

Up in smoke



KIRAN PANDEY

The Maoists are bent on making things more and more difficult for the UML-led coalition unless they are allowed back into government. All last week, they played the ultra-nationalist card by beating up Indian priests at Pashupati and bringing the capital to a halt (left).

But the leaders of the NC and the UML need to accept that there is no place for their old antagonism in the present scheme of things. Girija Prasad Koirala and Madhav Kumar Nepal

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may have been movers and shakers once, but the main players in the political arena now are the Maoists and the Madhesis. Koirala and Nepal need to make peace with Pushpa Kamal Dahal for their own good and for the future of peace and democracy in the country. ●

JHAMAK

She was born with cerebral palsy, and can't speak, walk, or move her limbs freely. But Jhamak Ghimire's disability hasn't prevented her from expressing her acerbic, poetic humour freely – through her left foot.

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Film South Asia 2009

The region's best documentaries showcased in Kathmandu film festival 17-20 September. Indian actress Shabana Azmi will deliver the opening speech.

Highlights: *Afghan Girls Can Kick* (Afghanistan's first women's football team), *In Search of the Riyal* (Nepali migrant workers in the Gulf), *People's Leader* (Benazir Bhutto's life).

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NEW ARRIVALS ...

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TURNING THE KEY

The Maoists continue to disrupt the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. If the stalemate continues, state governance will come to a complete halt. The current year's budget has to be approved by Parliament to maintain some semblance of governance.

The role of the president is at the core of the political confrontation. The Maoists want to move a parliamentary resolution motion to censure the President's instruction to (now ex-) army chief Rookmangad Katawal to continue in his post in contravention of his sacking by the (now ex-) government.

On the face of it, merely debating the issue does not appear to be an unreasonable proposition. However, the 22 parties making up the anti-Maoist ruling coalition fear that they might not be able to withstand parliamentary scrutiny of their moves prior to the fall of the Maoist government. If such a motion were carried by the simple majority needed, the UML-led government would fall. Even if it failed, Premier Nepal would have to seek a trust vote: a dicey prospect for someone who doesn't enjoy the confidence of even his own party.

The government has come up with a counter proposal that dares the Maoists to bring an impeachment motion against President Ram Baran Yadav. This is something the Maoists are not willing to do, for two reasons. The motion requires a two-thirds majority to be passed, which means the NC and UML together have the numbers in Parliament to defeat it. Secondly, even if the motion failed, Yadav might resign on moral grounds. This would discredit the Maoists in the Madhes and could bring in someone even more inimical to them.

There must be a compromise formula between these two extremes. NC lawmaker Narahari Acharya thinks that if the Maoists were to come up with a constitutional amendment bill in Parliament to define the limits of presidential powers, the other parties may not object when the discussion turns towards censure of past actions. Perhaps this is a formula that CA Chairperson Subhas Nembang needs to sell to the NC, UML and all their international backers.

The present Constituent Assembly may not be to the liking of many, but if it goes, everyone will have to go with it. The President and the CA Chairperson are both products of the House. They are morally obliged to do everything in their power to make it function normally.



KIRAN PANDAY

Ram Chandra who?

The media's obliviousness to Ram Chandra Mishra's passing shows how little we care

After five bed-ridden years during which he was gradually losing his memory, Ram Chandra Mishra passed away on Monday at the age of 72.

Ram Chandra who? It was symptomatic of how we treat the generation of real revolutionaries who struggled for our freedom that his passing got no mention in the media. Mishra was among the few true Gandhians of Nepali politics and a pioneer of the Madhes movement.



PLAIN SPEAKING
Prashant Jha

Born into a landowning family in Mahottari's Pipra village, Mishra had a political and spiritual bent right from his schooldays. He was close to the two political stalwarts of the region, Bhadrakali and Ram Narayan Mishra, and became an active member of the NC. He had met Vinobha Bhave in India and was inspired by Gandhian ideals. During the NC's Patna convention following the

royal takeover of 1960, Mishra firmly opposed Subarna Shamsher's argument for an armed movement from Indian soil, and advocated a non-violent struggle within Nepal.

He was arrested in Janakpur soon after while participating in one of the first protests against the Panchayat system. From then on, his

being imprisoned and tortured became a matter of course for Mishra and his family. In 1970, he wrote a scathing pamphlet against the Panchayat, then in its tenth year.

But he also believed in using the existing electoral system in order to expose the system. He won in 1971, but was not allowed to take his oath and was arrested again. Fifteen days before the 1979 referendum, he was brutally tortured by police and Panchayat goons. He was taken to Patna but returned before his treatment was complete to vote for the multiparty system.

Mishra was the district president of the NC in Mahottari in 1983. That year, along with Gajendra Narayan Singh and others, he set up the Nepal Sadbhavana Parishad, the precursor to the Sadbhavana Party. Girija Prasad Koirala was then the national general secretary of the NC, and he delivered an ultimatum to Mishra, forcing him to choose between Congress and the Parishad, even though the latter was only a socio-cultural organisation.

Deeply hurt, Mishra left the NC. But his commitment to democratic struggle remained, along with his stand in favour of Madhesi rights. In the 1990 movement, he was arrested again and sent to Sindhuli jail for six months.

Mishra was among the founders of the Sadbhavana Party after the restoration of multiparty democracy, and stood for elections in 1991 and 1994. But unwilling to cut any deals, Mishra lost both times. He also developed differences with Gajendra Narayan Singh's brand of Kathmandu-centric, India-influenced politics and veered away towards spiritualism,

setting up an Aurbindo Ashram in his village.

Mishra's political philosophy and foresight were remarkable. He was a republican long before the Maoists. Twenty-five years before the Madhes movement, and before people like Mahant Thakur left the NC, Mishra had sacrificed a national party for a regional outfit. He showed how democracy, nationalism, and commitment to the Madhes could co-exist.

Mishra's values remain relevant for our political parties even today. He felt that Sadbhavana should have used the 1990s to remain outside power politics and build a larger Madhes movement. This is a lesson newer Madhesi parties would do well to heed. He remained committed to non-violence, despite being repeatedly at the receiving end of state violence. And he felt that the first duty of any party was towards the masses, not to the embassies.

But his biggest lesson was his uncompromising honesty and integrity. Though born into a well-to-do family, Mishra lived a life of economic hardship, with barely enough to educate his children. He was never recognised adequately for his contributions. Yet Mishra did not die a bitter man, for these were political choices he had made. To him, politics was a mission, not a cost-benefit calculation.

Those who knew him have the indelible image of a slightly built man walking along the streets of Janakpur in a khadi kurta, dhoti and chappals, bag hanging from shoulder. That image, fading with the generation of early revolutionaries, is a rare one: that of an honest man, committed to a just society. ●

LETTERS

'JUDICIAL SUPREMACY'

CK Lal ('The fallacy of supremacy', #467) says a strong court, or what he calls 'judicial supremacy' will hurt minorities in a country as diverse as ours, but he misses an obvious point. The alternative to 'judicial supremacy' is majority rule, and without a strong court that can restrain the majority and protect minority rights, the majority can do whatever it very well wants to the minority. If, after the Hindi oath row, you think Nepal is unsafe for minorities, check out China, where the government freely oppresses Muslim minorities (as the violence last month attests) and the court's restraining arm is nowhere in sight.

Why is a strong court good for minorities? If laws and ordinances are passed by majority vote, then minorities have no say in them, which means they can't defend themselves against malicious policies, like a policy to systematically disenfranchise some small ethnic community to serve business interests. This is where the

court comes in, at least in a functioning democracy. The court can step in to defend the minorities and invalidate the policy by gesturing to a constitution that, as in our case, protects equal rights for all.

Name withheld, email

SHOCKED

Until I read Katy Elliot's article ('You are what you eat', #467), I thought the shinier the vegetable the better. Now I know to keep away from them. I'm shocked that I've only discovered this now, after years of buying shiny vegetables, and that the government hasn't done anything to make people aware of the problem. They should consider setting up billboards at popular vegetable markets that explain the dangers of pesticides and what to watch out for. I

think it's as serious a problem as inflation, and if the government raided, if half-heartedly, vegetable warehouses to control hoarding, then they should be just as willing to do the same to control the misuse of dangerous pesticides.

Beena Pant, email

the oath in the Nepali language.

I personally do not care what language the leader speaks (or does not speak). Let the parliamentarians (or people) elect the person who can win the heart and soul of Nepalis.

Prakash Shrestha, email

● In 'Swearing in Hindi' (#466) Prashant Jha pretends to explain the Hindi oath row, but ends up justifying Jha. I think this is an occasion for everyone to swear in the language they understand, after all, to 'swear' means to 'use offensive or obscene language, especially to express anger' (Oxford English Dictionary).

Puspa Pant, Aberdeen

FEDERALISM

Ratna's Sansar's 'Jumping the Gun' (#467) is a simple, well-expressed article that touches on the more practical aspects of federalism hitherto ignored by those clamouring for a new set-up. Federalism is no panacea.

Prabhu KC, email



in the comprehensive peace agreement. We must focus our energy towards it. The planet will not collapse if he does not take

Nepal and Koirala

Nepal is behaving as if he is the leader rather than the figurehead of a wobbly coalition

When Prime Minister Nepal called on Girija Prasad Koirala early this week, the octogenarian leader may have been genuinely sick. When an elderly person is stressed, after all, symptoms of chronic diseases tend to worsen. And Koirala must be extremely worried. Contrary to his expectations, Premier Nepal is behaving as if he is the leader rather than the figurehead of a wobbly coalition.

After the fall of the Maoist-led government, the NC, as the second largest party in the legislative parliament, was entitled to take the reins of government. But Koirala probably didn't wish to sow seeds of disagreement in a party still struggling with its unification process with a former breakaway group. When the NC didn't stake its claim to



STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

leading the government, UML leader Jhalnath Khanal should have been the rightful choice.

Khanal was perceived to be too close to the Maoists for India's comfort. Koirala thus consented to give Madhav Kumar Nepal a chance on the assumption that he would be consulted. The appointment of daughter Sujata Koirala as deputy premier was an implicit condition.

Once ensconced in Baluwatar, Nepal didn't need Koirala anymore. He deduced accurately that as long as his anti-Maoist 'international community' constituency was intact, the NC wouldn't dare unseat him. Apparently, the Congress patriarch has failed once again to correctly

assess the UML's visceral antagonism against his party in general and the Koirala family in particular.

Since the mid-nineties, the UML has succeeded in attracting a large number of self-employed professionals, small entrepreneurs and something it calls 'nationalist' capitalists to its fold. But the petty

bourgeoisie continues to be the mainstay of the Balkhu establishment. Avowedly conventional in its beliefs and outlook, the lower middle-class hates proles. But it detests the elites even more. Since the time of BP Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh, Subarna Shamsher and Ram Narayan Mishra, the NC has relentlessly been portrayed as an elitist party. UML stalwarts are actually more comfortable in the company of the RJP or RPP, the political platforms of former Panchas with whom they worked during the time of absolute monarchy to resist the penetration of the NC into urban areas. Nepal knows his cadres aren't comfortable working with the NC as a coalition partner and doesn't want to antagonise them.

Premier Nepal has been in Nepali politics long enough to be aware of the risk of inviting Koirala's ire. But his core constituency in New Delhi isn't willing to cede an inch of political space to the Koiralas. A senior sleuth, who worked behind the scenes for the formation of Premier Nepal's anti-Maoist coalition, was recently heard remarking, "I have four years to go before I retire. By that time, I will make sure the Koiralas are history." He may have been merely massaging Nepal's bruised ego, but the discredited leader of the UML has apparently begun to believe that he is indispensable for now.

Despite a concerted disinformation campaign against the Maoists, it's Madhav Kumar Nepal's hubris that lies at the centre of the parliamentary deadlock in the Constituent Assembly. Under Nepal's leadership, the UML boycotted the entire winter session of Parliament in 2001, so he must know the difficulty of extricating an opposition party from a self-destructive, confrontational course. Even though the Maoists know the prolonged impasse in Parliament will ultimately harm them more than any one else, they just can't let it go without extracting at least a face-saving compromise.

Koirala and Nepal need to accept that there is no place for their old antagonism in the present scheme of things. They may have been movers and shakers once, but the main players in the political arena now are the Maoists and the Madhesis, as well as whoever hates or loves them strongly enough to meddle in the internal affairs of another country.

Koirala and Nepal need to make peace with Pushpa Kamal Dahal for their own good and for the future of peace and democracy in the country. ●



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Orbit International is an educational consultancy with a difference



On the way to the airport, when you drive by the International Conference Centre at Baneshwor, you can see a well-manicured garden right in front of the building. Orbit International Education maintains it. Asked about the incentive for an educational consultancy to get involved in urban beautification work, Uddhab KC, CEO of Orbit International Education, says: "Now that we are doing well as a business, we'd like to give a little something back to society."

The former handicrafts salesman who studied fine arts at Kathmandu's Lalitkala Campus

has indeed come a long way in his business career.

In the late '90s, whenever he returned from his periodic European visits, he was amazed to see many young Nepalis asking him about ways to study abroad. Sensing that there was a demand for honest advice, he opened up Orbit International Education in 2000 in a one-room office in Putali Sadak. "At the time, there was little information. I was able to turn my handicraft-selling trips into finding out how Nepali students could apply for scholarships at European colleges," he explains.

Students appreciated KC's getting first-hand information from abroad on their behalf. Fueled by this market trust, the educational advising business grew and grew. KC started a well-equipped TOEFL exam centre, and his standardised test-preparation classes filled to capacity as more and more

young Nepalis made plans to study abroad.

In 2004, KC, ever the maverick, decided to branch out to offer educational services to others too. His tie-ups with the British Embassy and the American Embassy to teach conversational English to security guards became successful templates for his subsequent work on teaching English to female MPs, the police and even housewives in Kathmandu.

"We are in the process of teaching English to taxi drivers who frequent the airport road," KC says. "If taxi drivers put their guests at ease, it will have many indirect effects on boosting tourism." His training program for photojournalists on the basics of first aid was appreciated by participants who cover riots and bandas.

KC is happy to note the progress the educational consultancy business has made in the last five years. "Many of my former employees have gone on to start similar businesses, and it makes me proud to see them doing well," he told *Nepali Times* after being chosen as the paper's September Company of the Month. But he readily admits that



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

there are quite a few fly-by-nights in his profession.

"Buyers beware," he cautions. "Students and parents must do their homework to make sure that they get their money's worth when they buy the services of an educational consultancy."

In the last few years, KC has been busy expanding his business overseas, and in medical education. Together with Nepali professionals living abroad, he has started offices in Japan, the Philippines, China and Australia. "As more and more Nepali

students head to those countries, it would be good to have a presence to assist them, and to look into new educational services that we can offer to our customers," he explains.

Early this year, KC ventured into offering medical school test prep courses. The courses are already oversubscribed. "The best medical applicants want to study in Nepal, where the quality of medical education is high," KC says. In any year, there are about 8,000 to 10,000 medical applicants for far fewer seats, and they all have to take the entrance tests.

To accommodate applicants who come from villages to Kathmandu, KC has built a dorm which offers subsidised room and board. He says, "My observation is that those who come from villages tend to take their education much more seriously than those who grew up in cities."

"I have been able to help thousands of Nepali students achieve their educational dreams," KC admits, even though he got into the educational advising business by accident. These days, he spends his time more on social service activities. He's founded an organisation that aims to stop cruelty to animals, and works on another plants trees, the growth of which is tracked with Google Earth software.

Says KC: "Others have helped me become what I am today. Now is the time for me to help others." ●



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अब सधैँका साथी

Turning 50

Marking the 50th anniversary of Asia-Pacific education, officials from the East-West Center (an international education, research and exchange institution) will be visiting Kathmandu 12-15 September. Says Karen Knudsen of EWC, "We hope to reinforce ties with the EWC community in South Asia, reach out to Nepali EWC alumni and meet prospective EWC students."



EAST-WEST CENTER

Headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii, the

East-West Center was founded by the U.S. Congress in 1960. Today the Center, supported mainly by the US government, provides educational scholarships and conducts cooperative research and discussions on common issues concerning the Asia-Pacific and the United States.

On the move

Prolink launched a brand new netbook, the Prolink Glee TA-009. Weighing only 1.1 kg, the netbook is available at Rs 36,000. Prolink also introduced a combo pack 'Wireless-N Portable Router and Adapter' designed especially for those with on-the-move lifestyles.

Absolutely free!

'Yaslai bhanchan Dasain ako', a grand Dasain-Tihar offer by CG, offers a chance to win a trip to Bangkok for five couples or a free CG product on the purchase of any CG product.



Convertible

SHTC International launched Fujitsu's LifeBook tablet-convertible PCs: the LifeBook T5010 and LifeBook T1010. The wider-screen PCs are said to be more convenient.

Irish Pub



The Irish Pub is offering a 25 per cent discount on shots of whiskey, gin, vodka, rum, brandy and various other spirits this Dasain season. New delicacies on the menu are chicken nuggets, fish burgers, and mushrooms with Guinness cream sauce and apple pie.

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Education politics

Shivaraj Bhandari (2nd year B.Sc student, Trichandra Campus) in *Annapurna Post*, 8 September

अन्नपूर्णपोष्ट

Once considered an exceptional institution, Tribhuvan University (TU) is now in a pitiable state. Engulfed in the country's political turmoil, the irresponsible, directionless course TU has taken is jeopardising the futures of more than two hundred thousand students.

The blame goes to academics and student leaders who spend their time running after corrupt politicians. TU is now a hub for dirty politics. It is not just criminal



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

politicians and egocentric scholars who should be blamed. We students have played an equal part in degrading TU. Our unacceptable behaviour – insulting

teachers, making classrooms romantic hideouts and the university grounds a battlefield – has done nothing but ruin our futures.

TU never releases results on time and exams don't take place according to timetables. Students, on the other hand, sit for exams only if they feel like it and if not, they hold them up claiming the questions don't relate to the course. TU itself isn't honest in this regard. How can our futures be safe, travelling in such a rickety vehicle?

SOLD

“They beat me even when I was sick” in *Nagarik*, 5 September
Rita, 20

नागरिक

My dad doesn't have a job. My mother eloped with another man. I'm the eldest daughter in a family of seven. Since the situation at home wasn't good I dropped out of school after eighth grade. I worried that if I didn't get a job my siblings wouldn't be able to go to school. My aunt offered to broker a trip for me to Kuwait, where she said I would earn a lot of money. I believed her.

I didn't have any money to get to Kuwait. My aunt assured me, “Don't worry, just give me 20 per cent of your earnings in Kuwait, you'll earn a lot there.” I was giddy with excitement. She got my passport made, and sent me to Mumbai through Silgudi. I reached Kuwait on 24 July and was taken to an office where there were other women. They were all unemployed.

Slowly I began to understand that the office collected women and sold them to work in rich people's houses. Everyday, rich Kuwaiti men would drop

by to see us, and picked those they liked to go home with them. We worked in the office until we were picked. I wasn't picked so everyday I washed the office floors and cleaned the windows. They took a blood sample from me, and I became sick soon after but wasn't given any medicine.

The office people beat me daily. They would throw me onto the floor and beat me. I didn't understand their language, but I think they were saying, “Nobody bought you. You cost us a lot of money.” They didn't even feed me properly. They gave me one stale meal a day, so I began to lose a lot of weight. When I wasn't able to walk any more, they sent me back. I reached Kathmandu on 9 August. In such a short time, I had become all skin and bones. I'm still recovering now.

I thought my aunt was doing something good for me, instead she had sold me. When I returned, a couple of friends told me to contact my family. But I still haven't done so. Nobody should go to the Gulf. Even if it means starving to death, I'm not returning. I wouldn't wish it on my enemy.



KIRAN PANDAY

“The Maoists will succeed”

Janadisha, 1 September

जनादिशा

Janadisha: What will happen if the new constitution is not written on time?

Baburam Bhattarai: When the Maoists won in the CA elections, regressive and foreign forces were startled and isolated us, for example, by requiring only a majority vote to topple the government. The President's coup attempt and election of the constitutional committee head are other examples of this. The United National People's Movement has been announced to check the return of regressive forces. For that we need to create public pressure.

Many believe the movement is to get power back.

For us, being in government is just a means to fulfill our objectives. If we were power hungry, we would never have resigned and would never have sacked Katawal. We never bowed to any forces. The main objective of this movement is to scrap the President's unconstitutional move, establish civilian supremacy and expel this puppet government.

What are the short-term and long-term goals of the movement?

The short-term goal is to get our 45-point demands met, to establish civilian supremacy and form a national unity government. The long-term goal is bring the government under the people's control completely.

How long do you think this 'puppet government' will last?

The government is like a weed in water and will soon fall, hopefully to be replaced by a more progressive government. Once it falls, a national unity government will be formed under the leadership of the Maoists.

What is the role of the media?

The media is important in the struggle against the anti-democratic, imperialist, feudalist forces. Even though media workers are generally in favour of the people and the nation, as long as the media is in the hands of a few capitalist owners, it cannot be independent and inform the people objectively. So media workers have to consider how to free themselves from the interests of the rich and join themselves to the cause of the people.

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“In Limbuwan, non-Limbus need not have fear!”



KIRAN PANDAY

Himal Khabarpatrika asked people in Phidim Bajar, Panchthar, about their views on ethnic federalism and the self-proclaimed Limbuwan province they currently inhabit. Translated excerpts:

Himal Khabarpatrika: Why are ethnic fronts necessary when we have political parties?
Kamalraj Nembang (Joint Secretary, Federal Limbuwan State Council): The unitary structure doesn't represent the country's diversity, so Rais and Limbus have formed fronts to demand federalism based on history and ethnicity rather than geography and administration. The fact that even economically well-off Limbuwan residents support Limbuwan proves that the problems this country faces are rooted in ethnicity, not class.

Dilendra Subba (President, Limbu Language Development Organisation): Nepal's problems are rooted in both ethnic and class differences. Those who consider class issues to be primary are seeking to retain the status quo, so Limbuwan and Khumbuwan residents have had to push for ethnic federalism through various fronts. Non-Limbu speakers have not been able to understand what I've had to experience as a Limbu speaker.

Labhang Chemjong (Federal National Democratic Front): The big parties don't understand the reality of Nepal. Not until we deal with the ethnic problem can we fix the class problem.

How will an ethnic federalist Nepal safeguard the rights of minorities?
Bir Bahadur Dhamala (Dalit Upliftment District Coordination Committee): Ethnic federalism won't help Dalits. Ever since this movement began two or three years ago, nobody's seriously addressed Dalit rights. Only if the movement to establish a Dalit

province in the west is supported by those espousing ethnic federalism will Dalit concerns be adequately addressed.

Lokendra Ale Magar (President, Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, District Coordination Council): Once a Limbuwan province is established, non-Limbu residents will have nothing to fear. But if the rights of indigenous communities are not enshrined in the new constitution these communities do not have to recognise it.

What are the relations between those supporting Limbuwan and those opposed to it in Panchthar?
Chhabi Banskota (President, NGO Federation of Nepal): It may not be fair to blame the parties advocating Limbuwan but persons linked to them are indulging in extortion. There have been slogans against Bahuns. Some in the pallo-Kirat have even denied people the right to buy or sell land. However, such activities are on the decline lately, and the situation isn't as bad as people elsewhere think it is. The leaders at least are of the opinion that we must work together.

Laya Banskota (CPN-UML): The extreme slogans of Limbuwan supporters may have sowed some fear but the actual situation is not that bad.

Lekhnath Khatiwada (President, Federation of Nepalese Journalists): In the last year, there have been about a dozen violations of press freedom on the part of Limbuwan supporters. We have had to self-censor ourselves. There is also a parallel justice system.

Kamalraj Nembang: Limbuwan residents know they cannot obtain their rights by disrupting communal harmony. If anybody does so in the name of Limbu rights then the press must expose this.

Dilendra Subba: I've heard the slogan 'Those Opposed to Limbuwan Beware', but that's about it. If it's the case it must be the work of those who don't want Limbuwan.

Mitra Lingden (central member, Federal National Democratic Front): It's not true that there were attacks on the press. We have been conducting protests and coming up with slogans but haven't done anything wrong. Our slogan 'Those Opposed to Limbuwan Beware' should not be interpreted negatively.

How can Limbuwan supporters and the state come to an agreement?
Jaya Rijal (Vice-Chairperson, Nepali Congress): Limbuwan residents have been respecting the ideal of communal harmony. But the leaders of ethnic fronts have perhaps not been able to educate their cadres sufficiently.

Raj Kumar Bhandari (Secretary, CPN-UML): This is the right time to demand Limbuwan's rights. But it seems the state is not ready to grant these demands, and those in the movement have been unable to present their case responsibly.

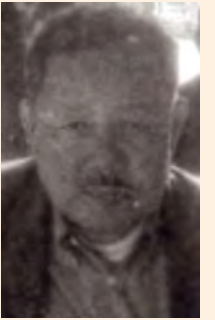
Sant Kumar Rai (Secretary, Nepal Bar Association): Those in the movement should focus less on whether all their demands have been met and more on whether a constitution is drafted that doesn't discriminate against any ethnicity.

Rupnarayan Jabegu (President, Teachers' Union): The main political parties should invite those agitating for their rights for discussions. Experts could help decide what kind of federalism is acceptable.

Lokendra Ale Magar: The demands of the movement should be addressed without disturbing religious or ethnic harmony. If the state looks at our demands in the right light, then they will seem entirely reasonable.

‘Need to be flexible about Hindi’

Mahendra Dhoj GC, NC CA member, Nawalparasi-2



How have you spent your time in the CA?

It's been a very frustrating 13 months because we haven't met people's expectations. We've dashed whatever hopes they had following the restoration of democracy.

Will the constitution be written on time?

Problems don't last forever, so I'm still hopeful. The constitution is the chief law that binds together various communities, ethnic and linguistic groups and religions. If the leaders put aside their differences, then the constitution will be written on time.

Unicameral or bicameral system?

A bicameral system will be best, since a unicameral system is a communist ideological brand. I don't want communist rule to be instituted in the name of the people. So the committee determining the form of legislative system should institute a bicameral system with a lower and upper house. I'm a member of that committee. The Maoists have delayed the constitution-writing process by raising the issues of a multi-member constituent electoral system and a unicameral assembly.

What do you think about the Madhesi demand to make Hindi the state language?

Some want Hindi, others English as the official state language. In my view, we don't need to be so rigid about language, so there's no need to campaign for one so forcefully. If parliamentarians in India are allowed to speak Nepali in their House, then what's the problem with allowing people to speak Hindi in ours?

What will it take to get the constitution-writing process going again?

The leaders must put their selfish interests aside and cooperate. If that happens, then whatever people outside the House do, the constitution will be written.

‘Need national government’

Madhusudan Agrawal, MJF CA member, Kathmandu



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

What do you think of the CA's work so far?

Although the constitution-writing process is going on slowly, the development and security situation hasn't improved at all, largely because of our stubborn party chiefs.

Will the constitution be written on time?

If the big three parties cooperate then there's no need to panic.

Why hasn't your committee, the Committee on the Distribution of Natural Resources, Financial Rights and Public Revenue

submitted its preliminary draft yet?

Committee members just haven't been able to patch up their differences. Many pretend to be independent thinkers but blindly follow party orders and ideology.

You're a businessman, how did you end up in the CA?

I wasn't elected. Upendra Yadav nominated me since he wanted somebody who could speak about economic issues. I wasn't involved with any party before.

What do you think about 'One Madhesh One Pradesh'?

More important than the identity of the province is that it really is autonomous.

Do you think Hindi should be made an official state language?

Since everyone speaks Nepali, it should surely be made an official state language. But we should consider giving Hindi that status too, since Mathili, Bhojpuri and Tharu speakers can easily understand it.

What needs to be done so the constitution is written on time?

The big parties need to cooperate and put the people's aspirations ahead of their own and form a national unity government.

MY LEFT FOOT: Nepal's own Christy Brown, the artist portrayed in the Academy Award winning movie



PICS: SUSHAN PRAJAPATI

RABI THAPA

For Jhamak Ghimire writing is everything, and everything is literature

We meet our contact off the bus from Hile, and instead of heading down to the spread of Dhankuta Bajar hike up into the cool, damp groves of Salleri beyond which Jhamak Ghimire lives with her family.

The air tingles with the scent of pine but the sky is overcast, and it begins to drizzle.

We hurry past a group of girls, all dressed up and someplace to go. It's Tij. One of them is Jhamak's sister, and we pass another of her siblings on the way. They all wave us on in the direction of their house, as if it were the most normal thing in the world. By the time we get to the modest single-storeyed house below the highway, it's pouring. Jhamak's parents greet us warmly and usher us into her room. The four of us, dripping, crowd into the small space lined with hundreds of books, framed certificates, and more books. We awkwardly arrange ourselves facing the flannelled, huddled figure in bed, feeling like intruders.

We're here to see Jhamak Ghimire, the celebrated Nepali author and *Kantipur* columnist. The 29-year-old is no run-of-the-mill litterateur. She was born with cerebral palsy, and can't speak, walk, or move her limbs freely. Her disability, however, hasn't prevented her from expressing her acerbic, poetic humour freely – through her left foot.

Arriving unannounced, we don't know what to expect.

But Jhamak, with a ready smile, soon puts us at ease. She reaches for a copybook and painstakingly begins to scribble responses to my questions, laughing delightedly every now and again at the jokes we exchange, completely accepting of the curiosity that has drawn us to this settlement above Dhankuta. She corrects me when I address her as Jhamak Kumari. "It's Jhamak. Kumari is just something they hung onto my name when I got my citizenship card." I apologise for my ignorance of her body of work, and try to explain that I write too, but in English. She assures me it doesn't matter what language I write in, as long as I write.

We're not the only visitors, not by a long shot. Her mother, Asha Devi Ghimire, brings in some tea and asks us to sign a bulky visitor's book filled with admiring comments. It's no surprise Jhamak inspires such wonder in those who flock to see her. Being deprived of an education didn't stop her from learning how to read and write all by herself, and she has progressed so far along this path that she is today an award-winning author of 10 published books comprising both prose and poetry, mediums she traverses with equal, heartfelt facility. Dr. Govinda Raj Bhattarai's English translation of Jhamak's autobiography, 'Jiwan Kadha Ki Phul' (Life, Thorn or Flower), is due by Tihar at the latest.

Jhamak's going places, too. Father Krishna Bahadur Ghimire proudly announces she is soon moving to Kathmandu courtesy of a grant from the Ministry of

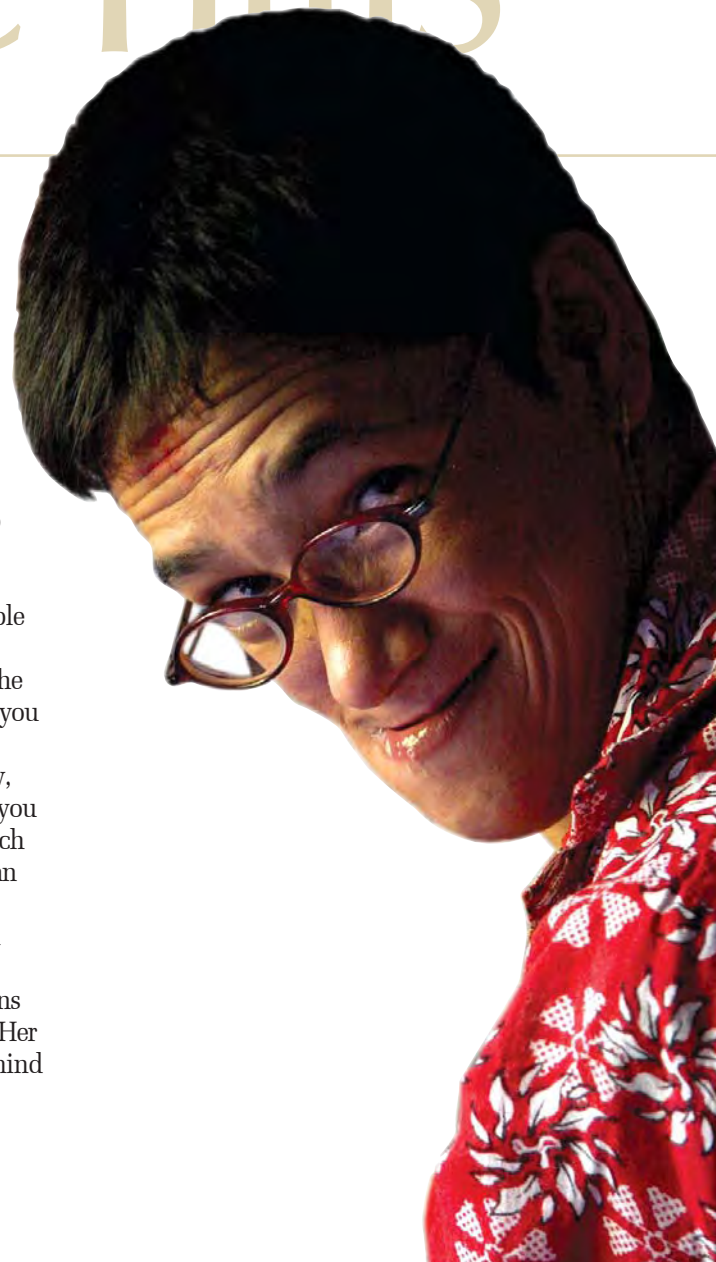


A ren child

LOOKING OUT AT THE WORLD:
Jhamak delights in what she can
see from her perspective



renegade of the hills



Women, Children and Social Welfare. Jhamak will be learning English for a year in the capital. “You’re sure to have plenty of visitors there,” I remark. “Will you still have the time to write?” “I need money like anyone else,” she says. “So I will continue to write.” But it’s hard to make a living as a writer in Nepal, isn’t it? She busies herself awhile and flips the copy over to me, grinning. “That’s true. But I only need a little, not so much.”

I look around the tiny space in which this remarkable woman has spent most of her life, and can’t help commenting on the books piled up in shelves and on the window sills. “You have books on everything here, are you interested in anything especially?” Jhamak responds: “Everything in every field can be seen as literature. Law, economics, science. I don’t want to limit myself.” “Do you spend all your time reading and writing, or do you watch TV too?”, I wonder. “I watch TV sometimes... I’m human after all,” she quips.

And perhaps this is the key to Jhamak Ghimire. An insistence on being seen as ordinary, coupled with an extraordinary drive to transcend her physical limitations and accept the diverse people and realities around her. Her body, as closed as a fist, has not been able to stop her mind from embracing the world around her. ●

Many thanks to Srijana Hingmang for taking us to meet Jhamak Ghimire.

Of Jhamak Ghimire’s poetry, translator Manjushree Thapa writes:

Poverty is an issue that is difficult to take on in poetry without giving way to flat, cliché-ridden didacticism. Jhamak overcomes this challenge through the sincerity of her voice, and the sophistication of her language. In the poem below, she takes to task the irresponsible father (the metaphoric father of the state) who has abandoned his progeny to the indifferent streets:

A STREET CHILD’S QUESTION TO HIS FATHER

Baba! I'll ask you a question
if you won't shout it down
for though you can boast
a hundred thousand offspring
I have only one father

Baba! Have you forgotten me
amid the hordes of your offspring
I am your fugitive child
Have you forgotten your
sleepless communion with my mother?
How could you embrace me
a new ray rising from a wrong time?
I am the avenging apparition
of a wrong time

an unneeded offspring
added to the hordes of your offspring
a mere child who broke through
his mother's stained womb
a renegade child

Baba! I'll ask another question
though you can boast
a hundred thousand children
the union of your blood is in
the union of my blood
Questions of silent union
arise from the cacophony

Half formed by you
fully formed by my mother
am I, the child of the street
Why did you damage me
on a corner of the street?
Why did you fill my mind
with gunpowder?
Its transformation will leave
your society and you
poisoned

Baba, my last question:
why are you siring
renegade children like me
who have lit your funeral pyre
before you have died
who have mourned you
before your death
shattering pebbles

Baba! Why are you siring
renegade children like me?

Road to riches

KATY ELLIOT

Last year apples from Jumla were fetching Rs 70 a kilo in the Tarai. They were low-grade fruit, battered and bruised after being harvested by growers vigorously shaking the trees, then flung unprotected into crates to be flown to Surkhet and roughly transported via potholed roads to Nepalgunj and beyond. In fact, of the 3000 metric tonnes of apples that were grown only 5% was exported out of the region and the rest was dumped as mulch on the land.

This year Jumla's A grade, gleaming organic apples are selling for as much as Rs 350 a kilo to the health-conscious Kathmandu elite willing to pay a premium for organic. Jumla's organic certified apple farmers are now receiving Rs 35 a kilo instead of Rs 10, and this is projected to rise next year.

The region's seven apple varieties represent part of a wider strategy to brand Jumla an 'organic district'. In 2007, the local district council banned the import and use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers. All produce from the region is by default organic because the farmers have no access to and can rarely afford to use chemicals. The Jumla apples are the country's first fruit to be certified (by independent company Organic Certification Nepal) under the government's new guidelines.

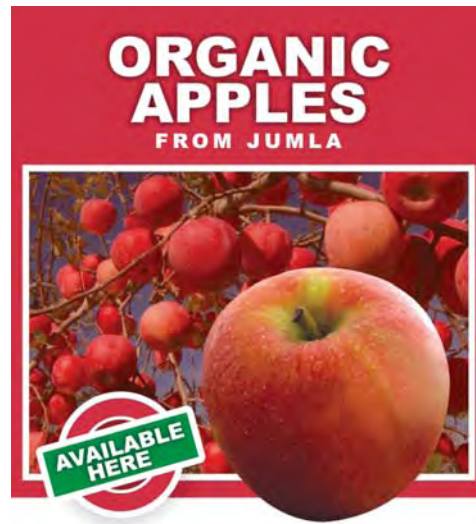
The construction of the Karnali road between Jumla and Surkhet, which partially opened in 2007, is still incomplete but farmers are hopeful it will be completed within two to four years. This would give them a cheaper and greener route to market (Kathmandu is 600 km away). In anticipation some 10,000 households in the district

Investment in Jumla's organic apples is bringing an old dream to fruition

now have apple orchards with 300 apple growers already certified organic.

For now the road is still impassable during the monsoon and the apples are being flown to Surkhet well packaged and protected, then transported by road for the final 400 potholed kilometres to the capital to ensure they are in the shops in the run-up to Dasain.

The District Agriculture Development Office in Jumla is collaborating with the Jumla



Chamber of Commerce and Dutch NGO SNV, and has received funding from agencies such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development and World Vision to train more than 300 farmers this year.

"The farmers' level of knowledge, especially regarding harvesting and packaging, was very low," says Bhairab Kaini, horticulturalist at the Nepal Horticultural Promotion Centre. "They were harvesting very traditionally and roughly by

shaking the trees till the fruit fell."

The fledgling organic apple industry marks a steep learning curve for farmers. But SNV Value Chain Advisor Rik van Keulen is positive about their investment. "Word has spread about Jumla apples. The whole mid and far west above 2000m is very suitable for apple growing. To change to organic in areas where chemicals are already being used is tough. But areas like Jumla and Dolpa, where we've heard the apple quality is even higher, are by default organic."

Apples were first introduced to the region in the late 1960s by the visiting monarch, who brought them as a gift from Kashmir. But the promised road was never completed and any early hopes for a market stagnated for 40 years. This year, the organic mantra may help Jumla farmers unleash their full potential.

Jumla apples are now available in Kathmandu at Bhat Bhateni, Navadurga Department Store, Kastamandap Bazaar and Saleways. ●

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Apple trouble

The harvest of Jomsom apples is down a whopping 60 per cent this year because of the late monsoon, poor roads and an apple disease that's blighted orchards in several Village Development Committees.

Apples thrive in dry climates, but conditions in the far west have been unusually dry this year. "This is all due to global warming. It has been particularly bad in high altitude places like Mustang, where that hasn't been snow this year," says CR Gurung, Chief of Citrus Development Program in Kirtipur.

Orchards in other popular apple-producing districts like Mustang, Manang, Jumla and Dolpa have also been hit hard by the dry spell. As a result, apples have ripened earlier than usual. They usually hit the market in late September or early October.

Harvesters have had trouble ferrying apples to major markets because the Jomson-Beni highway has fallen into disrepair. They have also had to grapple with apple scab, which causes dark, scab-like lesions to appear on tree leaves and significantly reduces yield.

Like apples from other parts of the country, Jomsom apples are grown almost totally organically, although chemicals are sometimes used to treat diseases like apple scab. Many world-famous varieties of apple are grown in Jomsom. They were imported by American NGOs and the Indian government, which has contributed enormously to apple development in the region.

Despite the troubles, Jomsom apples really stand out for their taste. "The apples are very juicy," says Gurung. *Suvayu Dev Pant*

Bird Business

Helping others make merit was merit enough for Mishad



BIRD IN HAND, BIRD IN BUSH: Man makes merit, munia makes merry

PICS: MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA



UP CLOSE: There's more to birds than pigeons and crows



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

A toddler rattles a cage and giggles as the bewildered budgies inside squawk, panicked. Nearby, 24-year-old Mohammad Minshad, who sells the birds to pilgrims at the shrine of Swayambhu, looks on misty-eyed. "This is all worth it", he says. "I'm happy because they're happy."

For the last 12 years, Minshad has been selling munias and budgerigars to Buddhists from all

over the world, who release them from their cages to gain religious merit. He wakes up everyday at 9am and walks from bird wholesalers in Chabahil and Bag Bajar to shrines around the Valley, making regular treks up the 365 steps leading to Swayambhu. He carries up to 70 birds at a time, held in sets of five or six in about a dozen cages.

The business isn't very brisk. On most afternoons Minshad manages to sell only seven or eight pairs of birds. But he does better on full moon nights, celebrated by

Hindus and Buddhists alike, who flock to temples and eagerly take up the chance to perform good deeds like feeding and clothing the poor and, happily for Minshad, freeing caged birds.

"Full moon days are my favourite. It's like another Dasain every month."

Minshad is a crafty businessman. The price for a pair of munias is Rs 400 for Nepalis but about Rs 1000 for Tibetan pilgrims. Although bigger birds would fetch a higher price, he doesn't have a license to sell

them. "If I sold big birds and the cops found out I'd be the one behind bars, not the birds."

But Minshad is going to have to close shop because he can't afford life in Kathmandu anymore, especially with a wife and two children to feed. He says he will return to his hometown Malangawa, in Sarlahi district, to try his hand at farming.

Will he miss his birds? "Yes," says Minshad, as he watches the toddler trail away and become transfixed by a pigeon fluttering on a nearby ledge. ●



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Film South Asia's seventh edition hosts the region's best documentaries

From 17-20 September in Kathmandu, Film South Asia (FSA) is showcasing 35 south Asian documentaries competing for the Ram Bahadur Trophy. The trophy, named after late Ram Bahadur Tamang (pictured with camera in the FSA logo), is sculpted in bronze by Purna Kaji Shakya. Actress Shabana Azmi will deliver the opening speech.

Tickets are priced at Rs 30 at the Kumari Cinema in Kamalpokhari, but FSA is putting out contribution boxes at the venue for the Ram Bahadur Trust. Donations will go to Sri Bhal Chandra Secondary School in the village of Rayale in Kavre district.

Afghan Girls Can Kick
Afghanistan's first-ever women's football team prepares for competitive international matches, and witnesses



Afghanistan change as the harsh, brutally patriarchal Taliban regime gives way to a modern government.



Out of Thin Air
Cinema magnates in the Ladakhi film industry happen to make a living as restaurant workers and cops. *Out of Thin Air* takes a look at their distinctly unglamorous lives.

The Way of the Road
A plan to connect an ancient Himalayan trade route in remote Rasuwa district, once the site of a Nepal-Tibet war, arouses mixed feelings among indigenous

Tamang communities.

In Search of the Riyal
The story of young Nepalis from disadvantaged communities who rush to the Gulf for work but return disillusioned. The film explores a world still obscure mainly because Gulf countries won't open their labour practices to global scrutiny.



Children of God
Many children live off the rituals of death in the cremation grounds at Pashupatinath in Kathmandu. *Children of God* documents their macabre struggle to stay alive.

Supermen of Malegaon
Inhabitants of the depressed central Indian town of Malegaon take refuge in the fantastical world of cinema, spurring a young group of cinema enthusiasts to make their own



quirky films, notably *Superman of Malegaon*. A small town mirrors India.

Chilika Bank\$
In a canvas spread over four decades, a banyan tree on the banks of Lake Chilika whispers tales of the lake and her fisherfolk. Once there was no export bazar, and one day there may no longer be a lake.

Threadbare
The story of the victims of Canada's 'War on Terror': 24 men are falsely accused, imprisoned and deported just for having the word 'Mohammad' in their names.

Machis ko Sinka (Matchstick)
A project that began as a search for

the Nepali-Indian identity, *Machis Ko Sinka* evolved into an attempt to understand the Gorkhaland Movement in Darjeeling and to interpret it for mainland Indians. The film studies the movement's use of violence.



People's Leader
A film about two different periods of Benazir Bhutto's life: her struggle for democracy, and her two stints as prime minister of Pakistan.



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Film South Asia 2009 Schedule

HALL A		
THU 17-Sep	4PM	The Lightning Testimonies (113') India, 2007, dir - Amar Kanwar Exploring South Asia's conflicts through sexual violence.
FRI 18-Sep	10AM	Mayomi (50') Sri Lanka, 2008, dir - Carol Salter Post-tsunami, a woman struggles to hold her family together.
	11.15AM	Come to My Country: Journeys with Kabir and Friends (98') India, 2008, dir - Shabnam Virmani Unlikely bonds in the quest for Kabir's 'country'.
	2PM	Punches n Ponytails (74') India, 2008, dir - Pankaj Rishi Kumar Women boxers work through their insecurities.
	3.45PM	Bhagwan Das: In Pursuit of Ambedkar (61') India, 2009, dir - S Anand The Constituent Assembly friend and Ambedkar.
	5.15PM	Afghan Girls can Kick (50') Afghanistan, 2007, dir - Bahareh Hosseini Spunky girls do kick well.
SAT 19-Sep	10AM	Delhi: Work in Progress (38') India, 2008, dir - Krishnendu Bose The Commonwealth Games and reinvention.
	11.15AM	People's Leader - Last 72 Days (25') Pakistan, 2008, dir - Nargis Hashmi The climax of Benazir Bhutto's eventful life.
		The Last Rites (17') Bangladesh, 2008, dir - Yasmine Kabir Where the ships go to die.
	12.30PM	The Forgotten Refugees (45') Nepal/Bhutan, 2009, dir - Amanda Burrell The Lhotshampa go overseas.
		Children of the Pyre (74') India, 2008, dir - Rajesh S Jala The kids of Benaras' Manikarnika ghat.
	2.15PM	Out of Thin Air (50') India, 2009, dir - Samreen Farooqui & Shabani Hassanwalia A peep into Ladakh's film industry.
	3.30PM	Threadbare (40') Canada/Pakistan, 2008, dir - Arshad Khan Simply the name 'Mohammad' gets 24 arrested in Canada.
	4.30PM	In Search of the Riyal (86') Nepal, 2009, dir - Kesang Tseten Study of Nepali migrants in the Gulf.
SUN 20-Sep	10AM	All the World's a Stage (60') India, 2008, dir - Nirmal Chander Sufi performers, the Sidi Goma ponder modernity.
	11.30AM	Encountered on Saffron Agenda? (90') India, 2007, dir - Shubhradeep Chakravorty Gujarat adopts encounter killings; minorities victimised.
	1.30PM	Children of God (89') Nepal, 2008, dir - Yi Seung-jun The kids of Aryaghat.
	3.30PM	Forever Young (78') India, 2008, dir - Ranjan Palit Shillong's Lou Majaw on Bob Dylan's birthday.
HALL B		
THU 17-Sep	3.30PM	Chilika Bank\$ (60') India, 2008, dir - Akanksha Joshi The Banyan and Chilika Lake's forgotten history.
	5PM	Saamam (The Music) (42') India, 2009, dir - Ramachandran K Homage to Carnatic music legend M D Ramanathan.
FRI 18-Sep	9.30AM	Leaving Home - The Life and Music of Indian Ocean (114') India, 2008, dir - Jaideep Varma Understanding the musicians behind IO.
	12PM	The Battle for Pakistan (40') Pakistan, 2009, dir - Maheen Zia Where do extremism and madrasas converge in Pakistan?
	1.30PM	The Promised Land (90') Bangladesh, 2008, dir - Tanvir Mokammel Stigma still haunts Bangladesh's 'Biharis'.
	3.30PM	Flying on One Engine (51') India/USA, 2008, dir - Joshua Weinstein Ailing, eccentric Brooklyn doctor helps India's cleft-lipped.
	5PM	Shores Far Away (49') India, 2007, dir - Savyasaachi Jain Migrants attempt to smuggle themselves into Europe.
SAT 19-Sep	10AM	Our Family (56') India, 2007, dir - Anjali Monteiro/ K P Jayasankar Three transgender women speak to you.
	11.30AM	The Legend of Shiva and Parvati (85') India/Germany, 2008, dir - Krishna Saraswati The hippie girl and the yogi of India.
	1.30PM	Supermen of Malegaon (79') India, 2008, dir - Faiza Ahmad Khan Small-town churns out hilarious Hollywood spoof.
	3.15PM	The Salt Stories (84') India, 2008, dir - Lalit Vachani Following Gandhi's salt march in our time.
	5PM	Morality TV and the Loving Jihad: A Thrilling Tale (31') India, 2008, dir - Paromita Vohra Inside India's breaking news' industry.
SUN 20-Sep	11AM	Machis Ko Sinka (Matchstick) (11') India, 2008, dir - Radhamohini Prasad The pro- and anti- violence arguments of Gorkhaland.
		The Way of the Road (60') Nepal, 2009, dir - Ben Campbell & Cosmo Campbell Will the Rasuwa Nepal-Tibet road help villagers?
	12.30PM	In the Market Stands Kabir: Journeys with Sacred & Secular Kabir (94') India, 2008, dir - Shabnam Virmani The spiritual Kabir reconciled with the secular.
	2.30PM	Temples in the Clouds (56') India, 2008, dir - Jim Mallinson & Chicoo Patuzzi Paragliding pilgrimage to Himachal's Chamunda temple.
	4PM	Super 30 (59') India, 2008, dir - Christopher Mitchell Poor kids with math shoot for IIT.

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ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **'Nepal Rendezvous - Nagarkot Workshop'**, paintings by Bangladeshi and Nepali artists at Hotel de l'Annapurna, Darbar Marg, till 31 Oct, 4218048

EVENTS

- ❖ **Gandhi, My Father**, movie screening at Lazimpat Gallery Café, 12 Sep, 5.30PM, 4428549
- ❖ **Film South Asia 2009**, Festival of south Asian documentaries, 17-20 Sep, www.filmsouthasia.org
- ❖ **Patan Press Club**, meets every Thursday at Dhokaima Café, 6PM, 5522113
- ❖ **Himalayan Buddhist Meditation Centre**, Tai Chi 10-11.30AM, Yoga 8.30-9.30AM and Meditation 5-6PM weekdays, Keshar Mahal Marg, Thamel, 4410402

MUSIC

- ❖ **Mukti n' Revival**, concert at House Of Music, Thamel, 11 Sep, 7.30PM, 9851050166
- ❖ **Baja gaja**, every Tuesday at Moksh, Pulchok, 7.30PM onwards, 5526212
- ❖ **Live band** every Friday and rooftop bbq everyday at Kausi Kitchen, Darbar Marg, 4227288
- ❖ **Sunday Jazz brunch** barbecue and live jazz music at the Terrace, Hyatt Regency, 12-3.30PM, 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, Rs 899 at Fusion, Dwarika's Hotel, 7PM onwards, 4479488
- ❖ **Happy cocktail hour**, ladies night on Wednesday with live unplugged music at Jatra Café & Bar, Thamel, 5-7PM
- ❖ **Nepali Ghajals** and songs at D'Lounge Beijing Duck Restaurant, every Thursday 6.30PM onwards, 4468589

DINING

- ❖ **Wine Festival**, until 15 Sep, Kilroy's Thamel, 4250440
- ❖ **Chocolate, Coffee and Caramel**, every evening at The Lounge, 4.30-6.30PM, 4491234



- ❖ **Tiger for Breakfast**, breakfast everyday at 1905, Kantipath, 4215068
- ❖ **A café's café**, Dhokaima Café, Patan Dhoka, 5522113
- ❖ **Jazzabell Café**, relaunched at Jhamsikhel, 2114075
- ❖ **The Corner Bar**, 5-7PM, 3-11PM, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu, 4411818

- ❖ **Al Fresco**, for home made pasta, steak and freshwater trout, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 4273999
- ❖ **Kakori**, for biryanis, curries and kebabs, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 7-10.45PM
- ❖ **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 at Le Resturant, Gairidhara, 4436318
- ❖ **Plat Du Jour** at Hotel Shangri-La, Lazimpat, 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
- ❖ **Stupa View Restaurant**, for vegetarian creations & clay oven pizza at Boudha Stupa, 4480262

GETAWAYS

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

For inclusion in the listing send information to [editors\(at\)nepalitimes.com](mailto:editors(at)nepalitimes.com)

Quest Entertainment



The story revolves around Chintu Ji (Rishi Kapoor), an erstwhile superstar, who is now trying his luck in politics. The residents of a small village, Hadbahedi, discover Chintu ji was born in their village. To draw attention to the backward state of their community the villagers invite Chintu Ji to visit his birthplace once more. Considering it an opportunity to launch his political career, Rishi Kapoor accepts the invitation and visits the village in his chartered plane, along with his young and dynamic PR agent, Devika Malhotra (Kulraj Randhawa). Can Chintu Ji survive village life without falling prey to tempting monetary and political offers?

Call 4442220 for show timings at Jai Nepal
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WEEKEND WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Don't make travel plans yet because the monsoon won't go away for a few more weeks, even if, customarily, it should end two weeks from now. This satellite radar composite taken on Thursday morning shows a big low pressure system sitting over eastern India. This means more rains into the weekend. Expect overcast skies for the next few days, but rain mostly at night. The depression is fairly widespread and is expected to linger as it plays a tug-o-war with autumnal westerly winds.



RECIPES

by GRAHAM SYDNEY

Pepper Crusted Tuna Salad with a sweet & sour ginger dressing

(Serves 4)

A refreshing summer salad.
600g fresh tuna fillet
100g coarse ground black pepper
1 egg

Cut the tuna with the grain of the flesh into strips of 5cm x 5cm. Separate the egg keeping the yolk for your dressing. Lightly beat the egg white with 1 tablespoon of water. Brush the tuna with the egg white and roll in the pepper. In a dry pan, on medium to high heat, sear the tuna on all sides for about 60 seconds depending on how rare you like your tuna. Allow to cool.



2 tablespoons
1 teaspoon
¼ cup
½ cup
1 teaspoon
3 tablespoons
1
1 teaspoon
salt to taste
Juice of 2 lemons

ginger paste
chopped garlic
rice or white wine vinegar
plain oil
wasabi or mustard powder
honey
egg yolk
sesame oil

Using a hand blender, blend the ginger, garlic, vinegar, egg yolk, honey and wasabi until smooth. Continue blending whilst adding the sesame oil and then the plain oil a little at a time until the dressing becomes thick and smooth. Season with salt and chill in the fridge. Slice the tuna as thin as possible and serve with your choice of salad drizzled with the dressing.

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Weekly Internet Poll # 468

Q. Will the PLA-Army row be settled within six months as promised?

Total votes: 1,692

Hardly likely 63.4%
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MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

GERI MALPUWA: Geri Halliwell greets Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal on Wednesday at Everest Hotel as part of a campaign to raise awareness of women's rights.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

I'LL BE GOOD: President Ram Baran Yadav administers the oath of office to Army Chief Chhatraman Gurung at a swearing-in ceremony amid army generals, bureaucrats and security chiefs at his residence in Maharaj Gunj on Wednesday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

LHASA IN COLOUR: Chinese ambassador Quo Guohang observes a picture of a Tibetan woman on Wednesday at a photo exhibition entitled, 'Women in Tibet, China' organised by Sun City Art Gallery, Lhasa.



KIRAN PANDAY

DIVINE PROTECTION: Indian nationals Girish and Raghavendra Bhatta undertake initiation rituals on Saturday before beginning priestly duties at Pashupati Temple. The two were earlier beaten up by Maoists protesting the tradition of appointing Indian priests at the shrine.



KIRAN PANDAY

SAMARITANS: Members of a 'Neighborhood Improvement Committee' help clean up the Pashupati area on Wednesday as part of a campaign to raise awareness about cleanliness in the city.



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A donkey's Dasain

The prime minister's advisers were probably trying to ensure the longevity of the Nepal government by making a big deal out of the fact that Barack Obama has given an appointment to **Prime Minister Mcoonay**. Baluwatar wants to cast this in stone so the government won't be toppled before October. But if history is any guide, pre-announcing a visit doesn't ensure the longevity of an incumbent: remember how Kishunji's state visit to France didn't save him from being ousted by GPK in the early 1990s?

If a prime minister uses every public speech to declare that his government is not going to fall, then it must mean it is about to fall. The *halla* about the **govt's imminent demise** reached a crescendo this week.

The rumours were triggered by GPK snubbing MKN and making overtures to PKD, then the meeting between SBD, JNK and PKD, and the anti-Suzy kangresi caucus meeting in Narayan Than. Despite all this intrigue, the govt has survived the pre-Dasain scare. Now all we have to do is wait for the post-Dasain scare.

Even the intrigue-minded Maobaddies don't know what to make of all this wheeling and dealing. But they have to make a big bang before everyone goes to sleep over Dasain, so they have announced a Samyukta Rastriya Jana Andolan Samiti. How does a **one-party agitation** become Samkyukta?

The week was awash with other **Maoist doublespeak**. Comrade Awe-inspiring first told cheering supporters that the ten-year war was a picnic and threatened a war in which 10 lakh would be killed. More cheers. Then in Biratnagar, he let slip what he really meant by civilian supremacy: "civilian supremacy means every civilian will have a gun". After that, Pashupati blew up in Fearsome's face and he got Mahara Babu to issue a double-tongued statement: "We didn't do it. The people did it, and we support the people." The tyre-burning at Pashupati went on the next day, but the protesters were no longer carrying Maoist flags.

But the Baddies chose the wrong time to attack Pashupati, when almost the entire Indian press corps was here to chase up the story on ex-CP Paras being involved in **fake currency**

trafficking. One Indian tv editor even called his correspondent in KTM to rake up a Chinese role in backing the Maoist attack on Pashupati. Mix 24-hour tabloid tv with hyper-nationalism and you get dynamite.

Something is definitely cooking on the India front. The new Indian **foreign sec** is supposed to visit next week, even while a half-dozen **young turk netas** fly in the opposite direction on a junket: Minendra, Shekhar, Pradeep G, Khimlal, Arzoo and Anil J. For once, we know they are not all going for health checkups.

The Baddies invited civil society members for a tête-à-tête ostensibly to ask for advice. All present told them off about the prolonged house boycott, BRB and PKD nodded sagely, but the house boycott continues. They told the comrade leaders to restrain their cadre, and the same day the Pashupati priests got beaten up. Too much to expect the leopard **to change its spots**.

The Prime Minister of Nepal got all touchy feely with Geri

Halliwell at the National Campaign to End Gender-based Violence the other day. Makunay was seen joking and fooling around with **Ginger Spice** throughout, oblivious of the fact that he was on national tv. Spice held his hand and put her hands on his shoulder several times, almost soft-massaging him. At one point the PM got up abruptly to go to the loo (yes, even premiers have to go) leaving Geri quite confused. In her speech, Geri called him a "21st century man". During the group photo session at the end, Geri fondly put her arms around MKN and the 5' 1" Prime Minister of Nepal reciprocated, but ended up grasping her love handles,

according to our eye witness. Let's not forget Ginger was famous for pinching Prince Charles' royal ass when she was still a Spice Girl.

With the holiday season approaching, it's a good time to remind ourselves of the good times we have as the country with the **most holidays** of any on earth. And we're not even counting the bandas. Which reminds me, the Ass is taking the next two weeks off. Even donkeys celebrate Dasain, yar. ●

ass(at)nepalitimes.com



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