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Dateline Everest



BILLI BIERLING

The cabinet meeting below Mt Everest on Friday will have drawn international attention to the impacts of climate change in the Himalaya ahead of next week's Copenhagen Summit.

But the government's stated commitment to reduce Nepal's carbon emissions, though laudable, will not be possible without strong tax incentives and a concrete strategy to switch from fossil fuels to renewable energy. This is needed not just to address climate change, but to rescue our economy.

The country needs a crash

program for electricity generation to meet rising domestic demand, to power industries and transportation, to reduce petroleum imports and to export energy so our huge trade deficit with India is narrowed. If that helps to save the planet, it will be a bonus.

Prime Minister Madhav Nepal is preparing to announce a major new commitment to switch to renewable energy in Copenhagen in the hope that rich countries will more generously support Nepal's adaptation and mitigation efforts. He will also announce

PEAKING ATTENTION: A Buddha figure on the summit of Chomolungma earlier this year. Mountaineers say climate change has made climbing the world's highest mountain more treacherous.

the creation of the Api-Nampa and Gaurishankar conservation areas.

In the run-up to Copenhagen, WWF's Climate for Action program has been on an expedition through Europe with Everest summiters Apa Sherpa and Dawa Steven Sherpa to raise

awareness about climate change. In Gland this week, the two received WWF's 'Leaders for a Living Planet' award. The two will also take part in a high-profile 'Summit of the Summiters' rally in Copenhagen on 11 December, International Mountain Day.

GLOF survivor

Namgye Chumbi and his family barely survived a glacial lake outburst flood in 1985. There are now bigger lakes upstream that are in danger of bursting because of global warming.



Full story p8-9

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Struggle for existence

HELD HOSTAGE

It is pretty obvious what all the petrol queues, the harvest seizures, land grabs, extortion and hotel strikes are leading up to: the nationwide general strike that the Maoists will enforce on 9 December. The Maoists are holding a gun to the head of every Nepali to threaten the ruling coalition to take them back into government. It is a hostage situation.

There is a sense of desperation in the Maoist strategy. The whole idea is to disrupt life, spread chaos and a sense of total breakdown so that a fed-up populace will say ok, let's put them back into office and get it over with.

There is no doubt that being the largest party, the Maoists deserve to be in the coalition. In this paper we have repeatedly called for a national government made up of all large parties, because it is 'unnatural' (to borrow Pushpa Kamal Dahal's phrase) for it to be any other way. But the Maoists have been their own worst enemy by being unable or unwilling to rein in their violent vanguard units and their use of terror and by making no attempt to hide their end goal of totalitarian control of the state.

Whatever is holding up the power-sharing agreement, these strikes and disruptions are pressure tactics to improve the Maoist bargaining position. It is a time-honoured tactic practiced by past masters of this art, that is the NC and UML since 1990: you punish the people by ordering stoppages to harass your political opponent.

Take the threatened hotel strike. The party's central union has directed its units to go on strike demanding salary increases commensurate with the civil service pay hike earlier this year. That increase was announced after many years, whereas the hotels have been hiking staff salaries almost every year and the lowest salary of a hotel worker is more than double the minimum wage.

The Maoists have chosen a soft target to make a populist move against rival unions. It is no coincidence that they have chosen the hotel owned by the president of the Hotel Association of Nepal, Shangri-La, and two hotels where the state has shares: Radisson and Hyatt. They have threatened to harm the children of mid-level managers in these hotels to force them to join the action.

There are indications of a major split between the top union bosses in the Maoist party and their second echelon, mainly over the spoils of extortion revenue. The hotels, the petrol stations, and the Nepali people are ensnared by a revolution that is now beginning to devour its own children. We can't do much but endure the next two weeks of turmoil the best we can.

The ideal outcome would be a deal that gives the Maoists a face-saving exit from an agitation of their own making so they can rejoin the political mainstream. But as long as this party continues to believe in violence and refuses to stop sowing terror there will be no space for it in this or any future state mechanism.



KIRAN PANDAY

A survey of key recent events is revealing. There are increasing incidents of Maoist land-grabbing and forest-clearing in the Tarai to settle supporters from the mid-hills. The Maoists are in the process of announcing autonomous



PLAIN SPEAKING
Prashant Jha

ethnicity/nationality based provinces. The NC has not yet submitted a common draft of its vision of federalism to the CA committee. The NA has been facing relentless international pressure to punish major violators of human rights, rather not reward them. And the PLA is organising a major sports jamboree to celebrate its ninth anniversary in a few months.

The Maoists can selectively cite instances and accuse the other side of being 'regressive reactionaries' bent on protecting the present state. The others can in turn point to the pattern of peace agreement violations by the Maoists and claim the former rebels are 'preparing for an urban

insurrection' to establish a people's republic.

Both perspectives might be considered at least partially fair. What we are witnessing is a battle to determine the precise balance of power. Both sides feel they are stronger than the other. The non-Maoists feel confident with the army and

India's support; the Maoists rely on their massive organisational structure and ability to cripple the state. Their respective constituencies are telling them not to compromise and instead prepare for a 'final confrontation'.

But there is another pattern to the recent incidents.

All of them essentially revolve around three broad issues – land, federalism, and the state of the security sector. Three years on from the CPA, there has been little progress on any of those fronts.

There are still demands for the return of confiscated property, while the Maoists continue to insist on the need

they are holding up a baby long after its Nepali parents have given up on it.

So what we are seeing now is a real struggle to determine the balance of power, seen as necessary to determine which side will dominate the discussions on the shape of the Nepali state, and who will subsequently run it. This battle is so fundamental that no short-cut deal will fix the problem.

What is needed is a really broad alliance across parties, diverse segments of civil society, ethnic groups, classes, and international actors. This can then facilitate another accord that builds on the CPA and takes on board the anxieties

While the titans battle it out, we have no choice but to watch and wait

for 'scientific' land reform. There has been broad acceptance of the decision to adopt a federal structure, but little concrete discussion on how ethnicity will be accommodated. Most worryingly, NA continues to be bloated and unreformed, and is increasingly restless about the restrictions on recruitment and arms supplies. Meanwhile, the PLA has become stronger and more cohesive with state funding, and is a distinct political voice within the Maoist structure.

On top of this, we live with the fiction of the CPA, which still has no independent monitoring mechanism. Nepali actors only remember the accord when they have to accuse the other side of breaching it. Internationals can point to the importance of the CPA all they like, and it does serve a purpose in deterring an outright resumption of violence. But

of all actors – from the parties' suspicion of the Maoist commitment to pluralism; the Maoist need for credible guarantees that they will have a stake in a changed power structure; the NA's fears that this is all a conspiracy to subvert the institution; and the apprehension of the marginalised that they will never move beyond token representation.

The possibility of such an alliance or agreement is zilch right now. It will only happen when all sides recognise that they have to work together, shedding both entrenched privileges and dogma. For this to happen, there has to be a crisis that shakes them out of their stupor and brings home the point that Nepal is too fragmented for the hegemony of one ideology or actor.

Till then, we can only watch and wait as confrontation escalates. ●

LETTERS

NEW PROLETARIAT

This is an interesting article ('The new proletariat', #478). I agree that living abroad widens people's horizons, and brings other positive and negative sociocultural changes besides. You mention the ethnic mix of the people travelling abroad: I would say a disproportionate number come from the Tarai. What does this suggest? Perhaps most manpower agents are based in the Tarai, or, due to the economic deprivation there, people are more eager to work abroad.

Rishav, web

POLITICS OF AID

Rabin Subedi's article ('Politics of aid', #478) has certainly opened up an interesting debate. While we respect his subjective opinions as to whether INGOs should raise funds and tap resources from Kathmandu country offices or not, there are some overgeneralisations –

alluding to different entities under one head – and potentially misleading statements contained in the article that need to be clarified.

Eighty-eight INGOs working in Nepal are members of the Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN). Our members do not implement projects and programs directly. AIN also has strategic plan and partnership guidelines that encourage its partners to work with national organisations. Some AIN members have regional bases, which are not established for implementing programs directly – as implied by the writer – but rather to facilitate operations and provide technical assistance to partner NGOs. Others may have offices in some districts, on a short-term basis for emergency response purposes only. INGOs are registered with the Social Welfare Council (SWC) and not at the district headquarters.

AIN members are guided by internationally defined principles and

standards of human rights, and we abide by our code of conduct based on principles of transparency and accountability, non-political party partisanship, legal compliance, performance-oriented culture, commitment to equity and diversity and a grounding in civil society.

INGOs normally raise funds from/through their home countries. They also bid for resources that are available internationally. What must not be forgotten is that many INGOs also have to provide matching funds on resources they raise for Nepal and these are usually done through global competitive processes.

Mohan Rai, Chair and Steering Committee, Association of International NGOs in Nepal, email

BANKING BASICS

I echo your sentiment ('Banking basics', #478). Having worked in Nepal's banking industry and now pursuing a doctorate in

economics, I have also witnessed how halfhearted R&D is in our banks. I sincerely doubt if they ever present a thoughtful assessment of the macroeconomic environment in their loan appraisals. They are driven more by cash flows and accounting statements without reflecting on how those projections can change with changes in the broader economy. On a separate note, I was quite taken aback when the pay limitation measure was announced. Apart from some hullabaloo, there wasn't even any attempt to present a newspaper article assessing the policy stance, let alone stand up to it.

Anjan, web

SILENT SOLDIERS

Wow, such an inspiring story ('Silent soldiers', #478)! People like Roshani Didi should be running the country not the idiotic politicians!

Rosh, web

Bustling Janakpur

But it's not on the road to Mithila

JANAKPUR – A day before the Vivah Panchami festival, it was impossible to walk on the city's thoroughfares. Two days later, the groom and his party had already left for Ayodhya, the bride had returned to her sanctum sanctorum, and all the pilgrims had gone to Gadhimai for the greatest sacrificial show on earth.

The festivities failed to attract high-profile visitors this year. The three celebrities to grace the ritual marriage of the Hindu deities Ram and Sita were all



STATE OF THE STATE
C K Lal

has-beens – the 'inactive' VP Parmanand Jha, former PM KP Bhattarai and controversial 'godman' Pilot Baba from India. Unlike in the past, nobody from the former royal family in Kathmandu showed up and DPM Bijay Gachhadar preferred to helicopter into the killing fields of Bariyapur.

The owner of an eatery near the Barahbigha grounds points towards makeshift toilets erected by the municipality for pilgrims and complains, "These would have been all full. This year the pilgrims left immediately for Bara and there was no business from the very next day."

But other than these annual festivals, Janakpur's not even a tourist town. With the cigarette factory and flour mills closed, there are no industries worth the name here. All trade and commerce is local, as Janakpur is not on the road to Kathmandu, and is far away from the rail links to Calcutta. It doesn't even have a university



or a proper hospital. And yet land prices are higher here than either Biratnagar or Birganj. Like many urban centres of the middle hills in Nepal, the prosperity of this settlement is based on remittances.

Manpower agencies and money transfer units do brisk business throughout the year. Planes fly full five times a day. A major portion of remittances goes into land and houses. The rest finds its way to the narrow street between the Janaki and Ram temples, where jewellery shops have driven out utensil sellers and clothiers.

The management of Janaki temple too has gone commercial: *prasad* is now sold

from an outlet within the temple premises. Priests at other shrines have learnt how to fleece unsuspecting devotees in the name of 'special puja' and 'milk, honey and ghee baths for holy *shaligrams*'. Unsurprisingly, Gulf returnees are the most generous worshippers and the most profligate spenders at the beer bars and rooftop restaurants.

The perils of the remittance economy are impossible to miss. Conspicuous consumption – once considered sinful – is now fashionable. Containers that bring in consumer goods from Birganj and beyond have to return empty, as this region has

nothing to export. The lure of jobs abroad has sapped agriculture of energy, innovation and investment. Youngsters that are left behind fall prey to armed gangs. The nexus between politics and crime is a worldwide phenomenon; here it is as naked as across the border in Bihar.

Private schools don't teach, they guarantee 'First Division' for a fee. Medical practitioners function as the referral agents of nursing homes in Kathmandu. Touts abound outside court premises. The most belligerent rickshaw-wallahs in the country are to be found here. Shopkeepers behave as if they couldn't care less about the customer on the counter. And yet, despite visible signs of decay and despondency, people in the street don't appear to be desperate to leave. It's the other way round, in fact; more settlers are building houses as the town grows in all directions.

Unlike the oppressive pessimism that hangs thick at social gatherings in Kathmandu, everybody in Janakpur seems to think that things can only get better. Faith is probably the source of this undying optimism: since Mithila's past has been glorious, the future can't be otherwise. Meanwhile, all that needs to be done is to endure the present. And therein lies the root of all the problems: there's no need to exert yourself if you are destined to be great anyway!

Growing towns like Janakpur require heavy investment in infrastructure to cope with their increasing populations. But if one thing were to be prioritised over all else, it has to be waste management. For this boom town, the road to greatness runs along a functioning sewer and passes through an incinerator. ●

On the web

In YOUR VIEW, our new online debate forum at www.nepalitimes.com, we asked readers how we can reduce aid dependency in Nepal. Selected comments below:

Political stability, good internal security and public-private partnership can create a climate conducive for the expansion of private businesses and public services. Increased industrial output, increased jobs, increased access to education and healthcare are the things needed to lift us out of poverty.

MD

Why do we always conceive aid in terms of financial aspects (i.e. economic growth in the country through foreign aid). What about knowledge, ideas and the ideological aspects of aid? Why do we hesitate to look at the relationships of aid from a broader perspective of poverty, people, development and bureaucratic practices?

Manhora Khadka

Begging for money never works. Shut down all NGOs and INGOs immediately. Start to punish corrupt bureaucrats. All youths should do development work after they complete their schooling. Award people who create jobs in society. Then invite the international business houses for investment by forming policies to provide security.

Webguy

Aid is a dangerous weapon used by powerful states to keep control of weak and underdeveloped states like ours. IMF, World Bank, USAID and all other development organisations who shed money in Nepal have their own individual interests to fulfill. So the sooner we get rid of it all, the better we'll be able to think on our own feet and implement what is best.

Maili

'Aid' is a market just like any other market. Nepalis have been reasonably good at it and have managed to capture some of that market. However, there is a lot of scope for improvement.

Jange

(comments have been edited for clarity)

In the blogs:
(www.nepalitimes.com/blogs)

East-West: Kunda Dixit writes from the road on his 'People After War' book tour.

The Brief: A new feature, Daily Analysis, provides much needed context to the news headlines from Sunday to Friday.

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Unwanted in Achham



RUMA RAJBHANDARI

WELCOME HOME: A newborn delivered at Bayalpata Hospital, Achham.

RUMA RAJBHANDARI

Wearing a red and green sari, a *phuli* in her nose, a fair, middle-aged woman timidly approached my desk in the Outpatient Department of Bayalpata Hospital, Achham. Averting her gaze from mine, she looked at the floor and spoke softly, not wanting anyone else in the room to hear.

"I have seven girls. I had one boy but he died when he was very young. I've been to Dhangadi two times before but both times they were girls and I got rid of them."

"I have seven girls..."

On further questioning, she revealed that she had not menstruated in four months. She thought she could be pregnant again and wanted to know if it was a boy or a girl. If it was a boy, she would keep it. If it was a girl, she would abort. Her husband was an auxiliary health worker in a neighbouring village and was understanding; he loved his seven girls. But she was sick and tired of hearing the neighbours and her extended family suggesting she was a useless wife who could not produce sons. They'd even tell her husband he should marry another.

The year before, when she became pregnant, she and her husband had spent almost Rs 40,000 on medical treatment in the Indian town of Paliya, which borders Dhangadi. She'd undergone three ultrasound

examinations to determine the sex of the baby before it was finally confirmed that it was a girl. She then had a D&C (dilation and curettage) to abort the female fetus.

This time, she'd heard from people in her village that Bayalpata Hospital had a 'video x-ray' (the term for an ultrasound in these parts) and thought she would just come here to find out the sex of the baby, as she knew the hospital provided free services.

Her urine pregnancy test did turn out to be positive. But despite her protests, we had to tell her that we do not use ultrasound to tell patients the sex of their babies. If she wanted to keep the baby, whatever sex it was, we would provide her with appropriate antenatal care. If she did not want to keep the baby because she felt she had had enough children, we could provide her with comprehensive abortion care as long as the fetus was no more than 12 weeks old.

Despite an hour of counselling, she left saying she would now have to go to Dhangadi again for an ultrasound.

At Bayalpata Hospital, encounters like this are common. Many of the pregnant women that come to the hospital come knowing we have free ultrasound services, and hope that we can tell them the sex of their baby. Counselling such women seems futile in a society where the male child is so highly valued. Unless the status of women as a whole improves throughout Achham, women who have the means will continue to make the long journey to Dhangadi and India. ●



Program to Promote Demand for Good Governance in Nepal – PROD State and Peace-building Fund (US\$120,000) Grant Making for Action Learning

The World Bank Office, Kathmandu

The Program to Promote Demand for Good Governance (PROD) is a US\$3 million World Bank initiative to help improve governance and institutional performance in Nepal and transparency and risk mitigation in World Bank financed projects – through social accountability (SA) mechanisms by civil society organizations (CSOs).

The World Bank intends to finance the assignment described below under the State and Peace-building Fund (SPF), a trust fund financed from the Bank's administrative budget and the governments of The Netherlands and Norway.

The assignment requires a suitable Nepal-based CSO to act as the Implementing Agency (IA) for the *Grant Making* component of the PROD for the period January 2010 to August, 2012. The IA will receive US\$782,000, of which US\$662,000 will be sub-granted to eligible Nepali CSOs towards improving their knowledge, skills and practice of social accountability through action learning, and US\$120,000 as remuneration to administer the sub-grant scheme – overseen by a multi-stakeholder committee.

Activities include i) designing a grant selection framework that incorporates eligibility criteria and calls for proposals; ii) designing and implementing 2 sub-grant windows to enable CSOs to pilot SA approaches, and develop and/or adapt SA tools; iii) provide technical support and monitor grantee activities; iv) facilitate grantee networking and knowledge sharing; v) mobilize new resources for sub-granting; and, vi) actively consult the program's stakeholders including Government of Nepal, donors and a CSOs, for input and feedback.

The successful applicant will be a CSO with an active presence and good reputation in Nepal; a sound knowledge of the political economy of CSO engagement; a long track record and experience in grant-making to CSOs for development or governance-related programs and provision of associated technical support; experience of networking with CSOs and donors in Nepal; knowledge of the capacity needs of Nepali CSOs; reliable financial, administrative and grant making systems; and a cadre of staff capable of supporting the above requirements.

The *World Bank* now invites eligible organizations to indicate their interest in providing the required services. Applicants must provide information indicating their qualifications for this assignment that includes details of: past experience of similar grant-making assignments and capacity building support of CSOs, experiences in similar conditions to Nepal, organizational charts and core skills of available staff, most recent audited accounts, performance awards, and testimonials from previous clients. Applicants may associate (in the form of a joint venture or intended joint venture) to enhance their qualifications.

Applicants will be selected in accordance with selection Based on Consultant's Qualification method as per the procedures set out in the current edition of the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers.

Interested organizations may obtain further information at the address below, between 09-30 AM and 5:00 PM, and expressions of interest must be delivered to the address below by December 30, 2009 at the following address:

Attn: Sulochana Nepali; World Bank, Nepal Country Office; Yak & Yeti Hotel Complex, Lal Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: (977 1) 4226792 Ext. 148 Fax: (977 1) 4225112; email: snepali@worldbank.org



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COVER

Deal close
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Revolution

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Madhes citizenship issue
C P Mainali on the new
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Models of federalism
in the CA

Back to labour woes

The Beed was told something interesting last week at a dinner. When the Maoists were in power, why did they raise salaries by a mere Rs 1,400 when they could have raised it by Rs 12,000 or even Rs 15,000? Isn't it unfair for the Maoists to pressurise the current government to do something they did not do themselves when they were in government? It is, but it explains how opposition parties



ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed

deploy their cadres to build pressure on governments. In the early 90s, UML performed beautifully as an activist, donor-funded NGO. UML is getting a taste of its own medicine now. Why don't the donors who aided the labour groups engage in a little introspection to determine when they crossed the line? Perhaps a similar exercise will be necessary fifteen years from now to figure out who took the inclusion/exclusion and federalism debate too far.

Since the Indian Airlines hijacking ten years ago, every ray of hope that's shone on the Nepali tourism industry has been quickly dashed by disruptive labour strikes or lockouts. Yet the hospitality business continues to be reactive, rather than proactive, in its approach to such problems. It made a big mistake, for example, in succumbing to demands for a service charge. As a result, service in the hotels and restaurants has deteriorated sharply. There is no incentive for people to serve customers better, since they are assured a cut of every purchase. But entrepreneurs who decided against transparency created much doubt amongst their workers as to actual revenues and the fairness of distribution in the first place.

The common man, however, doesn't see the closures forced by labour issues in the proper light. Instead, he wonders: why don't entrepreneurs resolve these problems?

Whenever discussions on the matter take place with multilaterals and consultants, the private sector talks about how labour reform is the most important agenda. Reform, however, hasn't been forthcoming. In the last 15 years, each government has decried unions in public, even as they wink at them in private. Both labour unions and leaders have decided to ignore the bearing labour issues have on the larger economy, as political achievements are considered more important than the welfare of the common worker.

If labour-intensive industries and the hospitality industry don't grow, there is no other place to employ the hundreds of

One step forward, how many backwards?

thousands of people that enter the job market every year. If there are no enterprises, there is no labour, so no labour rights. That seems obvious, but since creation of employment opportunities is paramount for Nepal's sustainable growth, it becomes important to bell this cat. Without large-scale enterprises or hotels, investment will continue to chase real estate.

But no economy can live just on the value created by inflated prices.

The onus is thus on the private sector to find a solution that protects labour rights without compromising the right to run enterprises. So private sector leaders, can you rise to the occasion? ●

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Anti-federal forces alert

Janadisha, 1 December

जनिदिशा

The Maoists' plan to announce federal states on 20 October has raised the hackles of the anti-federal forces. Instead of implementing the federal system as pronounced in the interim constitution, the status quoists seem terrified by the idea.

After a decade-long armed insurgency and the success of Jana Andolan II, the interim constitution has envisaged Nepal as a federal state as desired by the people, but the NC and UML are acting against the spirit of the constitution. The Maoists have now decided to announce the federal units in the third phase of their agitation, not to form a parallel government but to facilitate the process of putting a federal system into place, says Maoist politburo member Deb Gurung.



Contrary to the interim constitution provision, the status quoists are orchestrating a drama aiming to prevent it, and are spreading rumours that the Maoists are preparing to capture state power. If the political parties attempt to go against the spirit of the Jana Andolan, people will not hesitate to rise up in the future.

The status quoists are used to milking the state for personal benefit. They are trying to make a few changes in the 1990 constitution and introduce it as a new constitution. Also, though the Maoists took up the agenda of federalism ever since the people's war, the NC and UML only took up the slogan of federalism during the CA elections with an ulterior motive.

The Maoists will be announcing federal units in 13 different places. The demarcation of states, number of units and their names can be changed in the course of discussing state restructuring. But most political parties, during discussions in the State Restructuring and Sharing of State Power Committee, have proposed 13 to 15 states, though the NC has not yet finalised its draft.

The Maoist agenda

Interview with Ram Bahadur Thapa in Kantipur, 29 November

कान्तिपुर

What is the priority for the Maoists: government, peace process or constitution?
Our policies make it clear, it is our opponents who try to confuse matters. We would not have left the government if it were our priority. It is not our agenda. Democratic norms, peace and constitution are our priorities, meaning the president's unconstitutional move should be corrected and we should move forward. The Maoists' resolution should be discussed in parliament. Political parties should reach a consensus to establish civilian supremacy.



But the ruling parties are saying the Maoists are trying to regain power in the name of civilian supremacy.

They are free to say that. The government is also an agenda. We are not *sanyasi*, we never said we don't want to be in the government. The government and civilian supremacy are interrelated. Peace and

constitution are issues linked with government and civilian supremacy.

Did you know you would have to leave the government for sacking Katawal?

We knew it all. It was expected to happen. The recruitment issue came up before we resigned.

Katawal was in constant touch with leaders, ambassadors and journalists. It was a carefully taken step. We were saying the regressive forces were actively trying to make the constitution-writing and peace processes fail. However, their design has not succeeded yet.

Is there any guarantee that the ongoing agitation won't end up benefiting the regressive forces?

The constitution will not be written and the peace process will be derailed if protests are not launched to make the people aware of the need to stand up for their rights. There is danger of militarisation, instead of the integration of the PLA.

Vultures disappear

Yamlal Bhusal in *Nepal Samacharpatra* on 27 November

समाचारपत्र

Rising temperatures in Lo Manthang, Mustang, have reduced the local vulture population and hindered indigenous funeral ceremonies that require the birds.

The Gurung community in the area feeds their dead to vultures, believing that this will send the deceased to heaven. It has recently become difficult to perform the ceremony because

vultures are rarer.

"Only 5-6 vultures are born every year here; vultures only lay one egg, which takes 9-10 months to hatch."

Two recent studies have shown that the population of vultures has dropped by about 30 per cent a year.

While there is speculation that climate change is at fault, this hasn't been confirmed.



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DEWAN RAI

Preserving our heritage

The institutional and administrative arrangements in a federal system are crucial in preserving a country's heritage, but haven't received much attention to date. The constitution drafting committees are still stuck on debating the political system and state structures.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Centre for Constitutional Dialogue organised a one-day workshop on 25 November on the role of the federal system in preserving Nepali heritage.

A host of state institutions direct the government's efforts to preserve Nepali heritage, but how that heritage will be managed in the new, secular federal arrangement is still an open question.

Kosh Prasad Acharya, former DG of the Department of Archaeology, suggests the establishment of a commission to preserve heritage in the spirit of a secular federal republic. He said, "The state should support marginalised communities without becoming too meddlesome."

According to him, the central and provincial government should formulate broad policies, but leave the legwork to local governments and communities. "It's because of the work of local communities, not the government, that festivals like *chandi*, *chhat* and *deuda*, which were unfamiliar to many in Kathmandu 15 years ago, are so well known today," said Acharya.

Recently, the Department of Archaeology classified articles of heritage in 38 districts into three categories according to their cultural importance. There are 70 articles in A, 61 in B and 256 in C, in descending order of importance. Bishnu Raj Karki, current DG of the Department of Archaeology, said the new constitution should give authority over category A to the federal government, while B and C should be managed by provincial governments. Provincial governments should gradually get local authorities to manage C category articles and sites over 100 years of age, which the Ancient Monument

Protection Act of 1956 classifies as archaeologically important.

Constitutional expert Bipin Adhikari added that public participation, with coordination from the federal or provincial centres, is also important. He cited the experiences of other countries as instructive in the proper division of heritage management responsibilities between different levels of government.

In India, for instance, the state and national governments work together and implement their decisions through multiple organisations. In Australia, the commonwealth and national government take the lead and are advised by state monitors.

Adhikari said, "The central government should have supervisory powers over the protection of national heritage, its sustainable economic use, and the enforcement of international conventions. It should manage vulnerable heritage sites, while provinces should manage world heritage sites."

He also suggested the establishment of a national heritage council of experts to advise national and provincial governments.

Nepal Rastriya Jatiya Sangralaya representative Bam Kumari Budha pointed out that ILO convention 169 gives ethnic groups the authority to preserve and promote their culture and heritage. "State restructuring on the basis of ethnicity, language and region is all confusing. But we have to ensure that autonomy with self determination or whatever we call it, assures ethnic communities the rights they have by international conventions."

Nepal's eight world heritage sites and other sites of national importance are at threat. Many more will be designated in the years to come. If we are to preserve our national heritage for the future enjoyment of all, local communities have to be in the forefront. ●

"My enthusiasm has died"

Surya Bahadur KC, RPP CA member, Kaski

Will the constitution be written on time?

I'm in the committee on the distribution of natural resources, financial rights and public revenue. This committee is yet to write its draft paper. Because of Maoist protests, CA meetings have been suspended since September.

So will the constitution be written on time?

Only if the political parties reach a consensus.

Otherwise, it will be difficult. But more than the question of whether or not the constitution will be written, we ought to worry about whether it will be inclusive, since we have little experience with federalism.

What are the main obstacles?

Negative thoughts and ignorance of national interests in favour of communal and party interests.

What do you think federalism should be based on?

Personally, I don't favor ethnicity based federalism. A lot of CA members don't either, but have been ignored since party leaderships overwhelmingly support federalism. Only regional federalism, with the Himalayas, mid-hills and the Tarai part of each region, will be successful.

Is there any chance the constitution won't be written?

When I first entered the CA, I was very enthusiastic. But that enthusiasm died the moment I discovered that the CA was more focused on communal and regional rather than national interests. The feeling of togetherness is lost.



MUKESH POKHAREL

"The rush of foreign wives and husbands to Nepal will stop"

Ushakala Rai, UML CA member, Khotang

How have you spent your days in the CA?

I'm very busy. I am the coordinator of the sub-committees on gender and sexuality and women's rights study and recommendations, under the committee on fundamental rights and directive principles.

But isn't the CA suspended?

Although assembly meetings have been suspended, committee meetings have continued.

Will the constitution be written on time?

People are worried that it won't be written on time because of disagreements among the political parties. The politicians don't have a right to wreck the country.

Which parties would you blame?

The Maoists, NC and CPN-UML.

Why hasn't your committee completed its draft paper?

I'm in the constitutional committee. Half of the constitution will be based on our report, so it's very important to ensure that the draft protects everyone's rights.

What is the biggest disagreement with regards to the citizenship issue?

There has been some disagreement between the Tarai-based parties and the committee on the issue of citizenship. The Home Ministry reports that about 300,000 women and 200,000 men were given citizenship last year. Foreign women who married Nepali men came to Nepal, but not vice versa. Therefore, this question is

related to nationality. It's also important to ensure gender equality. The committee's draft treats all citizens equally, whether male or female.

So, more foreign brides than grooms have come to Nepal?

Yes. But, neither will for long. If you originally had foreign citizenship, and you marry a Nepali, you will only be granted naturalised Nepali citizenship if you stay here for 15 years following marriage. Most of those in the committee agree that only those who claim Nepali citizenship through both their parents will be eligible to hold high office.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

TED

ing sea levels and receding snowlines. Everest region from the 1960s show no Glacier below Lhotse. Today there is a long, 500 metres across and 100 metres bursts, it will unleash a catastrophic flood

ers and receding snowlines are the most proof of global warming. Nearly 1 billion am in China, southeast Asia, India and on the Himalaya and the Tibetan plateau

s on snow and ice takes attention away The Himalaya is also a gigantic sponge water. In fact, scientists estimate that only the water in the Ganga is from melting t is from monsoon runoff, and climate cting weather patterns, leading to extreme and droughts. ●

What should Nepal do?

Given the low per capita carbon footprint of Nepalis (less than one ton of carbon dioxide per person per year, compared to 30 tons in Europe and 300 tons per capita in Qatar) the issue of climate equity is bound to come up in Copenhagen next week.

No matter what Nepal does, it will not make that much of a dent in saving the world from climate change. But Nepal needs to switch to renewables not just to do our bit to save the planet, but also to save our economy. Nepal imports all of its petroleum products from refineries in India and the trade deficit is growing. This growing economic reliance on India is going to deepen as the world's oil reserves peak, and crude oil becomes more expensive. This will only increase our political dependence on our southern neighbour. Unless we implement a strategy to start a hydro economy. For Nepal, switching to renewables is a political imperative, not just an environmental question.



MELTDOWN: Imja Tso below the south wall of Lhotse, with Ama Dablam beyond, is now 2 km long. There was no lake here 40 years ago.

Himalayan tsunami

It was an uncharacteristically sunny day for the monsoon, with blindingly clear skies. Namgye Chumbi was weeding his potato garden in Phakding by the Dudh Kosi on the morning of 4 August 1985.

There weren't too many trekkers on the trail. The Dudh Kosi was tumbling noisily over boulders nearby. Around two in the afternoon, the river went quiet. Namgye sensed danger.

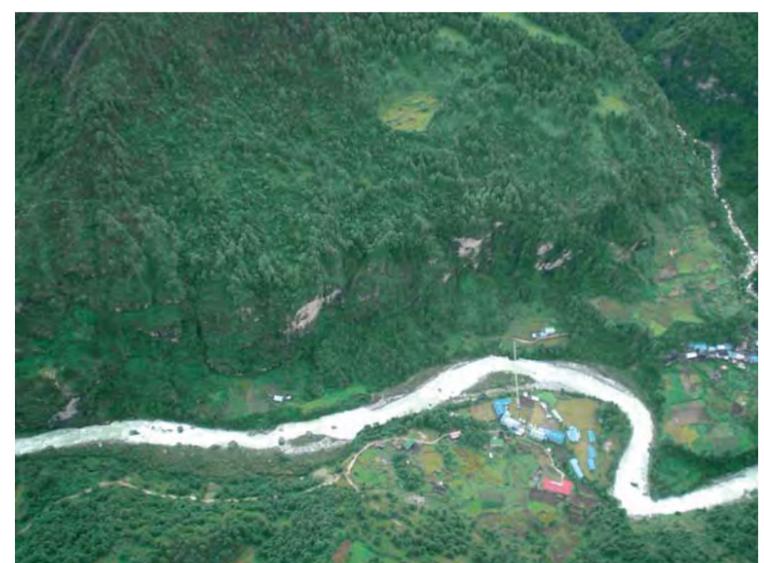
"I noticed that the white water had turned muddy brown, and in the distance I heard a thundering sound like an approaching helicopter," recalls the 50-year-old farmer. "I looked upstream and saw this huge wall of dark brown water approaching very fast."

Namgye indicates the level of the river with his left hand and raises his right hand over his head like a cobra to illustrate what he saw.

He dropped everything and began to run up the mountain. His wife, Sherkima, had more presence of mind, and picked up their two young children Hira and Tsering and followed her husband. They reached a ledge as the thunderous flood raced by beneath their heels. The ground was shaking, and the sound was deafening.

The family lost everything. If they had been just a few seconds slower, they would have lost their lives as well. Their millet farm upstream was cut in half, as the river changed its course and started flowing through its terraces.

Nearly 25 years later, Namgye has built a new house higher up the mountain, where his married children and four grandchildren live together today. Namgye points out one boulder the size of his house in the middle of the Dudh Kosi that was brought down by that terrible flash flood.



THIS HIGH: Namgye Chumbi gestures to describe the wall of water from a glacial lake outburst that nearly killed him and his family 25 years ago (top). After his house and farm were washed away, Namgye rebuilt his home on the top banks of the Dudh Kosi (small house at centre, above) in this aerial picture.

The Dudh Kosi deposited debris up to 15 metres high downstream. The water stayed muddy and high for two weeks until it finally started to recede. Villagers in Jorsale and Phakding were puzzled that there was a flood when there had been no rain; they only found out later that a glacial lake called Dig Tso had burst upstream in the Bhote Kosi Valley.

Namgye Chumbi still doesn't know the reason for the flood. He does know there is another large lake called Imja Tso that may burst at any time.

This was what scientists call a Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF). There is a major GLOF on a Himalayan river every ten years or so. A major flood in 1983 caused by a glacial lake burst in Tibet washed away 25 km of the Kodari Highway and put the Sun Kosi hydropower plant out of action. The frequency of these floods is increasing because of climate change. ●

King of sneers

Judging by the persistent lines outside the KFC/Pizza Hut complex in Darbar Marg, a full week after its pompous opening, customers are in for a special culinary treat, the likes of which has never been experienced in Nepal before. I can imagine that when McDonald's decides to usurp YacDonalds in Kagbeni (right), Thakalis and Manangis from across the Kaligandaki



KALAM
Rabi Thapa

Valley will throng the narrow alleys of that village day in day out, braving sub-zero temperatures and snow blizzards and GLOFs. Now the word on the street is Budweiser, the self-proclaimed King of Beers, will soon be available in the Nepali market.

But the truth is, KFC does not fry up anything close to the best chicken and chips in the world ('Nobody does chicken like KFC'), nor does Pizza Hut manufacture anything that honours the pizza's proud Italian ancestry ('Now You're Eating!'). Any of the innumerable roadside tandoori joints in Nepal will best the Colonel's oil-drenched, bland, soft-boned offerings. And Pizza Hut is to pizza what Budweiser is to beer. The prospect of this last abomination has me frothing at the mouth. Practically the whole of



RABI THAPA

Eat and drink what you please, but don't pretend it's caviar if it ain't

Asia doesn't know how to make a decent beer. Now we are supposed to feel grateful that this insipid, piss-weak approximation of a lager (yes, that's you, buddy) will soon be served as a premium beverage to those who take for granted the apologetic slogans of another great pretender, Carlsberg – probably the best beer in the world.

I don't care if opening a thousand franchises of all of the above boosts the economy or creates jobs or helps us conclude the peace process. I'm not proposing we go bomb these places, or even boycott their products. But please, marketers incorporated, don't go pretending that any of these franchises exist because of the quality of their products. It's more honest, in the civilised world at least, to trumpet their value for money. But why do we seem so fascinated by fast food in Nepal?

If cheapness is not necessarily a factor in Darbar Marg – considering that holding onto the franchise entails payments of 7 crore rupees (\$1 million) a year – then is it the reliable uniformity of the products, something that will become apparent once the franchises expand? Is it the efficiency of fast food, especially given plummeting service standards across our nation's restaurants? Or is it even the calorific lure of conventional, cholesterol fast food?

I'm not convinced these, or other explanations conventionally offered to explain the inexorable rise of fast food franchises, yet apply straightforwardly in Nepal. If they did, why would prosperous Nepalis visiting London or New York express a preference for, nay, insist on fast food?

Perhaps it's simply the allure

of the west, an indiscriminating appreciation of everything foreign (that is unthreatening to one's values or practices), one that conflates pizza with Pizza Hut, burgers with McDonald's, fried chicken with KFC. A misconception that these low-grade franchises are indeed the pinnacle of western civilisation. Or maybe it really is something more fundamental – the discovery of the taste of fast food, in all its gory, primitive glory.

A Korean housemate of mine in England received, every three months, three square feet of home from his mother. Open sesame, and there'd be packs of cutely over-packaged Korean snacks, sweet, sour, hot, plugging the gaps between canisters of preserved foods. Fiery kimchii, scrumptious shrimps, fried fish, creations I could only dream of within the bland bounds of blighty. But what did this scion of a proud culinary tradition do while these delicacies did time at the back of the fridge? He'd boil up a frankfurter, trap it within two slices of white bread, and splurt half a bottle of ketchup onto it.

Perhaps good food is more than some can take, at least all of the time. And perhaps fast food, far from representing an unnatural devolution from the ideal of hunting and gathering all the ingredients necessary for a considered, respectful and respectable *slow food* experience, is actually, equally, a tribute to our roots as rather baser creatures, happy with primary colours and tastes, simpler times and tunes. If only the marketers were as honest as their customers. ●

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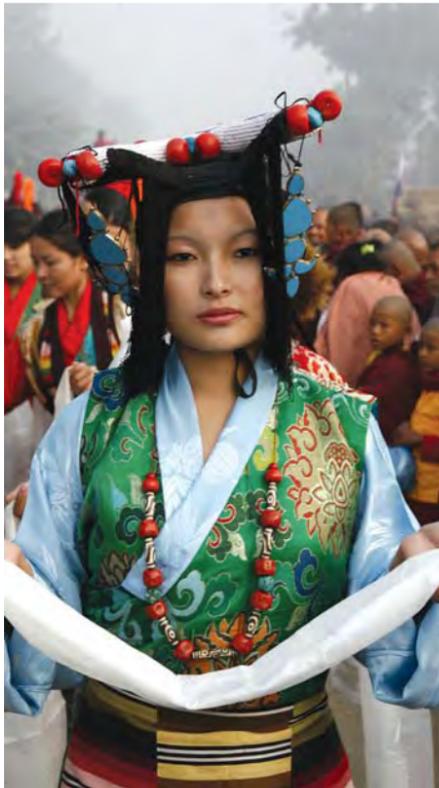


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Buddhists for nature



While pilgrims thronged the killing fields of Bariyapur, Bara, and local merchants in Janakpur lamented the low turnout at the Vivah Panchami festival, thousands of devotees gathered at the Buddha's birthplace, Lumbini, from 23-25 November. They were there to commemorate the golden jubilee of the 41st throne holder of the Sakya Order, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin.

What made this congregation special was its emphasis not only on peace, but also its modern outlook on the importance of nature conservation. As the Sakya Trizin (*above, left*) put it in the presence of WWF representatives: "For the sake of future generations, nature should not be destroyed in the name of development. The solution for climate change lies in forest protection. Every human being is responsible for the protection of wildlife and combating the impacts of climate change." ●



ALL PICS: MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

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Manang sans Manangis

DEWAN RAI

The change is obvious. The houses along the trekking route are built with imported building materials: they have concrete floors, iron grilles and glass windows. There are bakeries, coffee shops, and movie theatres in Manang village.

Basic services like water supply and sewerage, electricity and telephone lines are now available. The erratic NTC mobile network is surprisingly consistent in this remote district and loadshedding, unsurprisingly, is less than in the capital. If it were not for the snow-clad mountains that tower over you on both sides, you'd be forgiven for forgetting you were in a trans-Himalayan valley of nomadic people of Tibetan origin, said to have crossed the mountains in the course of hunting and gathering centuries ago.

The only reminder of Manang's unique heritage are a few poor settlements of basic stone stacked one on top of another against a wall of towering cliffs. They remind you of Manang's medieval beginnings, but even these houses own modern appliances: television sets, VCD/DVD players and radio sets so their inhabitants can keep abreast of happenings in the wider world.



THOMAS KELLY

Life is difficult for Manangis who have not migrated. These women are carrying compost to prepare the fields for winter wheat.

Sonam Gurung during the tourist season. Tourist numbers have gone up since the peace agreement was signed in 2006, and they are doing good business. But the Gurung brothers say they want to see the world.

In-migration from neighbouring districts has been on the rise in recent years, mostly from Gorkha district. In fact, those from Gorkha now outnumber Manangis in Manang, says Ram Raja Prasad Subedi, CDO of the district. Gorkha people mostly go to Manang in search of employment and end up settling there.

With the construction of the road, in-migration is expected to rise. The road linking Besisahar to Chhahare, near Syange. This has already shortened the journey from Besisahar by one day. Tourist entrepreneurs may worry about what this will do to tourism, but hundreds of villagers will benefit directly from access to the road. The Manangis may keep on moving, but their heartland, Manang, awaits a future they won't chart for very long. ●

The modernisation of Manang district has been at the expense of its local character

Manang district, after all, is one of the wealthier districts in Nepal, with a per capita income of \$504 to national average of \$240.

The Manang valley's harsh climate, due to the rain-shadow created by the Annapurna massif, ensured that its people never lost their nomadic tendencies. When

King Mahendra granted special privileges to the Manangis in the 1960s, many moved down to Kathmandu and beyond and became prosperous traders, hoteliers and businessmen. The out-migration was intense, and depopulated Manang district between the years 1960 to 1990. It was only in the

1990s, with the increased popularity of the Annapurna Circuit trek, that a few people returned to tap tourism.

But Subarna Lama, a hotelier in Chhahare, says that rich Manangis either live in Kathmandu or abroad. Subarna's children study in Kathmandu, while her husband works in the US. Karma Gurung, whose father owns the best hotels in Braka, prefers working as a bartender in Kathmandu to working in his village. His brother Rabi is studying to be a Lama in Kathmandu. They help father



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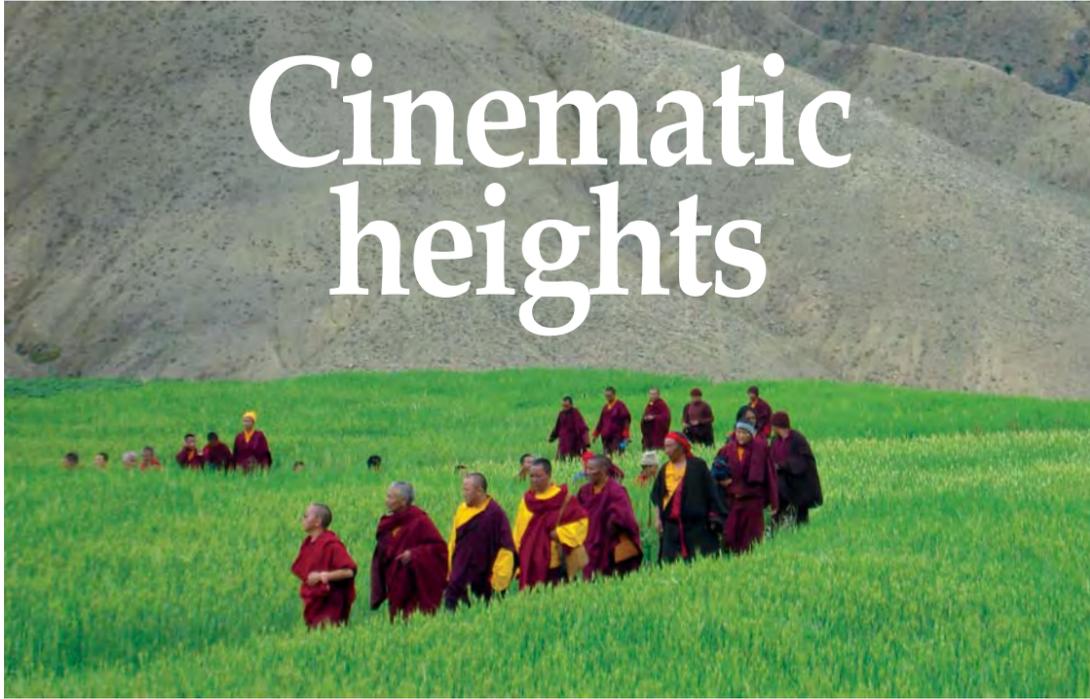
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Cinematic heights



The sixth Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival will be held in City Hall and Nepal Tourism Board from December 11-15, 2009. It will screen 59 of the most recent and exciting films about mountains, their culture, communities and environment. There will also be a separate screening of entries by Nepali filmmakers about the country's post-war social transition called 'Nepal Panorama', and a screening of short films about climate change. Selected synopses below:

This film is a potent human drama, a case study of how hardball politics is played. *The Garden* has the pulse of verité with the narrative pull of fiction, telling the story of the largest urban farm in the US, backroom deals, land developers, green politics, money, poverty, power, and racial discord. The film explores and exposes the fault lines in American society and raises crucial and challenging questions about liberty, equality, and justice for the poorest and most vulnerable among us.



A Sea Change
Barbara Ettinger
86 min

Imagine a world without fish. *A Sea Change* is the first documentary about ocean acidification, the flip side of global warming. Sven Huseby travels around the world to discover the science behind acidification and what can be done to slow or stop this global threat.

In Search of the Riyal
Kesang Tseten
88 min

In the last two decades, many young Nepali men have set out to work in the Gulf for wages as low as \$6 a day. This film depicts the gritty conditions in which they live and work. It's a rare glimpse of a world Gulf states have taken pains to hide.

The Garden
Scott Hamilton Kennedy
88 min



Sherpas-Die Wahren Helden Ah Everest
(Sherpas - The True Heroes of Mount Everest)
Frank Senn, Hari Thapa, Otto C. Honneger
93 min

This film follows an expedition of European mountaineers as they climb Mount Everest, through the eyes of their Sherpa porters. Their fears, and the hardships they face as they help their clients to the top of the world, are highlighted, and we experience the highs and tragic lows of the expedition.

Check www.kimff.org for the festival schedule

A Boy from Siklis

Chandra Gurung's example is to be celebrated and emulated

PRANAB MAN SINGH

Nepal's had no shortage of historical heroes. The nationalistic texts of the Panchayat era in particular helped document and extol national heroes for their role in nation-building, or as some would have it, perpetuating the rule of certain dynasties. However, beyond the violent and cunning examples of our Nepali princes and politicians, there are only a handful of others – Buddha, Bhrikuti, Arniko and a few poets and writers – who have made it into this pantheon. Buddha became a god, Bhrikuti and Arniko became heroes by virtue of leaving the country, while the poets and writers lived miserable, neglected lives. Beyond these, there are precious few examples of Nepali heroes known for secular, non-violent achievements.

So where are the heroes of Nepal? Perhaps in perusing the pages of History with a capital 'H', we are simply looking in the wrong place. In the week of his birth, we would do well to remember one such modern-day hero, the conservationist, Chandra Gurung.

A charismatic and natural leader, Gurung exemplified perseverance, dedication and the achievement of a vision that lives on beyond his untimely demise in a 2006 chopper crash. Coming from a traditional Gurung village in the Annapurna region, Gurung's affinity to nature and the natural beauty of his birthplace led him to direct the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). This project became a global model for how environmental conservation and community development could and indeed had to go hand in hand. Gurung was also responsible for bringing the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area Project (KCAP) into being, and played a critical role in initiating the Terai Arc Landscape Project (TAL). While KCAP built on his legacy of innovation in ACAP, TAL is a completely new transboundary approach to ecological conservation work. The project protects wildlife national parks, wildlife reserves and buffer zones around them in Nepal and India. It does so by engaging with the local community through sustainable use of the community forests, livelihood development and increasing awareness through conservation education.

Chandra Gurung was as much a teacher and educator as he was a leader and visionary. Some of those he mentored now lead the conservation movement in Nepal. Others, like Manjushree Thapa, have chosen to support his legacy by bringing it to a wider audience. Her recently released biography of Chandra Gurung, *A Boy from Siklis*, captures not only his accomplishments and ability to inspire and lead, but also highlights the void he left behind. But the good work continues, not least through the foundation that was set up in his name: the Chandra Gurung Conservation Foundation (CGCF). The foundation seeks to continue Gurung's work of promoting people-oriented biodiversity conservation while educating the upcoming generation about conservation. Perhaps this is how heroes should be judged – not only by what they achieved in their own lifetimes, but also in their continuing influence. ●

The Chandra Gurung Conservation Foundation (CGCF) is holding a fundraising event at the Central Zoo in Jawalakhel on Saturday, 5th Dec. 2009. The event will feature a reading by Manjushree Thapa from A Boy from Siklis, a photo exhibition on Siklis by Sara Parker, and a guided tour of the zoo. More details at www.qcbookshop.com



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उज्यालो ९० नेटवर्क सानेपा

रेडियो चितवन ९४.६ रत्ननगर

अब सधैका साथी

ABOUT TOWN

EXHIBITIONS

- ❖ **3D Images Exhibition** by Bishnu Kumar Shrestha, 7-13 December, 6PM, New Orleans Coffee Shop, Pulchowk, 5522708
- ❖ **A people war**, permanent photo exhibition, Sunday-Friday at Madan Puraskar, Patan Dhoka



EVENTS

- ❖ **Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival**, 11-15 December, City Hall/Nepal Tourism Board, Exhibition Road, www.kimff.org
- ❖ **Annual Art Fair**, 4-6 December, 10AM-6PM, Park Gallery, RNJC, Pulchowk, 5522307
- ❖ **AWON Christmas Bazaar** with locally produced arts and crafts, 5 Dec, 10AM-3.30PM, Hyatt Hotel, awoncom@gmail.com
- ❖ **Kathmandu Chorale**, a winter concert at The British School, Jhamsikhel, 12 December, 3.30PM and 6PM
- ❖ **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

- ❖ **National Folk Music Festival 2009**, organised by NMC, 4 December, 3PM, Nepal Music Center, Pingalasthan, Battisputali
- ❖ **Dabali**, instrumental music by Sajha Prayas Nepal and Aka Fuji Daiko, 7 December, Rastriya Nachghar, Jamal
- ❖ **Benefit concert for Street Dog Care**, at Hyatt Regency Ballroom, by Ani Choying Dolma, 19 December, 5-7PM
- ❖ **HyJazz** every Friday evening by Inner Groove at the Rox Bar, 4489362
- ❖ **Baja gaja** every Tuesday at Moksh, Pulchok, 7.30 PM onwards, 5526212
- ❖ **Live band** every Friday and rooftop bbq everyday at Kausi Kitchen, Darbar Marg, 4227288
- ❖ **Sunday Jazz brunch**, at The Terrace, Hyatt Regency with barbeque and live jazz by Inner Groove from 12-3.30 PM, 4491234
- ❖ **Live Band Sensation** every Saturday till late with Aprilrush at Rox Bar, 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 6.30 PM onwards, 4468589
- ❖ **Rudra Night** live fusion music by Shyam Nepali every Friday, 7PM at Gokarna Forest Resort, 4451212

DINING

- ❖ **Christmas Cake shop**, christmas pudding, chocolate Santa Claus, hampers and more at The Lounge, till 31 December, 4491234
- ❖ **Lavazza Coffee and Baskin n' Robbins**, at Blue Note Coffee Shop, Lazimpat
- ❖ **Strawberry Étagerie**, strawberry flavours at The Lounge, 4.30PM-6.30PM, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 4491234
- ❖ **Oriental Nights**, all flavours and specialities of Asia every Wednesday at The Café, 6.30PM, Hyatt Regency Kathmandu, 4491234
- ❖ **Aqua Java Zing**, bbq and gourmet fare, 4254809
- ❖ **Live continental BBQ Fiesta**, exclusive BBQ Dinner at Splash Bar & Grill, Radisson Hotel, from 6.30-10.30PM everyday
- ❖ **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 biryanis, curries and kebabs, Soaltee Crowne Plaza, 7-10.45PM
- ❖ **Chez Caroline** for French and Mediterranean cuisine, Babar Mahal Revisited, 4263070
- ❖ **Mediterranean cuisine** every Friday from Greece, Italy and the Middle East at The Café, Hyatt Regency, 4491234
- ❖ **Teppanyaki** meat items and garlic rice at Le 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



Auro (Amitabh Bachchan) is an intelligent, witty 13-year-old boy with an extremely rare genetic defect, progeria, that causes accelerated ageing. Although mentally he is 13, physically he looks five times older. In spite of his condition, Auro is a very happy boy. He lives with his mother Vidya (Vidya Balan), who is a gynaecologist. And Amol Arte (Abhishek Bachchan), Auro's father, is a young politician full of ideals. He is out to prove to the world that 'politics' is not a bad world and is a man with a mission. *Paa* revolves around the relationship between Amol and Auro.

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

काम सानो ठूलो भन्ने हुँदैन । पसिनाको कुनै रङ र जात पनि हुँदैन । काम गरेर खान लजाउनु पनि हुँदैन । चोरर, ढाँटेर, छलेर, लुटेर खान पो लजाउनुपर्छ । जो जहाँ रहेर जुन काम गर्छ ऊ त्यसैमा रमाउनुपर्छ, गौरव गर्नुपर्छ र समर्पित भएर गर्नुपर्छ । काम नै शक्ति हो, भक्ति हो र मुक्ति हो । कामको इज्जत गरौं, पसिनाको सम्मान गरौं ।

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WEEKEND WEATHER by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

The country will see slightly more rainfall in the coming weeks than it did in November, the driest month of the year. On most years, Kathmandu gets 15 mm of rain in December, versus 7 mm in November. Satellite pictures from Thursday afternoon show a light westerly front over Kashmir heading towards western Nepal, but it will not have enough moisture to produce significant precipitation. Low pressure over eastern Tibet has generated cloud cover over parts of Nepal, including Everest base camp, where the cabinet is set to meet this Friday. This weekend, expect temperature rises and cloudy skies.



RECIPES

by GRAHAM SYDNEY

Warm pineapple Sponge Pudding

This simple yet delicious recipe can be varied by using apples, pears, cherries, cranberries or mixed fruit.
(Serves 4-6)

200g	sugar
200g	butter
4	eggs
5 dessertspoons	milk
300g	flour
2 teaspoon	baking powder
810g tin	pineapple slices



Drain the pineapple, keeping the syrup, and cut the slices into 4 equal pieces.

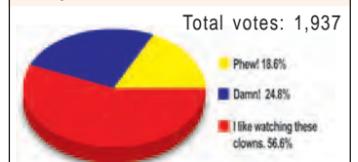
Cream the butter and sugar together. Beat in the eggs one at a time. Sift in the flour and baking powder and add the milk. Pour the mixture into a well-greased baking tray and drop the pieces of pear evenly into the mixture. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 180C for 45-60 minutes. Remove from the oven and pour the remaining syrup from the tin evenly over the hot pudding. Serve immediately with your favourite ice cream or warmed custard.

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Weekly Internet Poll # 479

Q. Are you relieved the budget has been passed?



Weekly Internet Poll # 480. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Do you think the Everest cabinet meeting is a worthy stunt?

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European Expedition

Legendary mountaineer Apa Sherpa and fellow Everest summiteer Dawa Steven Sherpa are embarking on an expedition through 10 European cities – Prague, Brno, Bratislava, London, Rome, Geneva, Chamonix, Vienna, Brussels and finally to Copenhagen to raise awareness about the impact of climate change in the Himalaya.

Their European journey will reach out to high-profile politicians and celebrities and people in the streets of these European cities whose energy needs will determine the future of hundreds of millions of people who depend on Himalayan waters. The European Expedition is part of the Climate for Life Campaign started by WWF Nepal and the Nepal government, its development partners and many non-profit and private organizations.

www.climate4life.org



KIRAN PANDYA

NAMASTE: Australian Ambassador Susan Grave gave out cheques totalling Rs 170,000 to representatives of 17 development projects across the country on Thursday in Maharajganj, under the Australian Embassy's Direct Aid Program.



KIRAN PANDYA

HELPING HAND: Policeman Bipendra Thakur helps Saraswati Timilsina through traffic in Tripureshwor during the International Day of Disabled Persons on Thursday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

NAYA NEPAL: The stage completely obscures the Narayanhiti Palace Museum during the Street Festival in Darbar Marg last week.

DECEMBER 2009 ISSUE IS OUT NOW!



ANIMAL'S RETURN TO BHOPAL 25 years on By Indra Sinha

18 Afghanistan's New Opposition
40 The New Nepal-China Relationship
58 Fresh Paradigms for Peace

COMMEMORATING 25 YEARS OF THE BHOPAL DISASTER

- 'Animal in Bhopal' By Indra Sinha - Regional winner of the 2008 Commonwealth Writer's Prize, Indra Sinha, in this exclusive for *Himal* resurrects Animal, who continues to be boundless, refusing to accept the restraint of human law, custom or convention.
- December 1984 By Sathyu Sarangi - Many of the battles begun 25 years ago, in the aftermath of catastrophe, continue today.
- The specious 'corporate veil' - Interview with H Rajan Sharma, international lawyer practicing in New York, currently lead counsel in a class-action litigation against Union Carbide.

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Red letter days

At this rate, expect a holiday for the festivals of all of Nepal's 103 ethnic groups, full moon days and bands. When the Maobaddies found out that their planned band on 10 December fell on International Human Rights Day, they moved it forward by one day. This means they will be safely violating our human right to freedom of movement on the ninth of December instead of the tenth.

Meanwhile, since Id fell on a Saturday, the government moved the holiday to Sunday and declared its own nationwide shutdown. Haven't googled this yet, but Nepal is probably the only country in the world where there are **Muslim Maoists**. So let me raise a toast to all the forthcoming red-letter days in December.



The prime minister and the chaubiseys held a high-level mechanism at Everest Base Camp this week, but the Maobaddies stole their thunder by stopping the country's fossil fuel supply. This is the single most effective effort by any country to reduce a nation's carbon footprint in the run-up to the Copenhagen Summit. The cabinet just talks, but the **Baddies are doing something about global warming** and deserve our kudos.



After declaring their own parallel autonomous regional governments, the Mau Mau are now looking for a way to quickly put the ethnic genie back in the bottle. But the agitation for automatic regions is now being driven by hardliners over whom the leadership has almost no control. Awesome has been telling the international community he needs to declare automatic regional councils to keep his party together and to control the ethnic agenda so it doesn't get out of hand. If that is true, then the **tail is definitely wagging the doggie**.



It was bound to happen. With the **revolution having degenerated into a criminal syndicate** as erstwhile comrades openly dip their paws into every available honeypot, it was only a question of time before they started fighting over money. And sure enough, one baddie CA member from Jhapa is being detained in Chulachuli over a property dispute. Maoist unions are openly defying orders from party bosses. The commanders in the cantonments are getting edgy because party HQ is only sending them 3k a month instead of 5k, while senior comrades violate their own guidelines by riding limos supplied by sympathetic sahus. Senior party leaders now ask for armed police escorts when they travel the districts because they seem more afraid of threats from within their own party than from others.



So it is now in the leadership's own interest to disarm and demobilise its cadre. And the Ass has a great idea: **give camp inmates a golden handshake**. Most would gladly take a three lak lump sum and head off to greener pastures in Malaysia rather than rot in snake-infested camps playing volleyball all day. It could easily be financed with a consortium of donors and be a more cost-effective investment in the peace process than indefinitely extending and broadening UNMIN's mandate.



DPM SuzyQ surprised patients in Kohalpur Medical College by dropping in unannounced to present **patients with bouquets**. But that PR gesture cost the exchequer 12 lacs for renting an Mi-17 for an extra hour on her flight back from Bajura.



Amik Kamred fractured his hand during the Singha Darbar gherao last month and the Baddies rushed to condemn police atrocities. But when Makunay went to see Amik-san in hospital, the patient told him it was actually **friendly fire**: he got hit by a brick thrown by fellow-Baddie protesters. And why is ex-Maoist Tharu commander Roshan Tharu accompanying royal minister Gopal Dahit to WFP to ask for donations?



Now that **YSL** has opened an outlet in Darbar Marg, guess that means the **YCL** is finally going out of fashion?

ass(at)nepalitimes.com





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