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p10

Sujata, Sujata, Sujata. Three columnists tackle the latest debacle:

p3, p5, p10

KIRAN PANDAY



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GETTING ON WITH IT

Trust Bidya Bhandari to transform the most mundane issues of the defence ministry into the most pressing concerns of the nation. From the day she took charge, she has constantly ridiculed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

First she wanted the army to resume recruitment. Better sense prevailed in the Council of Ministers, which refused to approve her proposals. She wanted some discredited army generals promoted, overriding the objections of human rights defenders. She got her way. She then wanted to restart procuring arms and ammunition. She now wants ex-army chief Rookmangad Katawal to shoulder important responsibilities in his retirement.

Bhandari seems to think that even though she lost the CA elections, Nepal's middle-class is behind her. That may be so, but she should remember that this is a transition period, where unilateral decisions on sensitive issues will only strengthen the Maoist argument about this government's illegitimacy.

Bhandari's claim that the peace agreement, which put arms procurement and new recruitment on hold, is affecting the preparedness of the Nepal Army is not without merit. However, the priority now is to protect the peace and write a new constitution.

Strengthening the defence forces is necessary, but it is not the priority.

To be sure, certain provisions of the CPA are absurd: you can't equate an insurgent group with the national army. But in 2006 it was needed to initiate the peace process. UN monitoring has been a joke, but it was a fig leaf the Maoists needed to show that they didn't lose the war. However absurd they may look now, the peace structure stands on these fragile feet. Remove them now and the whole thing could come crashing down.

The CPA is a faulty document, but for now, that's all the defence minister has. She'd do well to implement its provisions and move on. The sooner we can leave our past behind us and get on with it, the sooner Nepal can be a peaceful, prosperous and just society.



KIRAN PANDAY

Uncomplicating peace

Forgetting the past is not Nepal's future

There is a revealing anecdote about Girija Prasad Koirala and his idea of justice.

After the April 2006 movement, a group of human rights activists sought an appointment with GPK to discuss war-time atrocities. GPK did not think it was important enough. The activists conjured



PLAIN SPEAKING
Prashant Jha

up another reason, and managed to get a meeting. They talked about the need to address impunity, and the need for action against perpetrators of certain emblematic cases.

The 'democracy veteran'

snapped, "Let me make one thing clear. The Maoists have already expressed their concern that nothing should happen to their leaders and cadre; the Army leadership also has similar concerns. What is important now is the peace process. I have told both of them that nothing will happen and no case will be pushed against them."

Koirala's attitude was representative of the attitude of the larger political class, who pat themselves on their back for being 'realistic'. They all felt that bygones should remain bygones. The refrain was unanimous across party lines – avoid steps that will open up a Pandora's Box and complicate the peace process.

There was an easier route - forget the past.

This columnist too was drawn to the argument, until the killings in the Tarai shot up. A pattern was visible. Analyst Tula Narayan Sah has done remarkable research to show that the political violence in the Tarai can be traced back to past crimes that went unpunished and a desire for revenge. A key reason for both the Gaur massacre and the Kapilbastu riots was that the Maoists and other groups harboured grievances against each other. A bloody tit-for-tat, even delayed, was inevitable.

Forgetting the past may appear attractive if you are insulated from the conflict. It obviously doesn't work if your father, mother, brother, sister, wife, husband, son, or daughter is part of the past's violence. To suggest that painful memories be obliterated is both a morally questionable position and a politically ineffective and naïve strategy. The root of the Maoist insurgency was the perceived absence of justice. But the cardinal lesson of that period was not learnt. No justice means more violence.

Those following the Maina Sunwar case (she was tortured

and killed by army officers in 2004) were not surprised when her father was found dead this week in mysterious circumstances. Activist Mandira Sharma points to the struggle that each family has had to mount; how the process has been deeply frustrating; how the pain and depression has taken its toll; and how, in the process, victim's families have made enemies of powerful people. She adds, "The feeling among victims is that if Maina's family could not get justice after all this, what hope is there for others?"

What is left is a deep sense of hurt. That hurt may sometimes translate into apathy, but often results in thoughts of vengeance. If you wonder about the rising violence, or the rage that characterises even banal everyday street conversations, it is because we live in a society that has suffered, where many people feel cheated out of life's simple joys, thereby fueling a desire to destroy or be destroyed.

One could argue that it is in the Nepal Army's interest to take action against officers involved in cases such as Maina's - this would enhance their institutional prestige and silence critics. It is in the Maoists' self interest to act against the Bibidhs of their party – this would overhaul their image and demonstrate a commitment to democracy. And that could mark the beginning of a wave of reparations across the country.

But it is unlikely that this will happen, for neither side feels it has committed any wrong. Crimes have been justified through clever narratives. Collateral damage is seen as a part of the game. And killers on both sides have become part of the new political elite.

An apology for the pessimism, but given the shocking inability of our politicians to provide justice, Nepal seems destined to remain stuck in a cycle of violence and hatred. ●

LETTERS

NON-RESIDENT NONSENSE

In his rather condescending column 'The NRN Manifesto' (#471), one can perceive Prem Jung Thapa's bitterness against the current NRN leadership.

What he has failed to mention in his write-up is that the current NRN leadership and thousands of Nepalis abroad have developed an unbroken networking capacity across the world in the last 6 years of the existence of the NRNA (Non Resident Nepali Association). Since 2003, NRNA has organised 3 global conferences in Kathmandu and many regional conferences in the Middle East, Europe and the Far East.

A lot of hard work and imagination has gone into setting up an organisation for the Nepali and by the Nepali people. An organisation like

NRNA will have a multi-pronged approach to work with Nepal at various levels, not just in terms of business investment. Comparing NRNA's objectives with that of business houses of Nepal is myopic and absurd in the extreme.

I hope the readership of Nepali Times will recognise Mr. Thapa's argument that NRNA is yet another rent-seeking organisation based on Nepali ethnicity to be a completely humbug assertion. On the eve of the fourth global

NRNA conference in Kathmandu such a diversion should be treated as just that, a diversion.

Gaury S Adhikary,
Country
Representative,
NRNA, USA



IMPIOUS

Issue 471's front page 'Triumvirate' graphics are a disrespect to the Lord. To use the auspicious and blessed Shivalingam in that context is an abuse, and may be an innocent mistake by Nepali Times. Please remove the graphics from all your online media.

Prabin Raj Gautam, USA

CORRECTIONS

- Due to an editorial error, the article 'Baniyas and Brahmins' (#471) wrongly identified Surya Bahadur Thapa as chief of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party and Rajendra Mahato as belonging to MJF-D. They lead the Rastriya Janashakti Party and Sadbhavana Party respectively.
- Help Nepal Network has 12 chapters worldwide, not 21, of which 5 are officially registered charities, not 4 ('Inspiration, inc.', #471).

LETTERS

Nepali Times welcomes feedback. Letters should be brief and may be edited for space. While pseudonyms are accepted, writers who provide their real names and contact details will be given preference. Email letters should be in text format without attachments with 'letter to the editor' in the subject line. Email: letters(at)nepalitimes.com Fax: 977-1-5521013 Mail: Letters, Nepali Times, GPO Box 7251, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The daughter also rises

There is something about Sujata Koirala that makes everyone uncomfortable. It's not her lineage. Other Koirala women hardly evoke the same hope, fear and frustration. It's not beauty either, though she looks quite striking for a grandmother.

If birth and beauty were decisive criteria for success in politics, Manisha Koirala should have been reigning in Kathmandu rather than slowly fading from filmdom in Bombay. Despite her much publicised forays into Rautahat, the glamorous granddaughter of BP Koirala has failed to make her mark in politics.

STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

For all her intelligence and gravitas, Nona Koirala's hold over NC politics was felt, but seldom seen. Shailaja Acharya was a visible presence with a history of struggle and sacrifice. But she wasn't, ultimately, able to influence her party's politics. Sidelined from the mainstream, both these 'women of substance' died dejected.

Sujata Koirala insists on being seen and heard. She wants political power and she will get it. It's her grit and determination that NC bigwigs find disagreeable, but what they hate most is how she never misses an opportunity to remind them that they are where they are today simply because of the Koirala clan. For those who pretend to be popular in their own right, this must be painful.

Who said hardcore politics was a popularity contest?



KIRAN PANDAY

Republican royalty is an oxymoron, but it thrives in some form or the other in most democratic societies. With uncertainty the only certainty, politics is the battlefield of the determined and the desperate. Scions of political dynasties may have a launching pad at their disposal, but they are at heart no different.

Unfortunately, shows of resolve and ferocity do not often endear one to people. That's why successful politicians have more followers than friends, though also more critics than outright enemies. Sujata is no exception: she probably realised early on that courting controversy was the shortest route to success in democratic politics. It's her recklessness that gives her companions

and competitors the creeps. But whoever said hardcore politics was a popularity contest?

The chattering classes of Kathmandu love to hate Sujata for different reasons. For them, she is an upstart from the periphery. She didn't even attend St. Mary's, after all. But she dresses better, has more men half her age following her, and she gets what she wants, almost all the time.

When as foreign minister she refused to accompany PM Madhav Nepal on his visit to New Delhi, the entire political class in Kathmandu accused Daughter Koirala of sabotaging the anti-Maoist coalition from within. She dealt with them with a clever

mix of innocence (she claimed to have fallen sick) and defiance.

Now that she has got what she wanted, Sujata would do well to reflect on whether the prize has been worth the price. She has called the bluff of Team Hypocrite at the helm of her party. But for once, Baluwatar has clearly outsmarted her father.

PM Nepal has managed to make his foreign minister one of his two deputies without stepping on the toes of his unwieldy coalition. He also insisted, initially, that a formal decision of the NCCC was necessary to promote Sujata. Lured by their newfound influence upon the government, NCCC members then defied their Chair and insisted on holding the Grand Committee meeting from November 1-3 in Kathmandu instead of concentrating on preparations for the General Assembly scheduled for March 10-14, 2010. This probably means that the latter will not be held anytime soon and the UML will continue to maintain its primacy in anti-Maoist politics well into the next elections. Once this was established, PM Nepal simply went ahead and promoted Sujata.

Tactically, it was a masterstroke of realpolitik on the part of PM Nepal. The only problem is that he and his co-conspirators in the NC have no strategic aims other than keeping the Maoists out of power for as long as possible. Koirala is aiming higher - he wants to take the peace process to its logical conclusion. In this war of wills, may the better-intentioned win. ●



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Following these successes, Golchha founded Neoteric to locally distribute internationally branded hardware, like Samsung LCD screens. He also catered to a large market for assembled computers, which were not only customisable but also significantly cheaper. More recently, Neoteric has also become a leading distributor of Nokia phones and appliances in Nepal.

Neoteric is at war with a 'grey market' - the nebulous and legally dubious traffic of refurbished Indian and Chinese goods, many of which boast recognised brand names with a stray letter or two inserted, a 'Nokla' instead of 'Nokia', for instance. Golchha claims that while Neoteric's products are pricier, they are better quality and come with international standard service and warranties. "Before we entered the market, as much as 40% of the IT goods circulating here were either fake or were smuggled into the country," he says.

Underpinning these business ventures is a commitment to help the common man and empower the



KIRAN PANDAY

individual. Before Neoteric came along, only large corporations, and very few households or small businesses, had the high-grade HP and Samsung gear that Golchha markets. And that state of affairs was disastrous, he says, because in the Internet age, connectivity is as elementary as water or food. Golchha reveals an almost missionary zeal for Nepal and the Internet: "Imagine what Nepal would be like if everyone had a laptop with an Internet connection."

Indeed, that vision of a Nepal of laptop-toting villagers and grandpas is why Neoteric is, as Golchha calls it, 'leapfrogging' conventional desktops into the laptop business. He points out that laptops are sturdy and high quality, and almost as cheap as desktops, which means they have enormous social and commercial potential. They promise to correct what Golchha calls Nepal's 'chicken-and-egg' problem: not many are bothered to buy Internet connections in part because the

content isn't great, or doesn't suit specific Nepali needs, and there's poor content because few Nepalis are connected. Golchha thinks by making laptops easily available, he can short the loop and encourage more people to buy into the Internet age.

The Golchha Organisation, a fraternity of firms including Neoteric that is held by the Golchha family, sponsors a number of social service activities. They run an eye hospital in Biratnagar that offers treatment for free or at negligible prices and serves about 80,000 people annually. They also sponsor academic scholarships, and have made headway on a slew of environmental initiatives. Golchha says they're dabbling in non-conventional energy sources like husk and in characteristically far-sighted manner, have begun recycling electronics to prevent hazardous build-ups of electronic waste.

"It's a big problem in rich countries," he warns. "And if we're not careful, it could be a big problem here too."

Taking on software, hardware and social service is no mean feat, and involves a degree of risk in the volatile business and political environment of Nepal. Golchha admits he's made business mistakes in the past, but accepts that risks are part and parcel of entrepreneurship. "What Nepal needs more than ever is a risk-friendly investment climate that ensures businesses ownership of the rewards," he says.

"If we do these things, nothing can stop us."

Bold is the word. ●

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Xchange



Global Xchange, a British Council and VSO partnership program, is giving 18 hearing impaired volunteers from Nepal and the UK the chance to live with host families and work for local organisations. The volunteers, aged 18-25, will live in the two countries for three months and promote cultural exchange as well as build active networks.

Gift of sight

Marking World Sight Day 2009, Standard Chartered Bank and Tilganga Eye Center signed an agreement to conduct screening camps and free cataract surgery for needy people living in the Kathmandu Valley and neighbouring districts.

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Risk-taking for dummies

Sujata Koirala was defeated by Madhesi Janadhikar Forum Chief Upendra Yadav in the Constituent Assembly elections last year. In theory, her political career should have been finished, at least until the next general elections.



STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari

But on Monday, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal appointed her to the position of deputy prime minister. When asked why he did what he did, Nepal gave a distinctly non-prime ministerial answer: "I appointed her as asked by Girija Prasad Koirala." In other words, "Girija made me do it."

It doesn't matter how displeased or angry Nepali Congress members are with Sujata's new post. They can do their predictable song-and-dance routine: that is, pull long faces, hold meetings in windowless offices, condemn the PM's actions, pass resolutions, blame Sujata's father at press conferences and do everything that ends up as a spectacle on television.

If history is any guide, in just a few days, they will have shown signs of that great sense of Nepali resilience. It's the stuff that gets praised ad nauseam by amateur sociologists and drenched-in-positive-thinking pundits. It consists of reluctantly accepting what has happened and moving on to other matters without putting up a principled fight.

Principled fights, let us remember, often have uncertain outcomes and can be

costly for careers. Given these odds, which non-Koirala Nepali Congress leader has the self-confidence or the public following to say: "Look, enough is enough. Either we seriously reform how our party is governed or completely erode public confidence in what we do for democracy..."? Not one.

In fairness though, there are some NC leaders who have workable ideas about how to reform the party. But unless they start taking intelligent risks to translate ideas into actions, their continuous claim to be working for democracy is laughable. If they can't even work toward turning their party into a New Nepali Congress, who believes them when they

enthusiasm, energy and activities are hailed by all, and he starts winning national and international acclaim. After some time, he gets comfortably settled in his role. He hires family members, gets defensive about criticism, and punishes those who disagree with him. He is insecure about sharing the limelight with others. So he surrounds himself with dwarves who sing the great man's praises, and when he promotes one dwarf, others may grumble but don't complain much because they don't want to bite the hand that feeds them.

Ignoring small problem approach: This happens when an organisation's leadership thinks it's

The latest scandal exposes the management values that underpin many of Nepal's institutions

shout loudly about creating a New Nepal?

It's not enough to blame the father for what he has done. He's shown that he has calculated the odds, cast aside his scruples, and decided he can get away with doing what he thinks is right for his daughter's political future. The problem, broadly, is how Nepali institutions are governed in ways that are antithetical to democratic values and business success. Here's two rules of the game:

The Great Man approach:

Usually, a public organisation is first led by an initiative-taking individual who shows more courage than anyone else. Once he's in a position of leadership, his

beneath its dignity or that it does not have time to deal with small problems. Its approach is to brush away small problems, which then go on to fester and mutate into bigger problems in due course. When colleagues or employees see that small problems have been brushed aside, they allow the leadership to be more reckless in doing things that only create bigger problems.

The Nepali Congress leaders have only themselves to blame. That the Sujata episode has come to a head is symptomatic of their practicing both approaches at the expense of good governance. ●

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Intensifying food crisis



DIRGHA RAJ UPADHAYA

Nepalganj bureau in Kantipur, 9 October

कान्तिपुर

The endless downpours and flooding following the harsh drought has left several mid and far western districts facing a severe food crisis. The crops that made it through the delayed monsoon were inundated by the heavy rain of the last few weeks and began to rot, and rice grain laid out to dry was washed away.

Sachidananda Upadhyay of the midwestern agricultural directorate says, "Even without adverse weather conditions, the arable land here is not enough to accommodate the needs of the

population of this region." Jajarkot, Neyulapur, Dang, Dhorahi, Tulsipur and Pyuthan are the major areas affected.

Farmers were not only unable to plant paddy on time but were also unable to apply fertiliser at the right time. This year in Banke district, for instance, 31,718 acres of land were farmed, 4,781 hectares less than the year before. Similarly, while paddy production was 131,400 metric tons last year, the drought prompted estimates of only 80-90,000 metric tons. This is now expected to decrease by another 40 per cent. Says Bhanubhakta Bhattarai of the Agriculture Development Office, "A loss of about Rs 280 million is anticipated."

Unionism

Om Aastha Rai in Nagarik, October 10

नागरिक

Biratnagar Jute Mills, the country's oldest jute mill, will close down this week following conflict between the government and employees. The mill will be handed over to the private sector once the government pays the workers.

Even if it continues operating, its image as the centre of the democratic movement will suffer. The surrounding place is also

known as the Mills area and three generations of employees spent their lives here. These will become mere fables once the mill is handed to the private sector.

The mill is closing because of a short supply of raw materials, worn out machinery and poor sales. But this wouldn't have mattered had the management been strong.

The management weakened after the political changes in 1990, when party-backed unions overran the mills. Union members were



KIRAN PANDAY

corrupt, stole machinery parts and supplied low quality jute, yet no action was taken.

"We could not sack those who were found stealing on the spot," says a retired managing director of the mills. Directors were appointed by political parties, and

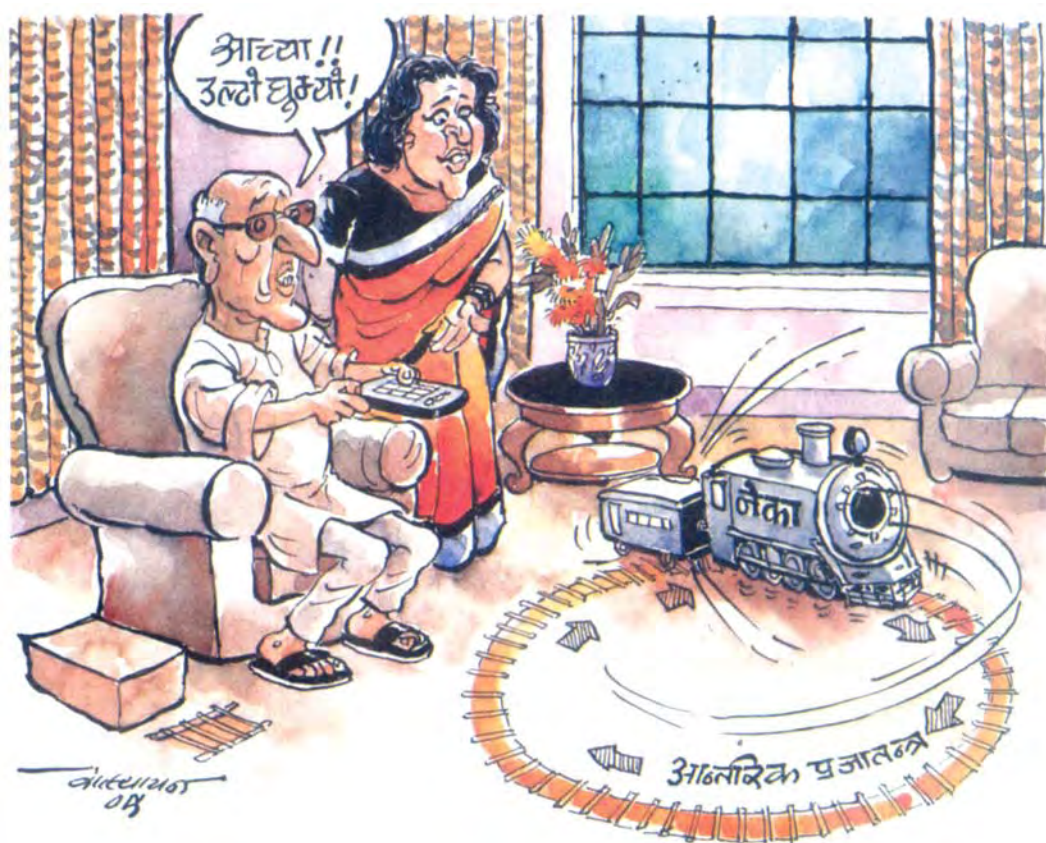
cadre from the same parties were involved in theft and irregularities.

Of 1,039 employees who lost their jobs after the closure of the mill, about 800 have joined private jute mills in Sunsari and Morang, where the going has been harder. Jhamarlal Shah, who worked for

28 years in Biratnagar Jute Mills and now works in a private mill says, "We only get a 20 minute break and hardly any leave."

Khadga Rai recalls those days when he protected his corrupt colleagues. "I did so because I was in politics," he says. He says if he had not done so someone else would. "There was competition to protect those corrupt people."

Rai, who worked in the mills for 24 years, is now unemployed at the age of 46. His children still need his support and he cannot just stay home idly. It is difficult to find a job for a person who is already known as a union leader. "We never realised I would make life more difficult for my family," he says.



Toy train: NC
Toy train track: Internal democracy
Girija: What! It's going the wrong way!

कान्तिपुर Batsyan in Kantipur, 13 October

Death wish

Editorial in Rajdhani, 14 October

राजधानी

Since time unknown, Nepali Congress chief Girija Prasad Koirala has been making death wishes, most of which have been fulfilled. His most recent one, to have his daughter appointed deputy prime minister, has just been fulfilled by the prime minister. Madhav Nepal's motive seems to have been primarily to save his own post. Pleasing Koirala enables Nepal to take advantage of the unconstitutional status that he holds. Both GP Koirala and Nepal are driven by selfish motives, sending the government further down the downward slope it is already on.

Because the decision was taken without the consent of the Nepali Congress and was something of a pact between Nepal and GP Koirala, the Nepali Congress now faces a test. Much depends on whether they decide to contest the decision or accept the post assigned to Sujata Koirala.

This only proves the charges of nepotism the Maoists have always made. The sole cause of this is the disorientation the nation has undergone in the past three years, transforming politics into a personal and domestic struggle for position and power. One way the nation can be redeemed is if the people express a collective concern. This can happen only if the Nepali Congress decides to protest against GP Koirala's action.



KIRAN PANDAY



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रेडियो तरङ्ग १०७.६ पोखरा



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रेडियो चितवन ९४.६ रत्ननगर

अब सधैका साथी

Discord, and more discord

Too little, too late to meet the constitution deadline



PICS: KIRAN PANDAY

The deadline for writing the new constitution is now only seven months away but five thematic committees haven't submitted their draft reports and concept papers to the CA.

To make matters worse, the six thematic committees that have submitted their drafts haven't patched up differences on key points. Only the Committee for Rights of Minority and Marginalised Communities passed its draft unanimously.

But instead of forging ahead and settling their differences the political parties want to extend the drafting period, which was initially two years, by a further six months.

Constitutional Committee Chairman Nilambar Acharya feels the problem is a lack of commitment, not necessarily the disagreements themselves. He says, "The parties should understand that the constitution is a document of consensus."

The National Interests Preservation Committee was the first committee to submit a draft concept to the CA but papered over differences on state structure, national defence policy, border issues and on whether to call the civil war a 'people's war' or an 'armed insurgency.' The NC and UML have also strongly opposed the provision of conscription for all adults.

The draft of the Judiciary System Committee has been the most controversial, as the Maoists want to invest parliament with the power to hire and sack judges, and to allow non-Supreme Court justices to become chief justice. The other parties have criticised this as an undue violation of the separation of powers.

The Committee for Determining the Bases of Cultural and Social Unity proposed Nepali as the official language but Madhesi parties want Hindi instead,

while the Maoists say any language spoken by at least one per cent of the population should be given the status.

The Committee for Determining Legislative Bodies has already prepared a draft paper without Maoist backing which proposes a bicameral Parliament: a 151-member House of Representatives and a 51-member National Assembly, with separate houses in each province. The Maoists have proposed an all-powerful 245-member unicameral Parliament. The MJF wants the chair of the proposed national assembly to be made vice president.

There are differences over what to name constitutional commission in the draft prepared by the Committee for Determining Legislative Bodies. 'National Commission' is preferred to 'Federal Commission'.

The Economic Rights and Sharing of Natural Resources and Public Revenue

Committee has finalised its draft but there are disagreements about whether to compensate landowners for land taken from them during land reform. The Maoists object to any compensation.

The Committee for Determining the Form of Governance System has been debating the merits of the presidential and prime ministerial systems, which is important since it has implications for the entire political system.

The State Restructuring and Sharing of State Power Committee has perhaps the most difficult task of all in deciding on a federal system. It hasn't been able to start work because the political parties haven't even submitted their concept papers.

The CA calendar has already been rescheduled six times and the public doesn't expect the November deadline to be met. Once deliberations finish, the public will be invited to comment on the drafts.

Acharya is still hopeful: "If the parties consider the national interest, the constitution will be written on time."

Committees that have completed drafts:

Committee for Rights of Minority and Marginalized Communities
National Interests Preservation Committee
Committee for Determining the Bases of Cultural and Social Unity
Committee for Determining Legislative Bodies
Committee for Determining the Form of Governance System
Judiciary System Committee

Committees yet to complete drafts:

State Restructuring and Sharing of State Power Committee
Committee for Determining the Form of Governance System
Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles Committee
Economic Rights and Sharing of Natural Resources and Public Revenue Committee
Constitutional Committee

Way out

We need a high-level political mechanism to resolve differences over committee drafts

Girirajmani Pokharel, CA member, UCPN (Maoist)

The ongoing conflict between status-quoist and progressive forces has held back the constitution writing process at its most crucial time.

The constitution writing process was slow from the outset. It took 3 months after the historic CA elections to form the Maoist-led government, and CA committees were established to facilitate agreement on constitutional issues. CA regulations eased the challenge by forbidding party whips from becoming too meddlesome so, if all had gone well, there wouldn't be opposition in the CA. Committee members collected public suggestions for the constitution, which have been investigated in a report that has been submitted to the Study



and Suggestion Committee.

But things haven't gone well, and the draft reports don't reconcile basic ideological differences. The UML and NC are happy with the status quo

and the parliamentary system, the Madhesi parties hanker for more inclusion, while the Maoists want a wholly new federal system.

Despite these difficulties I'm

optimistic and take inspiration from Jawaharlal Nehru who wrote his daughter Indira Gandhi thus: "If you come across problems in your life, look back at history. Human

beings have already resolved problems bigger than yours."

The 12-point agreement was signed amid persistent political hostilities that have brought Nepali politics to its knees today. The country needs a revised agreement that implements the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, integrates the two armies to make a national army, establishes civilian supremacy instead of military supremacy in a real sense so we can make decisions on our internal affairs on our own.

I have no doubt that if we have such a high-level understanding, the current obstacles in writing the constitution can be overcome and will lead to a common political agreement for the constitution writing process. A special political mechanism is the need of the hour.



ROBIN BOUSTEAD



The Great Himal

The mother of all trekking trails promises adventure for tourists and hope for the denizens of the Himalaya

ROBIN BOUSTEAD

If there is a trekking 'holy grail', it is a route through the remotest peaks of the Great Himalaya Range that joins all the major trekking regions in Nepal. Following five years of research treks, the Nepali section of the Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) is now a reality. Starting in September 2008 in Kanchenjunga and ending in July this year in the Api Himal, Pema Sherpa and I became the first people to traverse the entire length of the Nepal Himalaya. In doing so we traversed some of the most amazing mountain scenery

on the planet and discovered an incredible wealth of ethnic and natural diversity. The result (*see box*) is an extreme trekking trail over 162 days with more than 150,000 metres of climbing and descending, a proposition sure to tempt adventurous trekkers. Over the next couple of years, I will be trekking through the Eastern and Western Himalaya to complete a trans-Himalayan trail over 4,000km that will take between 16-18 months to trek.

Nepal's three main trekking regions, Everest, Annapurna and Langtang, attract tens of thousands every year. The trails here are well maintained and safe, and offer novice and experienced



ROBERT ROSENBAUM



ROBE



PICS: ROBIN BOUSTEAD

Himalaya Trail

trekkers alike the opportunity to explore the Himalaya in relative comfort. The other two thirds of Nepal's mountain terrain are normally considered 'off the beaten track'. From the lush rhododendron forests of the east to the dense woodlands of the west, relatively untouched wilderness and remote communities await discovery. Indeed, a small trekking group in these regions can make a real difference to lives that are barely subsistence.

In 2002, the Nepali government resolved all its border disputes with its northern neighbour China. This demilitarised seven border areas and for the first time in over fifty years, tourists were allowed to

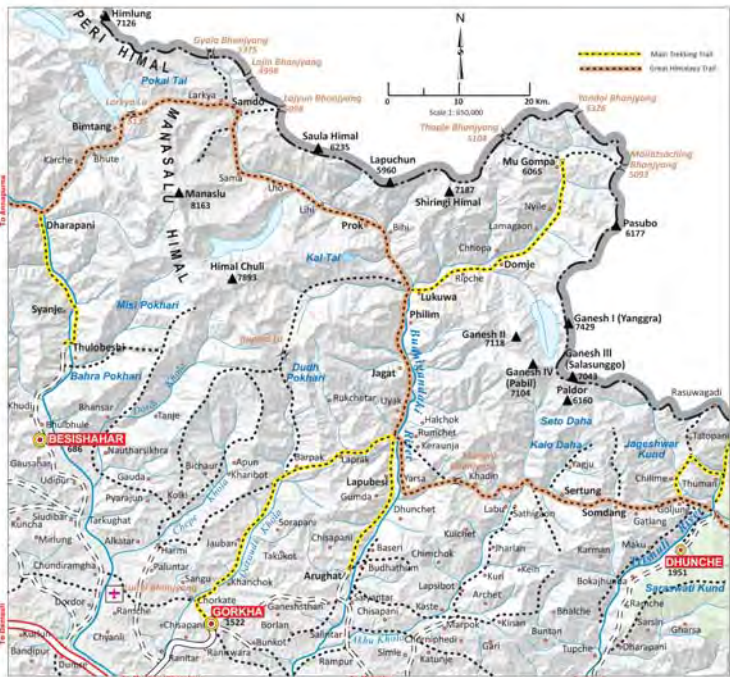
explore them. All of these areas offer unique trekking opportunities. They also tend to be next to the major trekking routes, so it's possible to design itineraries combining old and new routes.

Although the mountains are beyond compare, it is the people you meet along the trail who linger in your memory. You can't help but admire their indefatigable boldness and energy, their independence and resilience, and their open-hearted, generous nature towards strangers they may never see again. It's impossible to make a comparison, but surely the people of the high Himal are

among the very best of humankind?

I hope that the GHT will inspire other trekkers to embark upon their own GHT trails, helping develop micro-tourism projects in communities too remote for major infrastructure development. Creating value in regions that previously had little to offer could also precede the establishment of a transboundary corridor for animal migration, helping to save many endangered species. The snow-covered crown of Asia may then become one of its greatest assets. ●

for more pictures, visit www.nepalitimes.com



The real Naya Nepal

In his fascinating book '*The Great Himalaya Trail – A Pictorial Guide*', Robin Boustead uses stunning photographs, compelling storytelling and section route descriptions to describe the highest feasible route across Nepal. The large format pictures offer an intriguing insight into the first expedition to trek and map the Great Himalaya Trail. It crosses every one of Nepal's mighty mountain ranges, from Kanchenjunga in the east to Saipal in the west. Folklore combines with descriptions of the communities encountered to give the reader an intimate glimpse into the lives of mountain people. The series of interlinking trekking maps and graphical trail profiles provide enough detail for anyone to begin planning their own Great Himalaya Trail adventure.

The Great Himalaya Trail – A Pictorial Guide, by Robin Boustead
Himalayan Maphouse, 2009
ISBN: 9789993347408
Pages: 167

Robin will be signing copies of his book at Mandala Bookpoint on Saturday, 3.30PM



RT ROSENBAUM



PEMA SHERPA



ROBERT ROSENBAUM

Family matters

After two months of lobbying and sulking, Girija Prasad Koirala has finally succeeded in making his daughter Sujata the deputy prime minister. Given her unpopularity with the public as well as within the NC, it's no surprise the backlash has been so intense.

Koirala has squandered the merit he earned in 2006 in leading the country back to democracy by pushing his daughter as his political successor. He has demonstrated his lack of commitment to democracy, and nowhere is the anger as palpable as within his own party.



INTERESTING TIMES
Mallika Aryal

NC leaders are enraged and the UML is miffed. There is finger pointing between the political parties. Critics blame the weak government for not being able to stand up to Girija. The public, on the other hand, is so apathetic that the reaction has been a dismissive: "So what else is new?" As always everything will be figured out, forgiven and forgotten. The public understands that there will be protests now, but they will soon die down, and those protesting will be seen hobnobbing with Sujata about town.

Sujata Koirala has no political charisma, skill, guile or experience. She has little support within her party and the only person rooting for her is her father. When her party summoned her for questioning, she came with slogan-shouting hired goons. But is Girija the only one responsible for the mess in the NC? How about the other so-called leaders?

Koirala's dynastic tendency undermines democracy in his party

The NC leadership is quick to say that the party is changing with the times and that the leadership is going through a transition. They have protested in the past against Girija's efforts to anoint his daughter as his successor. But this particular move by the party president goes to show just how weak the NC leadership is and how beholden they are to the old man.

The NC leadership gossips behind Koirala's back about him with the leaders of other parties. They say the old man is 'losing it' or has become 'senile' and yet they have been unable to come up with alternative leadership. They have failed miserably in asserting their disapproval and discontent, in convincing Girija that his decision was a bad call, and in preventing him from making such a big decision unanimously. One has to wonder how one of the most unpopular leaders in Nepal has so much clout within his own party.

Seeing Koirala's face on the evening news has proved to the Nepali people that although we may have come a long way in the last few years few things in Nepal have really changed. Quipped one disenchanted NC member: "The prime minister and deputy prime minister were both unelected. They make a good team."

For the NC leaders, however, this is a good time to consider whether the party is actually going through the transition they claim is underway. They must understand that unless change can come from the top party leadership there will always be bad decisions. Unless young leaders are groomed, older leaders will always push their children as successors.

To come out in the media and badmouth is easy. This is a collective bad judgment call and putting the blame on someone else just makes the leadership look naïve and immature. This is the time to be assertive about issues that really matter. The party's reputation and position is at stake if it wants to present itself to the people as a real alternative to the Maoists.

General elections may be far away but if the party wants to rebuild its image the leaders need to undo this mistake and remake the party. ●



KIRAN PANDAY

Tampering with time

SUVAYU DEV PANT and DEWAN RAI

If Nepal Standard Time is pushed forward one hour and 15 min, we could slightly reduce our electricity shortfall this winter and adjust an unnecessary and irksome 15 minute time difference with India in one fell swoop.

Daylight saving time (DST) has been discussed before in the Nepal Electricity Authority and the Ministry of Environment, but plans have since gathered dust.

If enacted, DST would delay sunset and sunrise by 1 hour and 15 minutes, reducing light use during evening peak hours. Although more lights will switch on in the morning as the time change means many more will wake up before sunrise, there will be a net energy savings.

"Daylight saving will undoubtedly help reduce the electricity shortfall, since it allows people to work by daylight instead of tubelight," says former Minister of Water Resources Dipak Gyawali.

The numbers bear this out. Water management expert Ratna Sansar Shrestha calculates that if our electricity shortfall is 400MW this winter and we go up to 16 hours of loadshedding, then DST can reduce the shortfall by roughly 16MW, a ten percent decrease, and loadshedding by roughly 40 minutes a day.

DST energy savings could be

Adding an hour and fifteen minutes to NST could reduce loadshedding

more significant if industrial buildings, which consume a lot of electricity, were designed to require less ventilation and lighting.

Daylight saving was recently introduced in Bangladesh and Pakistan in a bid to reduce mounting electricity shortfalls, but has had a rocky start, especially in Pakistan, where it has confused thousands who have flat out refused to adjust their clocks.

That's a problem DST could face in Nepal. It will be difficult to communicate time changes to clock-users, particularly in the countryside, disrupting city-to-village commerce. It doesn't help that the very idea of DST is confusing. When asked for his feelings about the scheme, a bemused Milan Rai, who runs a café in Lalitpur, shot back, "What? I don't understand. You want to change the sunrise?"

Astrologers will feel the confusion most keenly, since the changes will throw their charts out of whack. Said one astrologer, "It will definitely change the charts so I might accidentally recommend inauspicious times."

It will also annoy early risers, like students and construction workers, who will have to wake up even earlier in the mornings, when it is considerably colder and darker. Research suggests that there are more sleepy drivers, so more road accidents, in the weeks immediately following daylight saving time changes.

However, the proposal will also round off to a half hour Nepal's inane 15-minute time difference with India, which it has had since 1971, and which has been a thorn in the sides of traders between the two countries. "The time difference must go, whether or not it's bundled together with a daylight saving scheme, because it will make trading a little easier," says Gyawali.

Policymakers like former Environment Minister Ganesh Shah have tried to erase the difference but have seen their efforts stymied by bad politics and changes of government.

To be sure, it's unlikely that a government that's fighting tooth and nail for survival cares about energy savings either, but we can rest assured there's daylight at the end of the tunnel. ●

DINANATH BARAL
in POKHARA

Twenty-three-year-old Susmita Rai's interest in kayaking safety work was sparked by her own husband's work in the tourist industry. But when she sought to transform a hobby into a career she came up against an impossible choice. Sanu Baba Sunuwar, concerned about their household and the perceived risks a Nepali woman might face in male-dominated tourist guide industry, issued her with an ultimatum: "It's either me or kayaking." Determined to make her own way, Susmita left her four-year-old son Niraj in the care of her in-laws and divorced her husband.

Her decision marked the beginning of a difficult period during which she had to support herself through restaurant work, dishwashing jobs and hard labour. The tide began to turn when she encountered Inka Trollsaas, a Swedish kayaker. Inka, who has been coming to Nepal for the last decade, runs Himalayan River Girls. This kayak club based in Pokhara trains Nepali women as river and rafting guides.

With Inka, Susmita had real cause to believe kayaking and rafting could give her a future different from that she was destined for once she was taken out of school and married off at the age of thirteen. She began to train with Inka and in 2008, along with compatriots Sita Thapa and Anu Shrestha, competed against athletes from 11 nations in the Peak UK Himalayan Challenge kayaking championship in Nepal. Susmita came first. Her triumph prompted a change of heart on the part of Sanu Baba Sunuwar, and led to their reunion. Since then, Susmita has represented Nepal at two kayaking championships in Spain and Switzerland. She continues to train, but has also set her sights on reaching the heights of her husband, quite literally: he is a paragliding pilot.

Susmita has blazed her own trail. But she laments the lack of support for women in sport, either from government or from sporting associations. She is clear about the need for women to be given opportunities. "If I had given up kayaking for my family," she says, "then how would I have had the chance to fly the flag of Nepal in front of the world?" She smiles and adds, "Who would know who Susmita Rai is?"

Susmita's husband agrees, and even goes as far to see their separation as a blessing in disguise. "If she had listened to me and given up kayaking, if we hadn't had a divorce, then how would my wife have become a



BLAZING TRAILS:
Susmita in action (above)
with Inka Trollsaas (below)

champion?" Sanu Baba now feels other women should take Susmita as an example and follow their dreams.

Inka's Himalayan River Girls has trained 10 women kayakers so far, and will be inducting new trainees in November. With a supply of equipment from abroad, Inka has been able to conduct training sessions on the Seti, Kali Gandaki and Trishuli Rivers. From November 27-29, her club will be helping to organise the Himalayan Whitewater Challenge for women.

Himalayan River Girls is doing more than just honing the competitive spirit of Nepali women, however. Grounding its paddle work is the firm belief that training women like Susmita not only boosts their confidence but also makes them employable. So far, fifteen women have been employed by Nepali rafting companies through Himalayan River Girls which is run wholly on donation. Susmita herself works for Paddle Nepal. She's had a rough ride. But calmer waters lie ahead. ●



Vacancy Announcement

**Extended Term Consultant (National)-Deputy Coordinator
Program to Promote Demand for Good Governance in Nepal**

The World Bank Office, Kathmandu

The South Asia Social, Environment and Water Resources Integrated Division (SASDI) of the World Bank invites applications for the position of a national Extended Term Consultant (ETC) which will be based in Kathmandu, Nepal. The position will initially be a local one-year ETC appointment, with a possibility for a 12-month renewal depending on performance and business needs.

SASDI supports initiatives to promote demand-side engagement for better governance, improved transparency, accountability and risk mitigation in the Nepal Country Program, including the PROD, a US\$3 million program financed by the State- and Peace-building Fund. The project will steward financial support to civil society organizations (CSOs) for: knowledge and skills development in social accountability (SA); piloting of SA initiatives; networking among SA practitioners; and the monitoring and evaluation of SA approaches. The PROD will use a wholesaler approach led by a Coordination Unit, housed in the World Bank Office, Nepal.

The Deputy PROD Coordinator will provide administrative, managerial and technical assistance for the effective implementation of the PROD. S/he will invest at least 30-40% of his or her time to mainstreaming of SA in Bank-financed projects. The Deputy Coordinator will report directly to the PROD Task Team Leader (TTL), and will work under the technical guidance of the PROD Coordinator on a day-to-day basis.

The successful candidate will have the following qualifications:

- A Masters degree in a relevant discipline
- At least 8 years of professional experience in the field of development, with substantive knowledge and practical experience of undertaking SA and governance activities preferred
- A good knowledge of CSOs in Nepal and their institutional context is a requirement
- S/he must have previous project management experience with a proven track record of dealing with senior government officials, donors, civil society organizations and other non-state actors
- Experience managing and/or developing training and capacity building programs and/or major civil society-focused development programs (especially with respect to capacity building and networking) would be a strong advantage
- Knowledge and experience of World Bank operational practices and procedures (including fiduciary ones) is preferred
- Proven skills in report writing, conducting stakeholder consultations, overseeing M&E, and planning/sequencing program activities is required
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English and Nepali will be required
- Knowledge of social inclusion approaches in Nepal is preferred

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

The details of the post are available at www.worldbank.org/jobs. Qualified candidates should apply on-line referring to job # 091794 by 25 October 2009.

SCANDINAVIAN SKYLIKE:
More bright ideas will be
needed to clear the skies.



KUNDA DIXIT

Everyone is an island

Smack in the centre of Denmark and at the geographic centre of Europe, the little island of Samsø has turned itself into a zero carbon destination in the last decade.

Not only has this bucolic farming settlement of 5,000 people switched over completely to wind and solar energy, it is exporting electricity to the Danish mainland. If Samsø were a microcosm of the Earth, the planet would already be out of its climate crisis.

An island that in 1997 relied entirely on fossil fuel imports now has 11 wind turbines that meet all its electricity needs, heating is provided by a combination of solar thermal and burning biomass, and offshore wind farms export power, compensating for the fossil fuel that is still used for cars and ferries.

Says Samsø resident Jesper Kjems: "It worked because the community got involved, and the people got involved because they saw the benefit to themselves, not because they'd be saving polar bears in Greenland." ●

Copenhagen climate countdown

KUNDA DIXIT
in COPENHAGEN

With less than two months to go for a big climate change summit here in the Danish capital, the planet's future hangs in the balance as countries continue to bicker about who should cut carbon emissions and by how much.

A preparatory meeting in Bangkok last week widened differences between rich and poor countries instead of bridging them, as emerging economies like China and India accused the West of forcing them to agree to binding targets.

"The climate change negotiations are dangerously close to deadlock," warned European Union (EU) President José Manuel Barroso at a global editors' forum here this week.

The EU has committed to reduce its carbon emissions to 20 per cent of 1990 levels by 2020. Japan has said it will reduce its carbon emissions by 25 per cent,

Norway by 40 per cent and Australia by 24 per cent. The US, which did not ratify the Kyoto Protocol, is now willing to go up to 15 per cent but wants countries like China and India to agree to similar targets.

China has overtaken the US with 24 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions. The US is responsible for 22 per cent, the

coming from countries like China, India, Brazil and Indonesia. Cuts only by rich countries, therefore, will not be enough to keep global temperature increase to within 2 degrees by 2050.

Indian state minister for the environment, Jairam Ramesh, accuses the West of trying to scrap the Kyoto Protocol, which requires rich countries to meet

mandatory fuel efficiency standards, an increase in solar and wind energy to meet five per cent of its energy needs and the conversion of half of all coal-fired plants to 'clean coal' technology. But it will not accept internationally imposed cuts. For its part, China is unilaterally planning to move away from coal and source 15 per cent of its energy supply from renewables like wind and solar by 2020. However, China imports half its daily oil needs and this demand is growing. Chinese negotiators have also rejected internationally agreed targets, preferring national mitigation action. But unlike India, China is poised to cash in on green technology and hopes to become the world's biggest producer of photovoltaic cells, electric transport and batteries.

Economist Joseph Stiglitz says it is clear that China and India can't try to imitate US consumption patterns. "If they do," he said this week in Copenhagen, "the planet is doomed."

Despite disagreements over the details, there is an emerging consensus among negotiators about the steps ahead:

- Rich countries must commit to deep cuts to compensate for their historical carbon emissions.
- Emerging economies must announce unilateral cuts, with international financing for the conversion to clean energy.
- Most vulnerable countries need help to adapt to the effects of sea-level rise and melting ice.
- We need to set up a system for measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) to make sure nations stick to their commitments.

Denmark's environment minister, Connie Hedegaard, says she is encouraged by a growing political consensus and the voluntary carbon cuts announced by countries. "We are waiting for the US to take the lead, and I think it is now doable politically," she said. ●

Time is running out to save the planet from catastrophic warming

EU 12 per cent and India 8 per cent of global carbon emissions. Scientists say the world must halve its emissions by 2050 to cap global warming at only 2 degrees Celsius.

The annual per capita emission of carbon by Indians is only 1.6 tons, whereas an average European emits 18 tons and an American 25 tons. But 90 per cent of the increase in emissions is

targeted cuts and emerging economies to undertake domestic cuts. "The trust has broken down and the EU is now trying to accommodate the US," Ramesh told the Copenhagen editors' forum. "There will be no deal in Copenhagen in December if they dump Kyoto and try to make a new deal."

Ramesh says India is preparing domestic legislation for

experience

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KIND OF BLUE: Soulmate fires up Shangri-La

KIRAN PANDAY

Let them hear jazz

We don't know about you, but when we go to a jazz concert, especially where bands inspired by Brazilian music are playing, we expect it to be, well...jazzy.

So the tables and chairs at Hyatt for Jazzmandu's headliner event may have worked for the mellow tunes of Trio Urbano. But when Sheyla Costa said the crowd made her "want to cry" and that she wanted to "go home" when noone stood up to dance to her Samba-inspired Parisian jazz, she was on to something.

Not to take anything away from the impressive roster of artists Jazzmandu brought to Kathmandu this year. The line-up ranged from the traditional classical music of Gurudev Kamath to the energetic improvisations of Thai/French Vatchapuj to the bossa nova beats of Sheyla Costa-La Brasileira. Jazzmandu may indeed be the biggest jazz festival in the Himalaya.

Eclectic, energetic, and exclusive, Jazzmandu bridged the holiday season in high style

The festival had something for everyone: the headliner event at the Hyatt treated the audience to a small, intimate evening of Brazilian jazz, while the 'music marathon' at Gokarna Golf Resort on Saturday entertained hundreds of guests with the entire spectrum of international musicians. No wonder people were still talking about it on Monday morning.

Despite the bands' different styles, they palpably demonstrated the power of music to unite rather than divide. Homnath Upadhaya gave us an impromptu tabla tutorial; Vincent Martial of Vatchapuj and Jamie Baum of Trio Urbano challenged each other to flute solos; and saxophonist Yuri Honing of Amsterdam persevered through a minor power-outage for his first 'solo in the dark' at Patan's Museum Cafe.

When Navin Chhetri started the festival back in 2002, his idea was to bring live jazz to the Nepali people. But with the kind of line-up they mustered, they should have just set up shop outside Patan Durbar rather than inside, and set the evening on fire. The Seventh Annual Kathmandu Jazz Festival did not disappoint. But next year, let's take Sheyla's advice – no chairs. ●

Meg Patterson and Indu Nepal

More than meanwhile...

It was enough to give you the blues. Gokarna Jazz Bazaar or Blues at 1905? Should any Nepali craving a little night music really be forced to make such a momentous decision? Gigi of the Gigabytes would have minded very much, so blues it was. Unlike the static crowd at the Garden of Dreams the night before, Saturday's blues fest paid its dues in full. Tight sets from local bands Looza and Gigi and the Gigabytes were set off by the heartfelt blues rock of Bangalore's Parachute XVI and the muscular, percussive acoustic blues of

the wholly entertaining Jimi (the Human) Hocking of Australia. And if the closing set by Brit blues geezers the Blues Business was a disappointment, the screaming soul blues of Shillong's Soulmate a couple of days later more than made up for it. In fact, they well nigh upstaged the rest of the line-up, having (been) chosen to perform at Jazzmandu's all-star event at the Hotel Shangri-La. Turns out blues and jazz are sometimes the same thing... ●

Rabi Thapa

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EVENT PARTNERS



ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **'Nepal Rendezvous - Nagarkot Workshop'**, paintings by Bangladeshi and Nepali artists at Hotel de l'Annapurna, Darbar Marg, till 31 Oct, 4218048
- ❖ **Lungta Paintings**, exhibition by Maureen Drdak, till 18 Oct, 5.30PM, Indigo Gallery

EVENTS

- ❖ **Global Handwashing Day 2009**, event at Nepal Administrative Staff College, 15 Oct, 11AM onwards, 5552764
- ❖ **Patan Press Club**, meets every Thursday at Dhokaima Café, 6PM, 5522113
- ❖ **Himalayan Buddhist Meditation Centre**, Tai Chi 10-11.30AM Saturday, Yoga 8.30-9.30AM and Meditation 5-6PM weekdays, Keshar Mahal Marg, Thamel, 4410402

MUSIC

- ❖ **42nd Yala Maya Classic**, featuring Jeevan Ale on flute, Prem Chandra Ojhaiya on tabla and Mandira Ale on tanpura at Yala Maya Kendra, 19 Oct, 5PM, 5553767
- ❖ **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**, enjoy a relaxing Sunday in The Terrace at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu with barbeque and live jazz by Inner Groove from 12:00 to 3:30 pm, 4491234/4489362
- ❖ **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
- ❖ **Rudra Night** live fusion music by Shyam Nepali every Friday, 7PM at Gokarna Forest Resort, 4451212

DINING

- ❖ **Arabic Food Festival**, experience the finest cuisine from the Arabic world from Oct 9 to Nov 7 at The Café, 6.30PM onwards, 4491234/4489362
- ❖ **Famous stews of the world**, at The Rox Restaurant, on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, all through October, 6PM onwards, 4491234/4489362
- ❖ **Chocolate, Coffee and Caramel**, every evening at The Lounge, 4.30-6.30PM, 4491234/4489362
- ❖ **Wine and cheese**, every Friday & Saturday at The Lounge, 5-8PM, 4491234/4489362
- ❖ **A cafe's café**, Dhokaima Café, Patan Dhoka, 5522113
- ❖ **Jazzabell Café**, relaunched at Jhamsikhel, TGIF, 10% discount all day, happy hour 6-8PM, 2114075
- ❖ **The Corner Bar**, 5-7PM, 3-11PM, Radisson Hotel Kathmandu, 4411818
- ❖ **Al Fresco**, for homemade pasta, steak and freshwater trout, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 4273999
- ❖ **Kakori**, for biryani, 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 Restaurant, 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
- ❖ **Tiger for Breakfast**, breakfast everyday at 1905, Kantipath, 4215068
- ❖ **Stupa View Restaurant**, for vegetarian creations & clay oven pizza at Boudha Stupa, 4480262
- ❖ **Gokarna Forest Resort** for a variety of sizzlers at Tripti bar, 4451212

GETAWAYS

- ❖ **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
- ❖ **The Fulbari Resort**, offers a 'Dasain & Diwali Fulbari Fiesta Package' that includes a two-night stay with BB, buffet dinner and more. 4461918, resv@fulbari.com.np
- ❖ **Tiger Mountain**, offers a safari at Tiger Tops, Chitwan National Park or Karnali Lodge & Camp, 4361500

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

Quest Entertainment



Wake up Sid is a coming of age story about a young and wealthy Mumbai slacker, Siddharth Mehra (Ranbir Kapoor). He cares about his friends, camera and car, but little else. Then he meets young and ambitious Kolkata girl Aisha Banerjee (Konkona Sen Sharma), and the two become fast friends. But a chain of events compels Sid to take a hard look at himself and change his ways.

Call 4442220 for show timings at Jai Nepal
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WEEKEND WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Autumn is here and you can tell from the dark blue skies, cooler nights and the light breezes that sweep through the sunny days. October has received more than its normal share of rain throughout western and central Nepal. The satellite pictures show clear skies and scattered clouds that are too dry to cause rain. Valley residents can look forward to clear weather during Tihar and on the eve of the Nepal Sambat new year this weekend.



RECIPES

by GRAHAM SYDNEY

Baba Ghanousch (aubergine dip)

(Serves 8-10)

- 4-5 medium sized aubergines, cut into 2cm chunks
- 6 cloves garlic
- 3 tablespoons tahina
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped coriander
- 2 tablespoons roughly chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons raw sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground red chilli (optional)
- ½ cup olive oil
- juice of 1 lemon
- salt and pepper to taste

Place the aubergine and garlic on a baking tray and rub with half the olive oil and a little salt. Roast at 200C for 15-20 minutes until the aubergine starts to change colour and becomes soft. Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly before placing it together with the rest of the ingredients in a food processor. Blend to a smooth paste before seasoning with salt and pepper. Serve with bruschetta, fresh bread or toast.



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KIRAN PANDAY

COME BACK! School children perform traditional dances during the inaugural ceremony of the 4th Non Resident Nepali Global Conference 2009 at the Army Club on Tuesday.



KIRAN PANDAY

YES, OFFICER? Police stop a LPG three-wheeler as it tries to evade them after protesting a government decision to gradually replace the vehicles with microbuses in the Valley.



KIRAN PANDAY

ECONOMIC SENSE: Nepali Times columnist Sujeev Shakya, aka Arthabeed, at the launch of his book "Unleashing Nepal: Past, Present and Future of Nepal", alongside Manjushree Thapa, Kul Chandra Gautam and Prabhakar SJB Rana at Hotel de l'Annapurna on Monday.



KIRAN PANDAY

MASTERCLASS: French artist Trebeka performs at Jazzmandu 2009's closing concert on Tuesday at the Shangri-La Hotel.



KIRAN PANDAY

IF ONLY... A man observes a model of an upcoming apartment at the Nepal Property Expo at the Exhibition Hall on Sunday.



May the festive season shower you and your loved ones with choicest blessings and happiness

We wish you a very Happy Dashain and a Prosperous Tihar 2066

max L'agence/09

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Donkey Tihar

Kasto kich kich gareko,
hairanai paryo buda le!

Exact Makunay soundbite last week before Girija finally **bamboozled** him into making Suzy DPM. "I couldn't take the pressure anymore," MKN told Ram Chandra and Sushil, "I had to do it to save the government, at least it's not PM, only DPM."

To cut a long story short, GPK blackmailed MKN saying: "I'll join the Baddies and topple you unless you take my dotter as your deputy." MKN resisted, but he had to do it in the end. The donkey's prediction: GPK will hibernate, lie low and stop hobnobbing with the Baddies till Christmas at least.

The other reason GPK is hibernating is because he was certain he'd get the **Nobel Peace Prize**, and was upstaged by President O'Bama. Can't blame him for having his hopes up ever since Man Mohan-ji threw him a red carpet at IGIA in 2006 and called him "**Asia's great statesman**" and then Jimmy ('Jimbo') Carter called him "My Hero".



What is all this sudden **India-China shadow boxing** over Nepal? OK, we understand

that these two don't like each other and each thinks the other is stabbing it in the back. China does not give visas to Arunachalis, objects to the Indian PM addressing a meeting there, issues visas to those from Kashmir on a separate loose paper stapled to the passport. India competes for resources in Africa, irritates Beijing by continuing to tolerate Tibetan activities in India, has a media that whips up anti-China hysteria regularly.

But what is surprising is that our netas, who have little clue of the larger geopolitics, want to play India off against China. So PKD troops into Beijing with dogmatist-in-chief Com Kiran and operator-in-chief Com Mahara to build 'party-to-party' links. Surya Bahadur Thapa creeps back from Delhi after meeting who-whos, convincing them the Maoists cannot be trusted, as if they needed more convincing. Then Lionheart flies into Delhi to convince them how he is their best bet at the next NC convention, and how he is the logical next compromise PM candidate. Ass' advice: let's stop beating around the bush and just have a direct **India-China Summit on Nepal's future**. Let's hammer it out once and for all. Once Beijing and Delhi come

to an understanding, our domestic jokers will stop all this diplomatic tourism.



The discharge of disqualified **Baddie minors** began this week with a grand function at the Sindhuli cantonment. But has it really begun? Noone, including the UNMEAN folks meant to be overseeing the process, quite know. Are the Maoists just using this as a ploy to show progress before the next Security Council meeting, without really going all out to throw out those who had no business being there? Or are they sincere? The day after the event, deputy commander Com Baldev was heard cribbing about the rehabilitation package.

Till we see this disqualified lot in civilian schools we will not believe it. But guess where many of them are headed after leaving the cantonments: a transit centre. This is meant to be a stop-gap arrangement, but are we not creating another structure that will be equally hard to disband?

The international community is getting wise to the ways of our netas. After paying endlessly for various parts of the peace process, the Norwegians

have finally issued an ultimatum: they are willing to help with the rehab of the discharged, but only if this process concludes by January 22. If that date is crossed, the promised **5 million smackeroos** will be channeled elsewhere.



And where is Com Pasang while all this is happening? The commander of the PLA has been particularly low key. He has not

been giving interviews, he was not present at the discharge function; unlike last time, he has not reacted to the defense minister's assertion that the CPA should be revised to bolster the Nepal Army's capabilities. Noone quite knows why he has allowed Baldev to hog the limelight, or whether he has been asked to lie low. Maybe both?

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