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UPENDRA LAMICHANE

“Stop the slaughter”

With only two weeks to go before the mass sacrifice of animals at Gadhimai in Bara, Bomjon (pictured, above) urged that the ritual sacrifice be stopped. “The animals are killed cruelly for the notion that wishes will be granted. I urge everyone to stop the slaughter,” he said.

Adding his voice to the campaign is Ram Bahadur Bomjon, the ‘Boy Buddha of Bara’ who gained world renown after he meditated in the hollow of a tree, ostensibly without food and water for six months in 2006. He disappeared mysteriously then, and is now living in the jungle near Ratnapuri.

At an ecumenical function on Saturday in Bara, Bomjon (pictured, above) urged that the ritual sacrifice be stopped. “The animals are killed cruelly for the notion that wishes will be granted. I urge everyone to stop the slaughter,” he said.

The Gadhimai sacrifices have been opposed by animal rights groups in Nepal, but this year there has been unprecedented international attention on the gruesome ritual in which half a million buffalos and goats as

well as chickens, pigeons, ducks and even rats are sacrificed. The event is held every five years and this year will take place over two days on 23-24 November.

Indian animal rights activist Maneka Gandhi has also spoken out strongly against the sacrifices, writing a letter to Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal urging him to ban the festival. But preparations are going ahead regardless.

Gadhimai is a transnational festival, and most of the pilgrims as well as the animals being sacrificed come from across the border in India. •

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inside

Netbooks in Nepal

p8-9



p13

Mouse in the middle
India-Nepal-China

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ULTRA-VIOLENCE

Whatever the slogans on the streets about 'civilian supremacy' it is now clear that the current phase of Maoist street protests are aimed at saving the party from itself.

The torch rallies, the dancing in front of municipality buildings and the 'capture' of Dhankuta are all showcase activities to say, "We're here". But much more sinister is the escalation of violent attacks against opposition figures, attacks that remind us of the conflict years. The only difference is that guns are not being used.

But it is the time-tested Maoist method of enforcing obedience by terror tactics. A Maoist leader this week reminded everyone that the party still had guns stashed away and could use them anytime.

The kind explanation for all this is that the Maoists are just buying time for a face-saving way out of the corner they have boxed themselves into. The unkind explanation is that they are intent on state capture by escalating the protests into an urban uprising, removing all those in opposition and instituting totalitarian rule, as Baburam Bhattarai candidly explained to the World Peoples Resistance Movement last week (see p13). None of the Maoist actions so far convince us that the second option is not their real end game.

By rejecting a post-Tihar semantic compromise on a parliamentary resolution that offered everyone an honourable escape clause, the Maoists proved that this is all about getting back to power by hook or by crook. Indeed, to see it from their side, the Maoist leadership is afraid of greater attrition from the rank and file and perhaps even a split in the party if it doesn't get into government soon.

The question is how. The UML-NC coalition is unlikely to agree to Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal stepping down, and the Maoists will not settle for anything less than prime ministership. The street protests were necessary because the Maoists realised they don't have the numbers in the house to oust the government, and their strategy of splitting parties to garner those numbers failed.

The desperation has led the Maoists to play an even more dangerous game by declaring autonomous ethnic federal councils this week. When nothing else works, the Maoists have always fallen back on stoking ethnic and caste tensions: not to liberate the downtrodden, but as a political weapon. A Maoist leader's explanation this week that the ethnic units are just 'symbolic' just doesn't wash.

The comrades must know that mixing ethnicity with politics can only lead to the fragmentation of the country. If so, does it mean they don't care if that happens?



RSS

Politicians don't go to their constituencies anymore. Mainstream parties have almost abdicated the countryside. From Marchabar to Manang, the only political activists who can be seen in the districts are the Maoists. More often than not, it's to gherao something.

The Maoists are usually decked out in their new uniform: grey tracksuits and Chinese sneakers. They will stay with supporters outside the district capital, as they still prefer haunts where they found shelter during the underground years. UML cadres,



STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

on the other hand, gatecrash government guest houses when they do venture out. And if an NC leader leaves the district headquarters, he will immediately look around for a hotel or lodge.

On arrival, the NC cadre begins the day with puja at the local temple. The UML fellows are late risers. The Maoists go to the police station to assert their presence and then interrogate the VDC secretary on what contracts are ongoing and which parties are bidding for them. No wonder the Paris Danda honchos are so well informed about politics at the grassroots.

Their days also end differently. A Kangresi will head for the local watering hole if he is not carrying his own bottle. And as the night wears on, yodelling old Bollywood hits is the order of the day. UML operators are more comfortable in the company of nationalist capitalists and civil servants and when happy, prefer the tunes of MaBiBi or Chandani Shah.

But most intriguing is the way a Maoist spends the evening. From a side pocket of the backpack emerges a plastic-covered notebook. It is opened gingerly and the ferocious warrior of yesterday begins to read poetry. Surprisingly, few Maoists sing unless they are affiliated with the cultural

wing of the party, when they burst into a full-throated Nepali version of 'The East is Red'. King Prithvi warned that songs could enfeeble the soul of a warrior. The Maoists have taken the counsel of the Great Gorkha conqueror to heart.

The politics of music is difficult to define and impossible to quantify. But a gross generalisation would show that some kind of relationship does exist between music and politics. Ballads, blues and laments tend to induce fatalism. String instruments tend to encourage pacifism in their players as well as their audience.

Patriotic and love songs are conducive to conservatism. Dharma Raj Thapa, Narayan

Plains prescience

The late Gaige's work on the Tarai is as relevant as it ever was

The fact that Frederick H Gaige's 'Regionalism and National Unity in Nepal' (1975) remains the single most important work on the politics of the plains is a testament to both its pioneering and prescient nature, and the sorry state of English language scholarship on the Tarai.



PLAIN SPEAKING
Prashant Jha

Gaige first got interested in Nepal after hearing the formidable Nepal hand, Leo Rose. He subsequently enrolled in a PhD program, won a Fulbright scholarship, and flew into Nepal in 1966. A US embassy officer suggested to him that at a time when other scholars were drawn to the mountain region, he could focus on the Tarai. Gaige was excited, and asked himself the question we are still struggling with today: "how Nepal, as a young and struggling nation, would pull together all the disparate ethnic groups and regions into a stable national entity". He felt that the Tarai "represented both a very important region of Nepal and the one most difficult to

integrate into a national framework".

He visited Biratanagar, Janakpur, Birganj and Nepalganj, the most politically volatile cities when the Madhes rose in opposition to the Nepali state thirty-two years

later. Gaige travelled to villages across the Tarai in a Land Rover, armed with copies of the census bureau district maps, sleeping on foldout canvas cots, and cooking on a pump-up kerosene stove. His dissertation got published as a book.

Gaige runs through the entire gamut of issues that marked the Tarai's troubled relationship with the Nepali state: its intimate links across the border; the perception of the plains people as 'Indians' and its implications in a polity that thrived on generating anti-Indian sentiments; the region's geopolitics and economy; and the politics of citizenship and language.

In the last and most prophetic section 'on the problem of national integration', Gaige declares dealing with the problem 'through the elimination of minority groups' is entirely unrealistic. India would not allow it; and the economic power of the plains would prevent any such move.

If the Nepali state could not integrate the Tarai into the national framework by force, the 'realistic alternative would be draw the plains people into the national structure through participation in the nation's political life'. He recommends certain policy changes – removal of discriminatory clauses in the citizenship law and simplifying citizenship procedures; ensuring that plains people are not denied sources of livelihood; recognising Hindi as an associate language; and hiring plains people as government administrators, police and army officers through quotas.

Gaige's study has limitations because he was thinking of these issues in a monarchical set-up, and could not cross certain lines. But reading these recommendations, and their striking relevance today, makes one wonder what would have happened if the regime had undertaken such transformations earlier.

Soon enough, Gaige's book was out of print. Researchers and journalists looking for a basic overview of the plains struggled to get a photocopy from libraries. Social Science Baha and Himal Books filled the gap earlier this year by bringing out a new edition to inaugurate a series on 'Classics in Nepali Social Sciences'.

Before that, publisher Deepak Thapa, aided by US-based scholar Mahendra Lawoti, had to launch a massive hunt to find Gaige, who had disappeared from the Nepali academic radar. A Baha representative, academic Bandita Sijapati, met Gaige last year in New York. He was retired and bedridden, had only visited Nepal once in all these years, and had spent a major part of his life as an academic administrator at Penn State Berks. He readily gave his consent for a new edition.

Gaige passed away on August 25 this year. He did get to see a copy of the new edition, though he was very unwell by that time.

The Tarai, and Nepal, owe Gaige a huge debt for his outstanding work that questioned existing assumptions. The fact that he got to see what his work meant to generations of Nepali scholars, and that Nepal is slowly on the path to accommodating the people of the plains, is the best tribute we can pay him. ●

What is your song, comrade?

There is a relationship between politics and music

Gopal, Tara Devi and Mira Rana dominated the Nepali music scene for much of the Panchayat era. Unsurprisingly, the harmonium and flute were their main accompaniments – there is nothing like a wind instrument to create an aura of calm and completeness.

The Maoist insurgency inspired two simultaneous changes in musical tastes. Country music and devotional songs came into vogue once again. (It has since become de rigueur for retired generals to cut *bhajan* discs.) The other: poetry readings became popular.

The Maoists are busy turning swords into guitars. But music, and the arts in general, are areas where the Maoists have a lot of work to do to rise above their usual exhortative socialist realism. Which is why the song and dance outside DDC buildings this week failed to rouse onlookers. Public protests can be carnivals of the people rather than spooky torch processions that persuade no one except diehard supporters. ●

This column is in memory of French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who argued that music had the ability to represent the conflicting forces and ideas that lie at the foundation of society. Prof. Levi-Strauss passed away on Friday.

LETTERS

WHEELING AND DEALING

I read your well-written update ('Deal or no deal', www.nepalitimes.com) with great interest. Although I am not an avid supporter of the Maoists, in my view they are the only legitimate party to lead Nepal: they won the elections fair and square.

Now we have a government being led by the biggest losers in the elections. How will 'New Nepal' find direction if we do not even start on a legitimate footing? The Maoists may be playing games, but they are only following the lead of GPK who loves playing chess with the entire country.

Abhishek Bhandari

PEOPLE POWER

When you distrust the community ('Demonstrating democracy', #474), you are undermining the power of the individual. When you want government to give you a free ride, you are essentially killing that natural instinct of the individual. Perhaps one has forgotten how and what brings success in life: hard work and perseverance, which are best played out in the markets.

Anjan Panday

SOFT TARGET

I was upset by your editorial this issue (Presidential conduct, #475). Is it a sign that our media houses are now aiming at

soft targets rather than trying hard to fight the scourge that is sure to destroy them when it gets its first chance?

It also reminded me of a comment historian Schumpeter made about 'liberal' French elites just before the French Revolution of 1789 in his classic 'History of economic analysis':

"French society in particular was rapidly disintegrating, but as yet felt perfectly safe. Like all disintegrating societies that don't want to face their danger, it delighted in protecting its enemies and thus provided a milieu of unique charm that will attract even those of us who sense a flavor of

decay...A wave of religious, political and economic criticism that was pathetically uncritical of its own dogmatic standards swept over the intellectual centers...."

Biswo Poudel, from

www.facebook.com/nepalitimes

REAR VIEW

● The Ass is not a comedy page, it is an editorial, which appears to the untrained eye as a gossip column.

Shankhar Ranjit

● The Ass's request to hold a climate summit on Everest (Out of power, out of mind, #475) seems to have reached the concerned authority.

A Bomjon

Chaudhary's

वाइ वाइ

जस्तो अरु कुनै छैन !

वाइ वाइ 25 years

हिमाल, पहाड, मधेश-तराई, सर्वत्र जब चाउचाउको नाम लिइन्छ तब वाइ वाइको नाम आउँछ । अनि वाइ वाइ भन्नासाथ हामी उत्कृष्ट स्वाद, अत्यन्त स्वास्थ्यबर्द्धक र सर्वगुण सम्पन्न चाउचाउ भनी बुझ्दछौं । विगत २५ वर्षदेखि नेपाली परिवारसंग अटूट र न्यानो तथा मिठो सम्बन्ध गाँस्दै आएको वाइ वाइ सबै नेपालीको एकल रोजाइ हो किनकी आज पनि वाइ वाइ जस्तो अरु कुनै छैन ।

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United Nations for the nation

Tamrat Samuel is the director of the Asia and the Pacific Division, Department of Political Affairs at the United Nations. He has been actively working on Nepal since 2003, and served as the deputy head of UNMIN in 2007-08. In the run-up to the UN Security Council meeting to discuss Nepal on Friday, Samuel spoke to Prashant Jha of *Nepali Times* in New York.

Prashant Jha: What is the UN's assessment of the present political situation in Nepal?

Tamrat Samuel: The current situation is one of stalemate. We recognise efforts are being made to resolve the stalemate. Unfortunately, as the Secretary General stated in his report, we can't say that the commitments made in the 7 July letter by PM Nepal to him have been implemented. This is regrettable, including from UN's point of view. UNMIN's mandate was framed in the context of the period before the Constituent Assembly elections. It has been over a year-and-a-half since the CA elections took place, and the mission is carrying out the residual aspects of the original mandate under significantly different political circumstances. What we would like to see is that agreements are carried out, integration is completed, and the constitution is drafted in a timely manner so we can finish the job we were given.

So do you think a new mandate, that reflects the changed political context, would help the UN perform its role better?

It is up to Nepal, the parties to the peace process, and the Security Council to determine that. As the UN, we respond to the needs of the country. There should be no sense that

the UN has any different agenda or that UNMIN wants to stay on in Nepal. We are not looking for any additional business. But anything that spurs progress is welcome. To maintain the cantonments indefinitely, under UNMIN's light monitoring arrangement, while political tensions and the possibility of confrontation increase, is definitely not ideal. While UNMIN's monitoring has been an important factor and no serious breakdown has occurred, this arrangement was designed for a different period when parties shared greater mutual trust and confidence. The sooner there is progress on integration and related aspects and cantonments can be closed the better.

The Secretary General's recent report says that a national unity government is desirable. There has been criticism that this marks disrespect for Nepal's domestic political processes.

The criticism is not justified in any way. The report actually says

"remains desirable". All the major Nepali actors have emphasised that a national unity government is important. In fact, PM Nepal told me in June that he was trying to get all the key parties into government. All the report does is reflect the general desire of the parties, and it is consistent with what the Secretary General has repeatedly said in the past about governance by consensus, maintaining the unity of the parties, etc. The report does not make any suggestion about the specifics of such a government. That is obviously for the parties to decide. To interpret this positive encouragement in the direction of a commonly held ideal as being a partisan view is not acceptable at all.

January is two months away, and there may be another request for UNMIN's extension. Will there

be a roll-over of the mandate?

I'm sure the Security Council will be grappling with the issue of the future of the mission this Friday. It is up to the parties to decide the nature of UN assistance they request. The PM had given strong and encouraging indications that after the Dasain and Tihar holidays, there would be maximum effort to make progress on integration. There is time, and while it may be physically difficult to complete the process by January, with trust and confidence, progress is still possible.

What would you say to the Maoists, who have just started an agitation?

Our consistent message to all parties has been to adhere to solemn agreements, implement commitments, utilise the constitutional and political mechanisms available to them to resolve problems and to refrain from taking extra-constitutional steps that would impede rather than facilitate progress. This is the responsibility of all parties, and this is what we continue to say to the Maoists.

Have you been talking to India about the stalemate? Do you think neighbours can play a more constructive role to turn the situation around?

Nepal's neighbours are of course key partners, and India is a major player. Our consultation with them is quite important. They know our concerns about the present drift in the peace process. They have a closer engagement with stakeholders in Nepal. Our position is that the international community, including India, should send a message to Nepali actors that the peace process enjoys the support of the international community, that the fate of the peace process is in their hands, and whatever the international community does is to support the peace process and not to undermine it. There is complete respect for the national ownership of the process.

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MBA degree

KFA has launched a two-year 'MBA in Banking & insurance' program in Nepal in affiliation with the Vinayaka Missions University of India.



Super slim

Using super-shrink technology, Samsung has developed the world's thinnest LCD panels for TVs.

European way

Orbit International has introduced BEKO, a premium brand of home appliances from Europe, with air conditioners, washing machines, dishwashers, refrigerators, televisions and microwaves, among other products.



New branch

Bank of Kathmandu opened its 32nd branch in Urlabari on 28 October. With 32 branches and six counters, the bank now provides services in 38 locations in Nepal.

Sky scraping



The 23rd AGM of Standard Chartered Bank convened on 4 November. The Bank's Operating Profit and Net Profit for fiscal year 2008/2009 was Rs 1.51 billion and Rs 1.03 billion respectively.

Hassle free

Everest Bank started its SMS bill payment service for NTC mobile users. Customers can make monthly bill payments or recharge their mobiles by texting 5677.

Money transfers

United Remit and Everest Bank have tied up to provide money transfer services to Money Gram.



Bipalis galore

Nepal is where Nepalis are

BOSTON: This Beed estimates that the number of Nepalis living in the United States has crossed the half-million mark, with a high concentration in the east coast. More and more Nepalis are seen on trains, in restaurants and



ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed

on college campuses. There are two distinct kinds of Nepalis living abroad. There are the older set who ask for your surname and home village, claim to have powerful connections and read Nepali news portals instead of the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal. They are as fatalistic as ever and despite having spent decades here and still love to tell you why Nepal has no hope.

Then there is a fresh set of young Nepalis who aren't keen on opportunities in Nepal. From the talks at the Washington Nepal Forum in Washington DC to Harvard to Brown University, it is refreshing to see Nepalis who do want to understand Nepal from a perspective that does not involve politics.

For Nepalis, migrating has been way of life. They have been doing it for over two centuries, mainly because they see no hope in Nepal. Politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen alike often prefer their children to stay out of the country they themselves have helped shape. However, interest in Nepal, especially among second generation Nepalis in the

US, is building. The Asia Center at Boston University has hosted speakers who have eked out a living in conflict-torn Nepal, and a group of students from Harvard Business School is coming to Nepal on a trekking cum exposure visit. Everyone, it seems, is interested to know more about a country uniquely situated between two galloping economies. For the bipali community

by such groups are always interesting. Some, 'parachute consultant' types who think they know everything about Nepal, need constant reminding that migration is by no stretch new for Nepal. Many Nepalis migrated to Assam and Darjeeling as far back as the mid-nineteenth century. India and China, which receive the highest number of migrants and remittances



here, the issues haven't changed. Many play out the Nepali penchant for politicking in associations, but others are less interested in becoming an association president than getting work done. For instance, the Chalphal Group in Boston continues to help the Nepali community there interact with visitors and scholars from Nepal, and is successful largely because it is informal and unstructured. The same goes for the Washington Nepal Forum, which continues to host interesting programs. Perhaps more such efforts are required.

Debates on migration hosted

globally, have stopped contemplating its merits. They realise that in a globalising world political boundaries are losing relevance.

The success of the European Union and now talk of an Asian Economic Union show that as communication becomes easier, cultural differences will dissipate, and a homogenous culture that relies heavily on technology will grow. Nepal will slowly become where Nepalis are and it will be immaterial where a person resides. So welcome to the building of Nepal in the United States. ● www.arthabeed.com

Good ad sense

Michael Maedel is president of J. Walter Thompson (JWT) Company, the global business communications company. *Nepali Times* caught up with him when he was in Kathmandu earlier this week.

Nepali Times: As a global company operating in almost 100 countries with about 200 offices, how do you maintain relations with all your clients?
Maedel: Our company has been around for 150 years. Yet there has never been a time that is as competitive as today. This means our professional standards have to be very high. Our standards have to be the global standards.

Though we have been pioneers in using new technologies and getting into new markets, we find that our clients are ahead of us. They keep us on our toes. Though we are a global company with offices around the world, we have come to see ourselves as a network of talents that's there to serve our clients. Our clients do not want generic business communication solutions. They want customised solutions and our job is to deliver.

How do you do that?

Our relationship with clients is based on trust, openness and candour. Our clients view us not as a communication partner, but as a business partner. We approach clients with a mindset that their success is our success. For this, we take a pro-active stance to help them sell more. Their success strengthens our relationship with them.

Ad agencies are often perceived as making ads that win awards for themselves but do not necessarily help their clients.

Our clients know that money spent on ads is money spent on making an investment to sell their products. They track results for themselves, and see what works and what doesn't. Though recognition is nice, as our work for Nokia and Kit Kat in the competitive Asia Pacific market has demonstrated, well thought-out creative ad campaigns do lead to more sales.

In recent years, billions of ad dollars have moved online. Companies like Google are eating your lunch. What is your 'Google strategy'?

The Googles of the world can best be described as 'frenemies'. Because of their technological sophistication, they capture and analyse data in real time in such a way that clients have a much clearer idea about who's viewing the ads online in what manner. But we have to understand that when it comes to creating or 'ideating' an ad, just having it on Google does not help clients. It's the high-end creativity in which our company produces value for our clients to sell more of their products.

But what worked in the past in terms of ideation may not work in the future.

Yes. That is why we have invested time and resources to be a network of talents to serve customers. For this network to be strong, we have to attract and retain talents from all over the world. We are also redesigning our company to be an 'open



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

architecture' company. This means we are open to good ideas that come from any part of the company, and this has helped us ramp up the creative value that we add to boost clients' product sales.

JWT's Nepal office has been running for 10 years. How has political instability affected your work here?

When we are in a developing market, we take a long-term view. Nepal is no exception. But when we see that there are many clients who take calculated risks to produce goods and services valued by their customers, we stand ready to help them be successful through our efforts.

Decision under pressure

Daman Nath Dhungana in Nepal, 8 November

नेपाल

Willingly or not, our political leaders are polarising the country. Maoist leaders launched the current street protest because they were under pressure to do so from the majority of party members who supported the idea.

The political leadership isn't focused on safeguarding the historic changes we've achieved in the past couple of years. A consensus government is necessary to end political confrontation which, in turn, requires that all past agreements, including the 12 point agreement, be reviewed without scrapping old agreements.

A new, reviewed agreement should mandate a national unity government and forbid any opposition. A common mechanism should be developed to resolve the political disputes and misunderstandings to help run the government smoothly. The same mechanism can decide the forms of the government.



KIRAN PANDAY

The current situation is the result of short-sighted political leadership. The integration of the Maoist fighters should have been completed before the CA elections. The combatants

should have already been discharged from the cantonments.

The Maoist House obstructions have delayed the constitution-writing process, although they claim otherwise. The parliament is part of the CA, not a separate body. The Maoists should let the House operate freely. It's completely unreasonable to hold the House hostage to their demands.

The Maoists seem to have decided that if that are not leading the government, they will be on the streets protesting it. But there are good reasons for them to come to the table. One way to end the political deadlock is to form a national government that is unopposed in parliament. The peace process hinges on the integration of Maoist fighters and completion of the constitution. For this, the political parties ought to moderate their rhetoric.

If the Maoists form or join the government, they will be forced to stand up for the constitution-writing process. They might have thought that they could push their issues if they led the government. The threat of resurrection of insurgency is neither practical nor logical. Therefore, if the Maoists are committed to democracy, they should allow the House proceedings and initiate a parliamentary process to form a national government. The other parties do not oppose this. This will be an opportunity for them to take national and international players into confidence.

“Two-facedness has caused uncertainty”

Gorkhapatra's Ram Prasad Acharya spoke to former United Nations Deputy Secretary General Kul Chandra Gautam on 31 October about the country's political situation:

गोरेवापत्र

Violence and armed struggle will never bring about peace and prosperity. No political party can succeed through armed revolution, which in any case has become an obsolete idea. The fruits of armed revolution are at

best short lived.

Political parties should understand that people are fed up with violence and will shun anyone who tries to sow communal discord.

This isn't the time for conflict. The parties ought to cooperate to write a constitution that addresses ordinary people's aspirations. The constitution should eliminate past inequalities, discrimination and misunderstanding in order to empower the people.

As the biggest party in the CA, the Maoists should be more responsible and create an environment conducive to consensus. Instead, they have disrupted the House, protested on the streets, all in order to impose their ideology on others. They talk of a People's Republic with their cadres but express a commitment to democracy with the international community. This two-facedness has caused greater uncertainty.

The other so-called

democratic parties haven't behaved democratically either. It's time they sorted out their own problems instead of blaming each other.

We need honest politicians. The Maoists claim they want peace but have a finger on the trigger. This is nonsense. We should renounce violence for peace.

To make a country democratic, peaceful and prosperous, the political culture should be democratic and progressive first.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA



Crowd: “Don't be afraid, he's our brother. He was released to help make the constitution.”
Tiger: “Protest”

क्रान्तिपुर Batsan in Kantipur on 1 November

In the mood to resign

Tarun, 26 October

तरुण

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal and Defense Minister Bidya Bhandari aren't talking to one another because of differences over a proposal mooted by Bhandari to revise the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The PM has refused to lend the proposal official government sanction. The agreement, made when the monarchy was still extant, places many limitations on the army. Bhandari and every political party except the Maoists want these limitations removed.

However, the PM has not given her the permission to put this proposal to the cabinet. The PM ended cabinet meetings prematurely on each of the three occasions Bhandari attempted to do so.

Flustered, Bhandari is now considering resigning. But under KP Oli's advice, she has held off doing so for a couple of days because there are fears that the PM may go softer on the Maoists after her resignation.

A few days ago, when PM Nepal toured army headquarters with Sujata Koirala and Bijay Kumar Gachhadar, the Defence Minister wasn't even informed. According to UML sources, Bhandari will resign whenever the talks between KP Oli and party president Jhala Nath Khanal conclude.

Khanal (who left for Delhi on Tuesday) and Oli have had several secret meetings. There are rumours that they are looking for someone to replace PM Nepal from outside of the Maoist party.



रेडियो कार्यक्रमको आदान-प्रदान नेटवर्क हाइवे

हरेक दिन बिहान र बेलुका साढे ६ बजेदेखि ७ बजेसम्म



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फरक परिवेश
फरक संस्कार
फरक भूगोल

उज्यालो ९० नेटवर्क सानेपा

रेडियो चितवन ९४.६ रत्ननगर

अब सधैका साथी

Pandora's box



DAMBAR K SHRESTHA

Himal Khabarpatrika's constitution caravan reached the southern city of Rajbiraj recently.

Himal Khabarpatrika: What are the challenges to overcome before the constitution can be written?

Ashok Chaudhary (advocate): All the parties have not accepted the political changes wrought by the Jana Andolan and the Madhes movement. Because we don't yet have an environment for languages and cultures other than Nepali, the basis for a balanced constitution is not in place.

Amarkanth Jha (professor): When the South African constitution was written, political parties and constitution experts were in agreement on how to go about it. We too need to have a common political mechanism.

Raju Paswan (rights worker): There can be no constitution without political agreement. We have to address the demands for ethnicity based provinces. The government needs to hold talks with the armed groups in the Tarai and address Madhesi grievances first.

Suman Raj Pyakurel (UML): The constitution can't be written while the Maoists still have an army. This needs to be sorted out before we move ahead.

What do you think of the demand for One Madhes One Pradesh? On what

basis should provinces be designated? Himmat Singh (senior advocate): It should be All Madhes One Pradesh. The constitution can have provisions to maintain Nepal's territorial integrity.

Hasim Ansari (National Muslim Front): We Muslims don't consider ourselves Madhesi, even if we live in the Madhes. The Muslim community of the 10 districts where there is a Muslim majority says: under no condition will the demand for One Madhes One Pradesh be granted.

Yukti Lal Marik (Dom Upliftment Society): There will be no place for Dalits in One Madhes One Pradesh. We need proportional representation and participation in all parts of the country.

Suman Raj Pyakurel: There are no majorities in any part of the country, so ethnic federalism doesn't make sense. Provinces should be designated on the basis of whether they can survive in the long term.

Shiva Hari Bhattarai (journalist): Madhesi parties are playing politics with the idea of One Madhes One Pradesh and there is a lack of trust between the state and the Madhesi.

Kishore Kumar Yadav (student leader): Madhes students want a Madhes state with the right to self-determination. If the Constituent Assembly doesn't fulfill our demands then there will be another revolution.

Hindu state or secular state? Sabita Koirala (women's rights

worker): A secular state is the need of the moment.

Hasim Ansari: The Muslim community does not favour either a secular or a Hindu state. We only want religious freedom. If we had a Muslim majority we would dream of an Islamic state. So if the Hindu majority in Nepal desires a Hindu state then we would not oppose it.

Himmat Singh: Since Nepal was declared a secular state by the interim constitution, people should be able to vote definitively on the matter.

How should we decide on language rights?

Yukti Lal Marik: The national language should be Nepali. Whichever language is predominant in particular regions should be the language of government there.

Bhogendra Chaudhary (MJF-Democratic): The main thing is that we should understand one another. Research should be conducted to determine which language is the most spoken and understood so it can be declared the national language. Mother tongues and regional languages should be designated federal languages and included in primary education.

Surya Nath Yadav (UCPN-Maoist): Language is related to development. Whichever language unites the country, is the most developed and easier to access education in will become the national language. If English is spoken the most tomorrow then it could become the national language.

“CA politics is strange”

Renu Chand (Bhatt), Maoist CA member, Baitadi-2

How much of the constitution has been written?

I spend a lot of time in committee meetings. Work is moving along but we haven't done as much as we would have liked to.

Why not?

First, because of political disagreements and second, because there isn't a mechanism to reconcile different viewpoints.

Don't you think the Maoists have delayed the process by focusing on issues such as changing the flag?

Some think the flag should better reflect Nepal's diversity, but others don't want it changed. I think it should be changed.

Perhaps the Maoist obstruction of parliament is to blame?

When the legislature is obstructed, the CA will certainly be affected. That's why the legislature needs to be run properly.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Will the constitution be written on time? Maybe not, but it must be written at some point.

What are CA politics like right now?

As Lenin said, sometimes politics seems like simply a platform for chatter. Other times it seems like an excuse to enjoy the sun. Parliamentary politics is strange. There is a need for reform. We're also very young, it's strange to have these old members of parliament come up to us and address us as 'honourable member' – they must have children as old as us!

“I know 5 or 6 gay CA members”



KIRAN PANDAY

Sunil Babu Pant, UML CA member, Gorkha

How do you spend your days now that the CA is suspended?

There is no regularity. I begin the day with yoga and attend lots of committee meetings and, occasionally, visit my constituency. Otherwise, I'm in LGBT (lesbian gay bisexual transgender) rights group Blue Diamond Society's office until 11AM.

Have there been any memorable moments since you became a CA member?

I got a lot of attention from people. Female CA members would ask openly about gay and third gender issues. Men were a little embarrassed and would ask about it in private.

Are you the only gay CA member?

I am the only one out of the closet. But I know 5 or 6 gay male and female CA members.

What has the CA done to help your cause?

The Committee to Protect Minority Rights recognises gay marriage and allows positive discrimination in favor of gay people.

How interested are you in the issues of the 'People's Assembly', parliamentary control over the judiciary, the use of Hindi as an official language, replacing the national flags, etc?

It is not wrong to have these issues under discussion. But the focus is only on the present, and not on the future. I don't think we can have an independent judiciary under the Maoist's justice system proposal. And, I would rather change the country's backwardness than change the flag.

Who do you think is responsible for obstructing the constitution-writing process?

The big three parties are obstructing the process since they want to remain in government and write a constitution that suits them.



KIRAN PANDAY

The digital life

HP Kasthamandap's computer servicing station in Kumaripati, a Dr. Frankenstein den of busted motherboards and meticulous repairwork, is at the heart of a new trend sweeping through Kathmandu: the emergence of the super-personal, customisable laptop.

Take 20-year-old engineering student and football fan Sameer, who has spiky hair, a bookbag slung over his shoulder and a blue HP laptop bearing the Manchester United insignia

to spend that little extra to cultivate a digital persona, which they exhibit in social networking accounts, blogs, gaming avatars and elsewhere.

Indeed, local distributors of laptops have banked on people like Sameer for the last six or seven years, in which period laptops have boomed in popularity. "We sell about 500 laptops a month. The price of notebooks has gone down significantly," says Rajan Man Tuladhar of CAS Trading House.

"Part of the reason why laptops have done so well is

The personal computer just got more personal

tucked under his arm. When Sameer ordered his laptop, he asked for specs – techie lingo for computer specifications – that would enable quality video gaming, including special video and graphics cards and a large monitor.

"I'm crazy about computer games and football, and I'd like everything I own, including this computer, to reflect that," he says. "Sure, custom laptops are a little pricey, but they're definitely worth it."

People like Sameer are willing

that it is trendy to have the latest models," says Sanjay Golcha of Neoteric, which distributes Apple, HP and Wipro laptops locally.

"A Macbook will be carried around with a lot more pride than some Chinese model," adds Bibhor Agarwal of IT Trade Revolution.

New models hit the Nepali market every 3-6 months, which is about the global average. "There are already 12 models of Japanese Fujitsu laptops in Nepal", says Amit Agrawal of



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SHTC International, sole distributor of the brand in Nepal.

Laptops have also profited from Nepal's taxing load-shedding schedule. "Laptops pretty much became popular among young professionals when loadshedding started as they can usually last through electricity cuts," explains Sujit Malla of HP Kasthamandap, which distributes HP merchandise. Workers in

private companies often prefer laptops with smaller monitors and modest but robust hard drives. In comparison there are few laptops in government offices, but demand there is picking up as well.

But branded laptops face a stiff challenge from assembled computers and the grey market. Assembled computers were the first computers to appear in Nepal and remain popular

because they are cheap and easily customisable. Fake laptops are also cheap but have few other virtues, yet dominate as much as 50 per cent of the local market. You can recognise them from their names — a 'compak' instead of a 'compaq', for instance.

"I have had so many customers coming back to us and buying the genuine product after they have tried fake products.

When you buy the genuine article you have peace of mind because you have a high-quality product with a warranty," says Niraj Thapa of Harati Computer Services.

A warranty and the extra service cost a significant Rs 2,000-5000, but sales figures suggest many believe it's worth the money. "We repair any hardware problems of Acer computers within four hours,"

declares Kabindra Jhonse of Mercantile.

Optimism about laptop sales, however, should be tempered by the reality that laptops aren't quite as popular here as they are elsewhere. "Although laptop sales are rising, desktops sales will also increase, especially in banks where data security is extremely important," says Sujan Mool of World Distribution Nepal. ●



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Fading light

More people than there are tigers in Nepal's dwindling wilds massed at the Soaltee last week for a round-robin of meetings, workshops, press briefings and declarations. Their mission: defining actions to save wild tigers from extinction, with the immediate goal of doubling the population of wild tigers in the next decade. Their motto: saving tigers is our test, if we pass, we get to keep the planet. The global tiger workshop was the first of its kind, and laid the groundwork for the Year of the Tiger, 2010.

It's about time. It hasn't quite been the Century of the Tiger. In the last 100 years, their numbers have plummeted from about 100,000 to 4,000 today, thanks to human encroachment into tiger habitats, misguided enactments of masculinity, and the ignoble pretence range states like China maintain in allowing illegal tiger farms to flourish. It's culture, it's medicine, insist advocates of tiger farms, and we could reduce the demand for wild tigers by farming them. Bullshit. It's not culture, it's not medicine, it's their economy, stupid.

What was the Cultural Revolution for if not to root out practices that threaten the wellbeing of society? It was for the little red book, perhaps, not the ever-expanding IUCN red list. So is the tiger then a useful member of our earthly society, beyond fuelling the Chinese obsession with dismembering endangered species? We're told it's a keystone species, an apex species, meaning it has a disproportionate effect on the health of the ecosystems within which it lives. Currently, 121 breeding tigers prowl the confines of Chitwan National Park. But if the tigers were to go, if Chitwan were to go, what would it mean for you and for me?

No tigers in my garden, thank you

One can debate the pros and cons of tigers to local communities living around national parks such as Chitwan, but it's clear the disappearance of this species would be damaging to sub-tropical tourism in Nepal. Economics aside, it's perhaps this tourism that explains what it is the tiger means to us.

Let's face it, the tiger is a celebrity, plain and simple. The smallest of chances to view the planet's most powerful terrestrial predator draws crowds to enclaves such as Chitwan. Alas, his domain is much diminished. Local communities have had to bear the consequences. Six children were killed by tigers in the run-up to the workshop. We may not suffer the same in Kathmandu, but most of us have heard of leopard sightings in the Valley.

Some of us more than others. A few months back, a friend told me how disappointed he was, not that a leopard had appeared in Bishalnagar, but that it had been shot before he got to the site. An adult female and two cubs had been cornered, and the mother attacked zoo staff, leaving the police with no choice. The cubs fled, and one was picked up close by the following day.

Almost a whole week later, the other cub showed up in my garden in Dhapasi. Terrified by our tibetan mastiff, it scrambled up a palm tree and waited for the zoo to turn up as hundreds of locals peered and pointed. After almost five hours up a tree, the leopard was tranquilised and brought down safely...and whisked off to Jawalakhel Zoo.

It was all very exciting, of course, but sad and worrisome in equal measure. What on earth was a leopard doing in my garden? One only needs to look out from Dhapasi towards Tokha and up to Shivapuri to find the answer. The urban waterline laps ever higher, and poaching in the forests continues apace. And so a mother and her two cubs ventured out in search of greener pastures.

I've never seen a wild tiger. But I'll die happy even if I never do, if only I have the knowledge that they can stay in the wild, for some portion of eternity.



KALAM Rabi Thapa

Bardiya boom



Being a goddess

PRANAB MAN SINGH

The show was raw, spontaneous and captivating. It was everything one would expect from a Tracey Rose performance. Her slightly disturbing, sonically wild video installation, currently being displayed as part of the international art festival, 'Separating myth from reality – status of women', provided a reasonably accurate teaser.

Tracey Rose reaches for the sky



KAILASH SHRESTHA

The South African did not disappoint, but nonetheless betrayed a superficial understanding of local culture, a trend that seems to be too easily forgiven in contemporary (dare I say 'post-modern') art.

Tracey Rose's performance at Moksh on Sunday embodied the satire and irony of being an artist, her role as a guest artist, and the touristic nature of her presence in Nepal. These very real, very personal experiences that are a part of her being in Nepal came out as genuine and captivating. However, in terms of an understanding of Nepali culture and traditions, she reiterated the standard schema of western pseudo-intellectualism that backpackers and development workers alike tend to adopt.

This could have been intentional, but given the sincerity of the performance, it is highly unlikely. However, in failing to understand what it means to be a goddess, she does capture the essence of the modern day hyper-real televised goddess.

During her time in Nepal, Tracey Rose will be playing out the role of the goddess – not the mythical eastern goddesses, but the mythical goddesses of the silver screen – Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie.

The simple life came to the third world and unsurprisingly didn't understand it at all. Tracey Rose tried to be a goddess and for 15 minutes on the sunken stage in Moksh she became one, but not the kind she was looking for. But it is perhaps the irony of her failed quest that made the performance worthwhile.

Undoubtedly a gifted performer, her dedication to her role as an artist is her strongest asset. A performance like hers is a rarity in Nepal and those who missed it missed a display of the true potency of art.



KUNDA DIXIT

SURESH RAJ NEUPANE
in BARDIYA

Chitwan’s loss is Bardiya’s gain. Going by the tourists thronging to Bardiya these days, that is the way it looks. Chitwan is a world-renowned national park and has become synonymous with wildlife safaris like Kenya’s Masai Mara. A key role has been played by resorts like Tiger Tops, which have promoted Chitwan internationally since the 1970s. However, Tiger Tops and seven other resorts inside Chitwan have been closed since early this year because of a government move to re-evaluate the impact they are having on park ecology. The dispute has been complicated by rivalry between resorts inside and outside the park. But 450km away, Bardiya National Park has become a

beneficiary of Chitwan’s closures. Bardiya has only 22 rhinos and 19 tigers and a dozen or so wild elephants, but wildlife viewing is said to be easier here because of the sparse undergrowth. “Last year this time we had 40 per cent occupancy, this year we are fully booked,” says Gauri Mallakar of Tiger Tops Karnali, a branch of Tiger Tops Chitwan. She adds: “Tourists love this

comeback.” Conservationist Ramesh Thapa of Bardiya National Park says the park sees a lot of repeat tourists because of its unique habitat. “Also, Bardiya is not as crowded as Chitwan, and the park is really wild,” he explains. More than 500 tourists came to Bardiya in August-October, compared to only 350 at the same time last year. But hoteliers like

SIT BACK AND RELAX: Tourists came to this resort in Bardiya National Park because Chitwan was closed. Tourist numbers here could double if the government invested more in infrastructure. Bardiya National Park’s extension on the Surkhet-Dang border (left).



SURESH RAJ NEUPANE

Bardiya reaps rewards from Chitwan resort closures

place, it has a unique ecology.” Indeed, these days flights to Nepalganj are full of tourists on wildlife safaris to Bardiya, most of them British and American. Nancy Reid from the United States, getting off an elephant after a safari, was breathless with excitement: “It was incredible, we saw rhinos up close, I’m going to

Mohan Aryal of Forest Hideaway Hotel and Cottage says Bardiya could do much better if the government invested in infrastructure. “Electricity, telephones, direct flights, and bus routes from Pokhara and Kathmandu would double the number of tourists coming here,” he says.

“We also need more safari elephants.” Tiger Tops’s Mallakar says tourists booked to Chitwan came to Bardiya instead and loved it. The resort brought some of its staff to Bardiya too. Maybe they need to bring the safari elephants along too. ●

Gift to the earth

At the inaugural session of the Global Tiger Workshop held last week, Minister for Forests and Soil Conservation Deepak Bohara announced the government’s plans to add 898 square kilometres to Bardiya National Park, effectively doubling its size. Under the proposed plans, Bardiya would extend east towards Dang, taking in hilly terrain (left), with the Mahendra highway as its southern border. At 1866 square kilometres, it would become the largest national park in Nepal. The expansion of the national park could be a significant boost to tiger conservation efforts in Nepal. An additional 549 square kilometres

of forest would be included, while the remainder would be part of a buffer zone. Thirteen VDCs of Dang district will be included. Some 50 additional staff, including army personnel, will be needed to manage the enlarged park. Back in 2000, the then prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala pledged to double the park’s size as a ‘gift to the earth’, but the deteriorating security situation put the plan on the backburner. Minister Bohara is confident that this time around there will be no such obstacles as the groundwork has been done and funding is available. Bardiya National Park is home to about 30 species of mammals including the Bengal tiger, the one-horned rhino, wild elephants, swamp deer and black buck. ●



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Over the last few weeks, I've been bombarded with questions about my thoughts on President Barack Obama winning the Nobel Peace Prize – so much that I'm starting to feel like I'm defending a relative.

My first reaction is to say I'm very proud. He's certainly deserving of the Nobel



COMMENT
Richard Ragan

Committee's claim that "only very rarely has a person to the same extent captured the world's attention and given its people hope for a better future." But is capturing the world's attention enough to justify receiving this prestigious honour?

There is a sense that the reservoir of global goodwill candidate Obama built up on his run to the White House is starting to ebb. After all, leading America is no cakewalk. Obama is now the tough talking face of a country fighting two of the most brutal armed contests on earth. Yet he has won a prize for peace?

Was the Nobel Committee bold enough to imagine the honour would weigh on his conscience when contemplating America's next steps in Afghanistan or Iraq? If that was the case, they were way off track. National security and

foreign policy decisions are about national interests and any prize is unlikely to have an influence on the decisions of a global superpower, even if US foreign policy has adopted a much-needed multilateral approach.

No, in my opinion President Obama won the Peace Prize for something else, something that I think will intrinsically transform the landscape of modern America, and if the United States is a beacon for others, then the world.

To grow up black in America has never been easy. The legacy of colour is chequered with pain, and

Obama's
peace prize
recalls
Jefferson's
declaration
that all men
are created
equal

struggle. Often treated as second-class citizens, black Americans still live segregated lives in some sense. Award-winning African American producer Lee Louis Daniels says that before Obama was elected blacks in America had two separate dialogues running in their heads. There was one for the black world, and another for the rest of the world, the white world. The latter was designed for success, it was superficial, and didn't ring true.

The Declaration of Independence, written in 1776 by Thomas Jefferson, boldly declares: "We hold these truths to be self

evident that all men are created equal." Yet throughout the country's short history race has divided America and resulted in its greatest social challenges. The Civil War (1861-1865), fought between the anti-slavery North and the pro-slavery South, remains the nation's bloodiest conflict.

We stand at a similar crossroads today in Nepal. The country's leaders, civil society and citizens are struggling to decide on a roadmap for the future. The decisions of today are likely to affect the future of generations to come. So those who are impatient for results should remember that from the time Thomas Jefferson penned those immortal words, it took Barack Obama 233 years to get to this milestone on America's long walk to freedom.

So what does it really mean to have a black man elected as President of the United States? My hope is that this is the beginning of the end in the long journey towards a colour-blind nation. For this, Barack Obama stands in the company of the other giants who have won this award, and for this alone I believe he deserves the prize. ●

Richard Ragan is Country Director for the World Food Programme (WFP in Nepal.



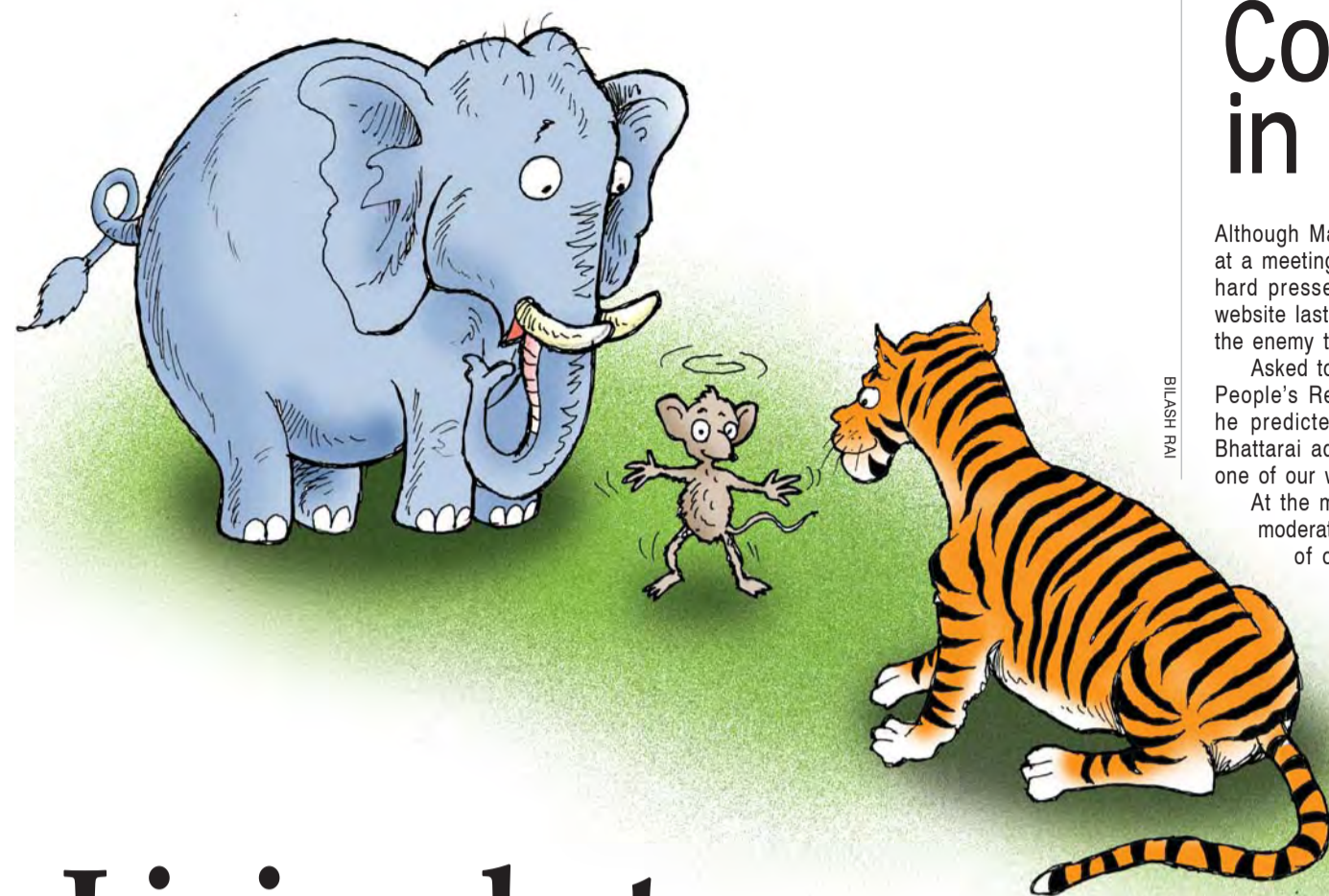
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- **Sunday** - Shopping Plus - info, bargains, discounts, destinations
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- **Tuesday** - Health Times ; Medical Board - Nepal's best doctors respond to queries ; Wheels - everything automobile
- **Wednesday** - Campus Plus - collegiate life ; Appointments - careers and jobs
- **Thursday** - School Times - everything kids should know
- **Friday** - Green - environment matters
- **Saturday** - Property Plus - weekend two pager focusing on real estate



BILASH RAI

Living between nervous giants

KUNDA DIXIT in NEW DELHI

Nepal's founding king called the country a yam between two rocks, and just as it was during the Great Game, recent strains in India-China relations are affecting the state of play in Kathmandu politics.

Complicating things further is the barely concealed schism within the New Delhi political establishment between conservative advisers close to Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh's secretariat and the bureaucracy on everything from the nuclear deal with the US, climate change and dealing with a newly assertive China.

Hawks in the New Delhi military intelligence establishment see Beijing overturning a long-standing accommodation to put the border dispute in the Himalaya in deep freeze while both countries concentrate on economic growth.

Nepal and China suddenly loom large in the Indian media, and often both are mentioned together in jingoistic coverage that is said to be fed by leaks from hawks. After an incident on a border lake in Ladakh mid-September, TV news channels aired alarmist coverage titled 'Enter the Dragon'. Another channel labelled Nepal the 'Number Three Enemy' of India after China and Pakistan.

The main reason for the suspicion is the belief that Nepal's Maoist government is getting too cosy with China.

"Silently but speedily China is spreading its wings in the erstwhile Hindu kingdom, mainly to unleash anti-India propaganda," wrote the *Times of India* last week. Nepal is getting entangled in Delhi's Sinophobia

as the Indian media gives prominent space to reports of China smuggling arms through Nepali Maoists to Naxalites in India. Statements like those made by Maoist leader CP Gajurel don't help: "We fully support and cooperate with the Indian Maoists in their armed revolt."

Several factors have contributed to a new cold war across the Himalaya: the recent geopolitical alignment between India and the US, Beijing's insecurity about Tibetan nationalism, and competition between the two countries over water from Himalayan rivers.

Nepal is getting entangled in New Delhi's Sinophobia

India and China reaffirmed their agreement on spheres of influence at a historic rapprochement between Deng Xiaoping and Rajiv Gandhi in Beijing in December 1988. That deal appears to have unravelled in the past year due to tension between the two countries.

Suspensions of Chinese intent, and the defeat of the Communist Party of India, have resulted in an attempt by hardliners in the New Delhi establishment to re-evaluate the Indian brokered peace accord in Nepal at the expense of Nepal's Maoists.

But despite differences, there is still a convergence of interest between India and China on Nepal: both want stability. Last

month's meeting between Man Mohan Singh and Chinese Premier Hu Jintao on the sidelines of an ASEAN summit in Thailand did clear the air a bit, and there are indications that Premier Hu re-emphasised the need for political unity in Nepal during his brief handshake with Pushpa Kamal Dahal in Sandong in October.

"India and China are just pretending to shadow box over Nepal," said one senior foreign policy specialist here. "Their rivalry is elsewhere and essentially both would prefer not to have the headache of a failed state between them."

Indeed, some Indian academics say China-India ties can mirror China-Japan relations where trade and diplomatic ties continue to grow despite territorial disputes and geopolitical rivalry. China is now one of India's top three trading partners and they do cooperate on issues like global trade and climate change.

What has prompted India and China to seek leverage in Nepal, say some Nepal-watchers here, may perhaps have less to do with their geopolitical rivalry than the deadlock in Nepal's peace process and the fluid political situation in Kathmandu. A weak state will tempt both neighbours to push their national agenda: China to seek a government less reluctant to crackdown on Tibetans and India to push leaders more likely to deliver on its need for water and energy.

But ultimately, "both China and India realise that this will only happen when there is a strong and stable government in Kathmandu," explained the foreign policy specialist. And the answers to that conundrum lie neither in India, nor in China. ●

Contradiction in terms

Although Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai appeared relaxed at a meeting of Kathmandu-based editors on Wednesday, he was hard pressed to explain comments he made in a revolutionary website last week in which he threatened a "final assault against the enemy to complete the revolution".

Asked to explain his statement in the interview with the World People's Resistance Movement (www.wprmbritain.org) in which he predicted "another round of armed clashes" on Thursday, Bhattarai admitted "contradictory statements from our leaders is one of our weaknesses".

At the meeting with chief editors Bhattarai didn't just appear moderate, but back-pedalled furiously on his party line. "Some of our leaders have a dogmatic ideology, but that is a peripheral group," he said. "We will soon be announcing our party line. We want to assure you that this will be a peaceful movement."

Bhattarai was asked about the declaration of 13 ethnically-demarcated 'federal republics', and admitted that it was not going according to the direction of the party leadership, and that it was only a 'symbolic' gesture to give an 'identity' to various ethnic groups.

Bhattarai made a distinction between 'nationalities' and 'ethnicities' and said the federal units were not a parallel government, but provinces named after ethnicities. "But we are aware that the debate is not going according to our plan," he admitted, "it is going the wrong way."

Bhattarai also came across as accommodating on a compromise with the other parties. "Some kind of common resolution from parliament or a gesture from the president would remove the need for protests," he said. "We want to bring closure to the issue of the president's move in a manner that would be acceptable to all."

All this was in stark contrast to Bhattarai's own recent public speeches and his 26 October WPRM interview, excerpts from which follow:



KIRAN PANDAY

WPRM: Why did the Maoist party enter the peace process and attempt to change society through Constituent Assembly elections?

Baburam Bhattarai: Our understanding was that after abolishing the monarchy and establishing a bourgeois democratic republic, the proletarian party would take the initiative and launch forward the struggle towards the New Democratic Revolution. We knew the bourgeois forces, after the abolition of the monarchy, would try to resist, and our main contradiction then would be with the bourgeois democratic parties. A new field of struggle would start.

Now we are preparing for the final stage of the completion of the New Democratic Revolution. In a few months, maybe there will be some intervention from the imperialist and expansionist forces. We may again be forced to have another round of armed clashes. We have decided to again focus on the basic masses of the people both in urban and rural areas. In the decisive stage of confrontation with the reactionary forces we could again combine our bases in the rural areas and our support in the urban areas for a final assault against the enemy to complete the revolution.

Can you explain how the UCPN(M) understands the nature of the state in this transitional period? Can the New Democratic Revolution be completed through the holding of an election?

A sort of flux has been created, it has not been stabilised. Within this nature of the state, we think it will be easier for the revolutionary forces to intervene and further destabilise the state, putting pressure on it from outside the state which can be smashed to make a New Democratic state.

What we are talking about is not organising elections within the bourgeois state, we are talking about after the revolution in a New Democratic or socialistic framework, where there will be certain constitutional provisions whereby the reactionaries, imperialists and criminal forces will not be allowed to participate. This concept of competition is only a general concept, the actual mode of that competition we have still to work out.

ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **Art Show** by Jennifer Fuller at the Indigo Gallery, 6 November, 9841682929
- ❖ **‘Separating Myth from Reality - Status of Women’**, art festival till 10 November at Nepal Association of Fine Arts, Imago Dei Café Gallery, Patan Museum, Kathmandu Contemporary Art Center, Nepal Art Council, Siddhartha Art Gallery, 421048

EVENTS

- ❖ **AWON Christmas Bazaar** at Hyatt Hotel, 10AM-4PM on 5 December
- ❖ **Sea Inside**, documentary screening at Documentary Open Skool, Boudhadwar, 6 November, 5PM
- ❖ **The Silence**, movie screening at Lazimpat Gallery Café on 11 November, 6PM onwards, 4428549
- ❖ **Nepali Art: In Present Scenario**, documentary screening on 28 November, 2.30-3.30PM and 5-6PM, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, 5553767
- ❖ **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

- ❖ **The Best Live Music in Town** by Musicology at House of Music, Thamel, 6-7 November, 9851050166
- ❖ **Gypsy Jazz** with the Hari Maharjan Project at Delices de France, 12 November, 7.30PM, **jazz evening** every Wednesday, 4260326.
- ❖ **Desmond O'Flattery and Anthony Correll** at Lazimpat Gallery Café, 4 Nov, 4428549
- ❖ **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 12-3.30PM, 4491234
- ❖ **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 till 7 Nov at The Café, 6.30PM onwards, 4491234
- ❖ **Live continental BBQ Fiesta**, exclusive BBQ Dinner at Splash Bar & Grill, Radisson Hotel, from 6.30-10.30PM everyday
- ❖ **Norwegian Salmon** every day 6PM onwards at Rox Restaurant, till 20 Nov, 4491234
- ❖ **Chocolate, Coffee and Caramel**, every evening at The Lounge, 4.30-6.30PM, 4491234



- ❖ **Wine and cheese**, every Friday & Saturday at The Lounge, 5-8PM, 4491234
- ❖ **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 Crown 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

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

Quest Entertainment



Famous musician Arjun (Ajay Devgan) invites his childhood friend Mannu (Salman Khan) to join his tour in Europe. Mannu, who started out by performing at weddings, suddenly rises to stardom and Arjun begins to envy him. To add to the mess, Mannu 'steals' the girl of Arjun's dreams (Asin Thottumkal) from right under his nose. The rest of the movie revolves around Arjun's scheme to destroy Mannu, but later he realises his mistake and goes on to salvage his friendship.

Call 4442220 for show timings at Jai Nepal
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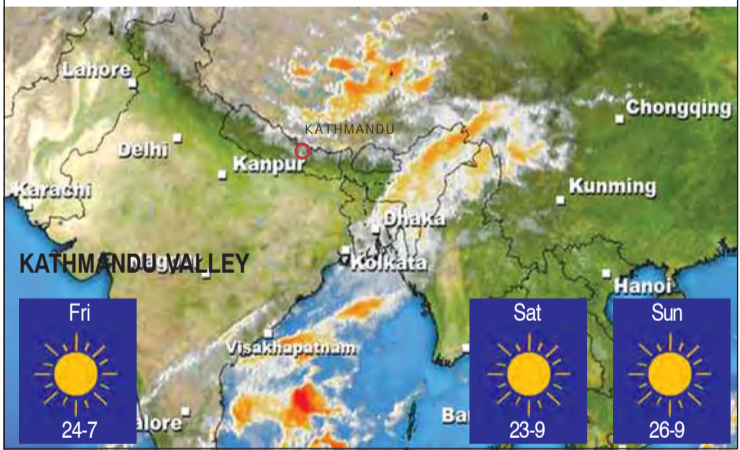
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WEEKEND WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Expect more cloudless skies and falling temperatures in the week ahead. Satellite pictures show rain clouds in Tibet and parts of northeast India, but they should stay clear of Nepal. Enjoy clear mountain views and watch out for dropping humidity levels during the daytime.



RECIPES

by GRAHAM SYDNEY

Cauliflower & Broccoli Salad
(Serves 4)

One can vary the ingredients in this salad to include different types of dried fruit, nuts and vegetables. You can also replace the smoked chicken with shrimps, ham or bacon or leave it vegetarian.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1 small | broccoli, broken into small flowerets |
| 1 small | cauliflower, broken into small flowerets |
| 1 small bunch | spring onion, sliced |
| 1 cup | diced smoked chicken |
| 1 medium | carrot, diced |
| ½ cup | dried apricots, diced |
| ½ cup | capsicum, diced |
| ½ cup | chopped roasted almonds |
| ¾ cup | mayonnaise |
| 2 tablespoons | honey |
| 2 tablespoons | chopped coriander |
| 2 tablespoons | chopped parsley |
| juice of 2 lemons | |
| salt & pepper to taste | |



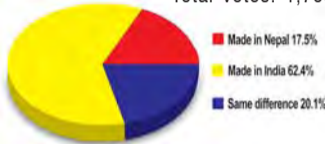
Mix the mayonnaise, honey, lemon juice, coriander and parsley together. Mix the other ingredients together and mix well with the dressing. Allow to stand in the fridge for at least an hour before serving as this improves the texture of the vegetables.



Times nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll # 475

Q. What do you think the Nepal-India revised trade treaty means?

Total votes: 1,768



Weekly Internet Poll # 476. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Where will the Maoist protest movement lead us?

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MIN RATHNA BAJRACHARYA

HIGH ALERT: Police positioned around Bhadrakali on Friday. Security forces have been put on high alert following the announcement of Maoist street protests.



NPA

RECONNECTING: Nepali Congress leaders at the party's General Convention at the National Academy Hall in Kamaladi on Monday.



KIRAN PANDAY

SPOTLIGHT: Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal at an interaction program called 'Sajha Sawal' organised by BBC World Service Trust Nepal on Friday.



KIRAN PANDAY

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE: An art enthusiast observes 'Mona Liza' by Pakistani artist Ambar Hammad during international art festival 'Separating Myth from Reality: Status of Women' on Wednesday.



KIRAN PANDAY

MAKING MERRY: School children dancing during a Maoist sit-in protest program at Kathmandu District Administration office on Wednesday.

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Comments from our readers:

"The logic of carbon trading is the same logic as that of the selling of indulgences by the Catholic church a few hundred years ago." *Jiri, Kathmandu*

"The people who support claims of fear mongering belong to the corporate lobby." *Afsan Chowdhury*



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Over the Moon

The talk of the town this past week has been the flying visit to Lumbini by the Sri Lankan president Raja Paksu. It is interesting that even though his name means “pro-king”, Raja Paksu also gave the Bi-Paksu anti-king leader of the opposition a blow-by-blow account of how he destroyed the Tamil Tigers back home in Serendib.

Needless to say, the Awesome wasn’t amused. But El Commandante got the message because he’s been getting cold feet about his andolan. In the past few days he has called off the asinine airport bund, dashed off for a Girja tea party and then carried on to a dinner party with the other parties at KP’s (Oli, not Bhattarai). Strange that while his cadre are staging **war dances** in front of municipality buildings nationwide their chieftain is whining and dining with the enemy.

Anyway, to get back to Raja Paksu, our fly on the wall tells us that the Sri Lankans warned our officials not to trust the Scandies and the UN, reminding them how he threw the Norwegians out of his peace process because they turned into Tiger conservationists. There were knowing nods all around the room from senior advisers who now suspect Moon and Kathmandu-based Europinkos of being Baddie-sympathisers.



Let’s clarify this once and for all so UNMIN doesn’t get all hepped up about its importance here. The ambassadors who looked into the containers last month all saw rusty old 303s and SLRs, and everyone knows that we know that they know the high-powered assault rifles are all stashed away somewhere else. In fact, Baddie leaders openly admitted as much this week. Even after the minors were disqualified, the cantonments don’t contain guerrillas, the real fighters are now called YCL and they are providing security for the andolan. Somewhere along the way, the Maoist slipped the **D-word** into their YCL acronym. As democratic as the DPRK, which is why Uncle Ban, of all people, should know what this is all about.



As far as the Ass is concerned, the first sign that this country has “civilian supremacy” will be when the Maiti Ghar Mandala to Tundikhel shortcut is re-opened as the public thoroughfare that it once was. The army occupied the road during the Gyanendra reign, citing security reasons much in the same way that it has militarised most of Tundikhel. If the Baddies had any brains, they’d not have polluted the streets outside Bir Hospital with asphalt soot from their **rankay julus** on Sunday and given half the capital an asthma attack: they’d have taken the torch rally straight from the Mandala to Bhadrakali and reclaimed the shortcut for the people.



Looks like all prime minister aspirants are rolling up their sleeves. By now, they’ve heard that Makunay became prime minister because he donated a she-buffalo to a Brahmin on a full moon day. So, there is a bit of a stampede to give “bhaisi dan” these days. Not being the superstitious type, and being such a darling of the internationals, BRB doesn’t need to give away buffalos. But it is precisely because his candidacy now seems so likely that PKD is getting antsy.

In fact, it would be safe to say Fearsome would much prefer Makunay stay on as PM than agree to Laldhoj getting PMship. And then there is Naran (“Mr Xerox”) Kaji Kamred who thinks the epic clash between BRB and PKD will cancel out both, and he has a good shot at being in Baluwatar once the current andolan plays itself out. The wild card in all this is Comrade Cloudy, who seems to be lying in wait to ambush the post for himself.



The Winner in this week’s Most Useless Debate Category goes to the Bureau of Mines and Geology which has raised a hue and cry over Makunay giving away **a rock** from the summit of Mt Everest to President Obama in September to draw attention to climate change. BOMG says the prime minister should have first asked for permission before taking the rock off the mountain.

ass(at)nepalitimes.com

