the Old Fox realised he could send lot of signals to various power centres and get tongues wagging by secretly meeting Shock and Awe, which he did. The two agreed to set up yet mudder ‘High-level Mechanism’ to untangle political knots.

Sure enough, the meeting immediately made it to the gossip columns (like this one), and nattered the Indians enough during the MKN visit to make them snort angrily. Having triggered the desired effect, however, Dodder and Dotter are suddenly less excited about hitching their wagon to the Mao engine. There is just too much accumulated bad blood between the kangresis and the krantikaris for them to form an alliance. That’s as far as the political horizon of these fellows extends.

PKD, as the Ass has noted in earlier episodes of this series, has been trying to woo both GPK and JNK. Sometimes he has more luck with GPK and sometimes he scores with JNK. He seems to have had some success with Jhallu who is now circling like a vulture that knows a wounded wildebeest is going down any time. There has been a strange silence between JNK and KPO lately, and we all thought that might be because the two had called a truce. But the reason for the silence is that the two have stopped speaking to each other: even in public. Talk is PKD wants to make GPK prez and become PM himself after Dasain.

Whatever the Chinese get antsy you know there is trouble ahead. After a 16-member delegation from the Autonomous Region visited Nepal recently, the Chinese are hosting a jumbo delegation of APF and Nepal Police brass as well as CDOs from eight Nepali districts bordering TAR-PRC. A senior politburo delegation is also coming soon and the subject of all of these meetings is, yes you guessed it, Tibet.

The editors of a national broadsheet probably didn’t realise that when they banned the headline ‘PM brings home the bacon’ last week it was the first day of Ramadan. It’s like the Riyadh press carrying a story about “pork-barrel funds” about Saudi Arabian legislators doling out patronage to constituents, or our own government “beefing up” security when we were still a Hindu Kingdom.

ass(at)nepalitimes.com