

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

POINTLESS 3 POINTS

There is nothing in the 3-point resolution reached just before midnight last Friday that is not already in the 12-point, 40-point, or 6-point agreements that have gone before.

Striking an agreement is not the problem, the difficulty is putting into practice what is agreed. Which is why they took it right down to the wire last week: so they could pull a fast one, fudge things so that they could continue to bicker endlessly. There is nothing here that couldn't have been agreed on six months ago, so why did the interlocutors indulge in such brinkmanship, punish the people with crippling strikes and hold the country's economy and development hostage?

Our politicians outdid themselves. Even by the low standards of responsibility and conscientiousness that they have now become world renowned for, their selfish and mindless lust for power that is the heart of

this deadlock is breathtaking.

We have a habit here of always looking at the bright side, however, and this time, too, we could say, "It could have been worse." The 3-point agenda may be a dud, but at least the CA term was extended. The last-minute non-deal pulled us back from the edge of the cliff. It was a face-saving collection of words that bought time for more bickering for sure, but not extending the CA would have invited an even more dangerous scenario of instability and upheaval. The extremists of the right and left would have exploited the fluid situation to push through their agenda of turning the clock back, and squeezing the democratic middle.

There are only two ways ahead. One is to be cynical about it and say the Maoists will never compromise, the prime minister will never resign, and one year won't be enough. The other is to strengthen the moderate and pragmatic voices within all three parties so that they look beyond their partisan ambitions to the long-term national interest.

Just one glance at the economy may be instructive:

the contraction of the banking sector continues, high interest rates have killed new investments and the balance of trade deficit with India has created a shortage of Indian rupees and fostered a black market in cash. The nation and the people can't take this punishment for much longer.

It doesn't really matter who gets to be prime minister. In fact, 'none of the above' would be the way to go, handing over day-to-day governance to a small team of technocrats within each party that can get the economy moving again, improve service delivery and tackle law and order so businesses are not extorted and people can live without fear of being kidnapped.

The politicians can then concentrate on what they were elected to do: write an inclusive, democratic constitution that will extricate this country from the quagmire they have got us into.

The magic wand

GUEST COLUMN
Dhruba Simkhada

The Nepali people's message to the political leadership of this country in the 2008 elections was clear: we want the Maoists to transform themselves into a legitimate political party and work with the other parties to write a new constitution. But the leaders forgot this mandate, and their priority was not the constitution but political power.

As the CA's term neared its expiry date, this newspaper carried out a public opinion poll in which an overwhelming number of the over 5,000 respondents from all over the country said that if the constitution couldn't be written on time, the CA's term should be extended and a national consensus government formed. Politics becomes cynical when public opinion ceases to matter to politicians.

The last minute deal last week didn't just save the CA, it

also saved the country's two biggest communist parties (the Maoists and the UML) both from splitting right down the middle. The cracks had begun to appear last year, but on the morning of 28 May, a Maoist Standing Committee meeting was divided between the Baburam Bhattarai camp (which wanted a six-month extension of the CA) and the Baidya faction (which didn't want an extension). Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal cast his lot with the hardliners.

Similarly, by evening dissidents within the UML, led by Bam Dev Gautam, had started a signature campaign to get 62 members to call for the resignation of the prime minister, though he was from their own party. Meanwhile, the MJF and other Madhesi parties in government began to



KIRAN PANDAY

After the drama of last week, we are back to where we started

say that the prime minister should step down, the CA term should be extended and the Maoists should lead a new national government. For the Madhesi parties, this was a complete turnaround.

A week later, as the Maoists and the NC-UML coalition interpret the three-point resolution in their own way and the political rhetoric goes back to pointing fingers, it looks like nothing has changed. The parties have just bought time by extending the CA. When should the prime minister resign, if at all, and who should take his place?

The person most desperate to get back to Baluwatar is Chairman Dahal, but he has too many external and internal forces arrayed against him. Baburam Bhattarai could be the compromise candidate for the other parties, but the paradox is that his own party leadership,

especially Dahal, is against him.

Some within the NC are now saying it is their 'turn' and are promoting Ram Chandra Poudel for his leadership in striking the deal last week. Sher Bahadur Deuba's critics say he has been prime minister once too often and he may have to wait till the NC convention to lead his party.

Jhahnath Khanal has too many enemies within the UML who don't trust what they see as his duplicitous role in dealing with the Maoists. KP Oli has represented the right wing of his leftist party, but it was his last-minute turnaround on Thursday in a meeting with Dahal that allowed a deal to be struck. Still, he is hobbled with the same 'loser' label that has undermined Madhav Nepal's credibility.

The CA has been revived with a magic wand. The agreement itself is vague and there is no timeline. After the drama of last week, we are back to where we started: getting a power-sharing agreement on a national government so that the other peace and constitutional issues can fall into place. 🇳🇵

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

A MONARCHY ENGAGED

Why would the monarchy, which has been around for 104 years, be willing to disappear ('Engaging monarchy', #504)? Would a Hindu king be willing to be in a position where he cannot perform the *raj dharma*? Is it a function of kingship to just watch while the incompetent, Indo-servile politicians degrade the country?

K.K. Sharma

● I agree with the gist of the article and it would have been nice if the monarchy had remained a cultural institution. The truth however is that the monarchy used its cultural influence as a cover for its political, familial and other selfish motives. To maintain the monarchy solely as a unifying agent from the past isn't reason enough to restore it.

Jeev

LEARN FROM INDIA

Now that the constitution-making deadline has been extended by one year, we should first of all enforce certain discipline and adopt correct procedures in the coming days ('Whither constitution-writing?', #504). We can take lessons from constitution-making in India, where it was mandatory for all top leaders to attend meetings, and all important committees were headed by top party leaders.

Daniel Gajaraj

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The issue calls for a comprehensive land use plan for the valley, implementation of which hinges on the power of the legal system ('Urban crush', #504). As long as there is corruption, all such measures will be futile. In the end, it's all about having a competent people-oriented government.

Jayjeev Hada

THANK YOU

Thank you, Esther Benjamins Memorial Foundation, for giving these girls a new chance in life ('Circus slave', #504).

Sandhya Sharma

A RARE GLIMPSE

Kudos to Manjushree Thapa ('Reaching America', #504). She definitely is in a unique (or even privileged) position as somebody who has lived in many parts of the world, and is both an 'outsider' and 'insider' at the same time. She can glimpse into the 'inner world' of Prema through multiple windows at the same time – as a woman from a poor 'third-world' country who is struggling to settle in the most 'developed' country in the world.

Anonymous

On the blogs
nepalitimes.com/blogs

East West

The parties will get stuck in the quicksand again, but for now they have bought time



Weekly Internet Poll # 505

Q. Do we need a new constitution at all?

Total votes: 3,169

- Old is gold 26.2%
- Old with changes 25.4%
- Brand new edition 48.4%

Weekly Internet Poll # 506. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Which of the following cares most about Nepal and the Nepalis?

Resurrection, deconstructed



PLAIN SPEAKING
Prashant Jha

On the night of 27 May, NC's Krishna Sitaula and Amresh Singh met Prachanda. They told him the PM would not resign the next day, and deserved an honourable exit. If the Maoists extended the CA and moved one step on the peace process, the NC would get the PM to resign in a few days. Prachanda did not buy that. The NC negotiators had a similar conversation with Dr Bhattarai the same night and early next morning, and also met the PM to assure him of full support.

On the final day, all top leaders were in the CA, but the core negotiators were Sitaula, Singh, Bhim Rawal and Krishna Bahadur Mahara. The Maoists first proposed that extension and resignation happen together: demand rejected. The Maoists then suggested that the PM could commit to 'resigning' in his speech, and privately agree to quit in two days. The other side

said the PM would at best commit to 'opening the way' and the term 'resignation' would not figure in any agreement. Talks were stuck on this point through the day.

And then the UML cracked, with multiple voices demanding the PM could not hold the CA hostage. The revolt within was led by Bamdev Gautam, and younger MPs like Rabindra Adhikari. The Maoists were thrilled. Prachanda told a few aides that either the UML would blink or it would split if the PM did not resign.

Fissures within the NC had also started appearing. A few MPs even shouted at Sher Bahadur Deuba and Sitaula for not being flexible enough. Ram Chandra Poudel kept calling the PM to come to the CA, even as other NC negotiators told him to come only after a deal since he would be subject to tremendous pressure in the CA.

But the focus was clearly on the internal UML rift. The CA complex was abuzz with reports that 64 MPs had met the CA chairman, threatening to surround the well of the house

and chant slogans against their own PM. Rumours circulated that they had decided to register a different party. Subash Nembang himself was angry with the PM, and had even advised him to quit a few days earlier. At this heated moment, towards late evening, KP Oli arrived in the house.

split. And if there was a deal of some sort, his rival Jhalnath Khanal would take all the credit and emerge stronger.

Even as NC leaders waited outside, Oli met Prachanda – on a one-on-one basis, and with Khanal. He asked what the Maoists wanted; Prachanda

But the UML-Maoist deal upset NC leaders who had spent the day fighting hard to prevent any commitment to resign in the deal. They told Oli NC would sign on but not own the agreement, as this had been done without consulting them, breaking the spirit of the alliance. Deuba spoke to the PM on the phone and both expressed unhappiness at what had happened. The NC's sense was that this had handed the Maoists a victory when they would have, ultimately, unconditionally extended before the hour of midnight. Oli tried to reassure them that the deal was vaguely worded, and could be interpreted anyway they wanted.

So what do we have post 28 May? The Maoists gained some political capital on the day, which has been partly neutralised by the insistence of others that they move on the PLA first. Within the Maoists, Dr Bhattarai and his line prevailed but Prachanda continues to remain central to any deal-making. In the UML, Khanal was pro-active, but Oli ensured he could not take all the credit. He has now firmly positioned himself as representing the other pole in Nepali politics and an indispensable interlocutor. The NC maintained a relatively coherent stand, but got locked in its stated positions. The internal dynamics of the UML and the Maoists will be the key determinant of politics in the coming weeks.

Deconstructing 28 May is central to understanding the elements that characterise the present political situation

Oli realised the game had changed, and the fracture within was serious. Even his erstwhile supporters, like Bishnu Poudel and Pradeep Gyawali, angrily told him history would judge him and the UML very harshly if the CA ceased to exist. Oli could see that if they did not show some flexibility, the CA could be dissolved and the party could

insisted on the term resignation in the agreement. Oli immediately agreed. This is when the narratives diverge. The Maoists claim Oli gave them a guarantee the PM would go in five days; Oli claims he only said that the PM would go in five days if the Maoists implemented commitments in the same time-frame.

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THIS WEEK

Back from the brink

The three parties signed a three-point agreement minutes before the term of the Constituent Assembly was due to expire last Friday. The agreement paved the way to extend the CA term by a year, but almost a week after the agreement there are no signs of moving the peace process ahead. Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal had agreed to resign as part of the deal, but has now said he will only do so after the Maoists come up with a specific plan and timetable for combatant management. Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal initially said he felt betrayed but his party has now agreed to present a proposal for the integration of PLA combatants.

Botched honours

What should have been a celebratory mood after the government announced its decision to honour 269 personalities for their 'distinctive contribution to the country' as part of the Republic Day celebrations has turned sour. A number of high-profile recipients refused to accept the awards. Actors Madan Krishna Shrestha and Hari Bansha Acharya, and journalists Kanak Mani Dixit and Yubaraj Acharya rejected the decorations, questioning the selection process. Chief Justice Ram Prasad Shrestha chided the government for awarding medals to five judges, saying it had affected the independence of the judiciary. Families of the victims of Jana Andolan-II also condemned the decision to honour police officers and army personnel implicated in human rights violations.

Fire press

Maoist cadre set fire to a pick-up truck carrying copies of *Nagarik* on Saturday while the driver and a child were inside the vehicle. The Maoists had warned the paper to apologise for a story claiming that the Maoists were holding captive missing doctor Dr Bhakta Man Shrestha, executive director of the BP Memorial Cancer Hospital in Bharatpur. Quoting unnamed sources, *Nagarik* had reported: "Shrestha was abducted over differences with party general secretary Ram Bahadur Thapa and his financial dealings with the party."



Complicity journalism



FOURTH ESTATE
C K Lal

status quo.

The Four Theories of the Press of the early sixties sought to explain authoritarian, libertarian, responsible, and totalitarian methods of media operation. The state had to chose between collusion (libertarian and responsible) and control (authoritarian and totalitarian) models to manipulate the media according to its own character.

The seventies saw the emergence of the lapdog press as the Cold War took hold. In the anti-Soviet camp, freedom of the press implied supporting whichever dictator had been propped up by the West as an essential evil. In Soviet-supported regimes, any journalist an important role in decision making after the disintegration of the USSR. The trend proved to be so strong that it could now call itself a journalism of national consensus. The mainstream media agreed about everything that it decided was in the national interest. The rest were deviant and subversive.

Once the Maoists exited government, the mainstream media in Nepal decided to support the successor coalition. While regular news reporting has continued apace, there seems to be a reluctance to hear, see or speak out against the anti-Maoist coalition.

The extent and scale of deforestation in the Tarai, for

Early this month, Gorkhapatra marked its 110th year of publication without much fanfare. Started as a weekly pamphlet to propagate the supposed virtues of Rana rule, Gorkhapatra has remained the trusted mouthpiece of the government. The tone and tenor of the paper's content changes with every change of guard at Singh Darbar.

However, since the Constituent Assembly elections two years ago, Gorkhapatra has acquired a somewhat different image. It's now one of the least biased newspapers in the country.

Part of the relative neutrality of this government publication can be attributed to the survival instinct of its employees. With a hung legislature, there is no way of knowing who is going to head the Ministry of Information and for how long.

But Gorkhapatra's semblance of impartiality owes more to the stridently anti-Maoist tone of the private press. The government mouthpiece may not boast of accuracy, balance and credibility, but it has no reason to fear a Maoist takeover, and can therefore cover their side of the story as well.

With profit and prestige as their primary motives, partisanship comes naturally to the proprietary media. Paradoxically, that's precisely why they have to appear to be independent. Without the reputation of being fiercely free and fanatically fearless, the media cannot claim to be the watchdog of public interest, and will lose its influence the moment it is perceived as an apologist for the

There's something wrong when state-controlled media is less biased than the free press

who didn't support the government was merely a running dog of imperialism.

During the eighties, collaborative journalism emerged as the favoured method of managing the media. Its strictures were laid out by Lee Kuan Yew, who declared the government would not allow the media, "to assume a role in Singapore that American media play in America, that is that of invigilator, adversary, and inquisitor of administration." According to the doctrine of collaborative journalism, the state knows what is good for the people and the media's job is merely to magnify the state's achievements.

The commercial media, in cahoots with the leading political parties of the day, began to play

instance, is eerily reminiscent of the pre-Referendum devastation wrought to ensure the survival of the Panchayat regime. Law and order in the country has all but collapsed. Industrialists openly threaten to withhold taxes. Diplomats dictate terms undiplomatically. Despite mounting evidence of acts of omission and commission on the part of the current government, there is deafening silence on the media front.

It's the mortal fear of a Maoist takeover that has transformed the Nepali media into the willing accomplices of the government. Complicity journalism is Nepal's media contribution of the decade. Ironically, state-controlled media has been the honourable exception for once.

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Biogas moves up

FOO CHEE CHANG in LANGTANG

A way from the political turmoil in the capital, a quiet revolution in rural Nepal has made this country a world leader in alternative energy.

In the past 50 years, over 205,000 households have built biogas plants to turn farm manure into methane gas for cooking and lighting. The simplicity of the Nepali-designed technology that allows bacteria already inside the cow’s stomach to turn cowdung into a clean and safe gas is only half the story.

The other half is a successful government-subsidised soft credit scheme. There is almost 100 per cent payback, the effluent is excellent pathogen-free fertiliser, and the elimination of indoor pollution from kitchen fires has reduced child mortality.

The Nepali fixed-dome biogas design is cheap and maintenance free, and proved to be superior to Indian and Chinese models. After initial support from the United Mission to Nepal, the Dutch group SNV stepped in with the Biogas Support Program (BSP), and millions of farmers in nearly all districts of Nepal have benefited in the past decades.

Today, 98 per cent of the plants are still functioning, some of them nearly 30 years old. Nearly 20,000 new plants are being added every year and BSP’s goal is to have a total of 500,000 plants in Nepal. The organisation won the prestigious Ashden Award for Sustainable Energy in 2005.



FIRE AND ICE: To make biogas work in cold climates, like this plant in Kyangjin Gompa in Langtang uses a compost heap to insulate the underground digester so the yak dung can be converted into cooking gas.

One of the limiting factors is that biogas doesn’t work as well in the cold climate at higher elevations. But with its new pilot plants in Langtang, BSP has found a simple way to generate methane from yak dung even at higher altitudes.

Pasang Demdi Sherpa, a trekking guide, is happy with the biogas plant in his hometown. “It saves us a lot of firewood, and I wish more people would

use it,” he says.

What Pasang Demdi and other high-altitude biogas users have done is to pile a compost heap on top of the underground digester so that it heats and insulates the digester from the chill of the Langtang winter.

Kyangjin Gompa, the highest settlement in Langtang Valley at 3,850m, is where no biogas plant has gone before. At first, the

plant at Hotel Yala Peak just looks like a pile of rubbish, but beneath the heap of steaming compost is the underground dome digester that supplies methane to the kitchen even in winter.

“We’ve considered many other methods of heating the digester, from using solar heaters to building biogas plants within greenhouses, but those are very expensive solutions,” explains Hari Bahadur KC, an engineer with BSP.

Heap composting to insulate digesters is a small-is-beautiful solution that needs no added cost, and the compost itself can be recycled for fertiliser. Biogas can now go to mountain regions, where replacing firewood for cooking is even more important to protect the environment.

BSP’s executive director Saroj Rai is not someone who rests on his laurels. He is happy that Nepal’s biogas program is an internationally acclaimed success story because of the ‘ecology of support’ it has from the government, banks, donors, technicians and farmers. But he wants to concentrate on making the technology even more widely available, and maintain the quality of the construction and after-sales service.

Says Rai: “Biogas is perfect energy solution for rural Nepal, and it is regarded as a model for other countries as well.”

See also:
‘Hurrah Nepal’s future is in the dung heap’, #234
‘Cowdung takes the cake’, #257

WORLD CUP FOOTBALL 2010 Group Matches

GROUP A

DATE/TIME	VENUE	MATCH BETWEEN
11.06.2010 / 19:45	Johannesburg	South Africa <small>SRAL</small> Mexico <small>SRAL</small>
12.06.2010 / 00:15	Cape Town	Uruguay France
17.06.2010 / 00:15	Tshwane/Pretoria	South Africa Uruguay
18.06.2010 / 00:15	Polokwane	France Mexico
22.06.2010 / 19:45	Rustanburg	Mexico Uruguay
22.06.2010 / 19:45	Mangaung/ Bloemfontein	France South Africa

GROUP B

DATE/TIME	VENUE	MATCH BETWEEN
12.06.2010 / 19:45	Johannesburg	Argentina <small>SRAL</small> Nigeria <small>SRAL</small>
12.06.2010 / 17:15	Nelson mandela bay/ Port Elizabeth	Korea Republic Greece
17.06.2010 / 19:45	Mangaung/ Bloemfontein	Greece Nigeria
17.06.2010 / 17:15	Johannesburg	Argentina Korea Republic
23.06.2010 / 00:15	Durban	Nigeria Korea Republic
23.06.2010 / 00:15	Polokwane	Greece Argentina

GROUP C

DATE/TIME	VENUE	MATCH BETWEEN
13.06.2010 / 00:15	Rustanburg	England <small>SRAL</small> USA <small>SRAL</small>
13.06.2010 / 17:15	Polokwane	Algeria Slovenia
18.06.2010 / 19:45	Johannesburg	Slovenia USA
19.06.2010 / 00:15	Cape town	England Algeria
23.06.2010 / 19:45	Nelson mandela bay/ Port elizabeth	Slovenia England
23.06.2010 / 19:45	Tshwane/Pretoria	USA Algeria

GROUP D

DATE/TIME	VENUE	MATCH BETWEEN
14.06.2010 / 00:15	Durban	Germany <small>SRAL</small> Australia <small>SRAL</small>
13.06.2010 / 19:45	Tshwane/Pretoria	Serbia Ghana
18.06.2010 / 17:15	Nelson mandela bay/ Port elizabeth	Germany Serbia
19.06.2010 / 19:45	Rustanburg	Ghana Australia
24.06.2010 / 00:15	Johannesburg	Ghana Germany
24.06.2010 / 00:15	Nelspruit	Australia Serbia

GROUP E

DATE/TIME	VENUE	MATCH BETWEEN
14.06.2010 / 17:15	Johannesburg	Netherlands <small>SRAL</small> Denmark <small>SRAL</small>
14.06.2010 / 19:45	Mangaung/ Bloemfontein	Japan Cameroon
19.06.2010 / 17:15	Durban	Netherlands Japan
20.06.2010 / 00:15	Tshwane/Pretoria	Cameroon Denmark
25.06.2010 / 00:15	Rustanburg	Denmark Japan
25.06.2010 / 00:15	Cape Town	Cameroon Netherlands

GROUP F

DATE/TIME	VENUE	MATCH BETWEEN
15.06.2010 / 00:15	Cape Town	Italy <small>SRAL</small> Paraguay <small>SRAL</small>
15.06.2010 / 17:15	Rustanburg	New zealand Slovakia
20.06.2010 / 17:15	Mangaung/ Bloemfontein	Slovakia Paraguay
20.06.2010 / 19:45	Nelspruit	Italy New zealand
24.06.2010 / 19:45	Johannesburg	Slovakia Italy
24.06.2010 / 19:45	Polokwane	Paraguay New zealand

GROUP G

DATE/TIME	VENUE	MATCH BETWEEN
15.06.2010 / 19:45	Nelson mandela bay/ Port elizabeth	Cote d'ivoire <small>SRAL</small> Portugal <small>SRAL</small>
16.06.2010 / 00:15	Johannesburg	Brazil Korea DPR
21.06.2010 / 00:15	Johannesburg	Brazil Cote d'ivoire
21.06.2010 / 17:15	Cape Town	Portugal Korea DPR
25.06.2010 / 19:45	Durban	Portugal Brazil
25.06.2010 / 19:45	Nelspruit	Korea DPR Cote d'ivoire

GROUP H

DATE/TIME	VENUE	MATCH BETWEEN
16.06.2010 / 17:15	Nelspruit	Honduras <small>SRAL</small> Chile <small>SRAL</small>
16.06.2010 / 19:45	Durban	Spain Switzerland
21.06.2010 / 19:45	Nelson mandela bay/ Port elizabeth	Chile Switzerland
22.06.2010 / 00:15	Johannesburg	Spain Honduras
26.06.2010 / 00:15	Tshwane/ Pretoria	Chile Spain
26.06.2010 / 00:15	Mangaung/ Bloemfontein	Switzerland Honduras



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The age of enlightenment

AHMAD ISKANDAR

Necessity is the mother of invention, they say. Sure enough with the prospect of at least six more years of power cuts, businesses, homes and offices in Nepal are all migrating to solar power in a big way.

Going solar isn't going to make you more environmentally friendly in Nepal because hydroelectricity already accounts for 99 per cent of supply. But if you use diesel gensets to tide over long loadshedding hours, then it does make sense to use the abundant free energy from the sun.

Solar comes in two types: passive solar heating of water for

the household, and electricity generation through photo-voltaic panels. Nepal's urban homes and trek lodges routes have been using locally built solar water heaters for 30 years now. But solar cells for electricity are becoming more popular with the price of photo-voltaics coming down.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has set an example by installing a solar array for backup power and to charge its fleet of electric vehicles. In winter, solar energy contributes 15 per cent of the energy needed to heat the building and also powers the perimeter and parking lot lights.

Across Patan, the World Food Programme (WFP) office recently completed the first phase conversion of its entire office to solar power, even when there is electricity from the mains. "Our annual electricity bill is \$20,000, and we spend \$12,000 on diesel," explains WFP's Tyler McMahon. "We hope to cut the utility bills by half once the whole system is in place and will completely eliminate the diesel bill for the generator."

It's not just big international organisations that are going solar. Electronic engineer Surendra Mathema has put his technical knowledge to good use at home where he has a fully solar 200W backup for the whole house, a passive solar water heating system and even a parabolic solar dish for heating water. Mathema also uses LED lights to reduce energy consumption and CFLs wherever he can.

"The great thing about solar is that it's a one-time investment, once you set it up everything is free," he says.

The next challenge is to convince NEA to buy back power when home generators like Mathema or organisations like



AHMAD ISKANDAR

SOLAR HOUSE: The Mathema household is fully solar with a 200W photo-voltaic array on the roof, a solar water heater and a parabolic reflector for boiling water.

ICIMOD have a surplus. This 'making the meter run backward' technology would not just turn households into power supply sources, but also help reduce loadshedding on the grid. The only obstacle is to introduce the

technology and set up the regulatory framework.

The time and money invested by Nepal's solar pioneers show much promise, and finally proves there may be a light at the end of the tunnel after all. 🌞

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Specials

- **Sunday** - Shopping Plus - info, bargains, discounts, destinations
- **Monday** - Hi Tech Plus - technology and gadgets
- **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

Reviving the river

A coordinated conservation effort is needed to revive the Bagmati River

The Bagmati River is an open sewer. The odour that assails one is proof of everything that has gone wrong with this metropolis: the exponential urbanisation, the lack of planning, haphazard growth and non-existent waste management. “That flat area used to be paddy fields,” says Hom Prasad Banskota, 83, pointing to Jorpati across the Bagmati from Gothatar heights. Now it is built over with new houses, not a shred of green fields is visible. Krishna Prasad Banskota, 73, blames democracy for the urban disarray: “We used

to drink water from the river. Now, you can’t stand the stink of the river.” The High Powered Committee for Integrated Development of Bagmati Civilisation is trying to save what is left. But it is an uphill task. Says the Committee’s Ram Chandra Devkota, “We need more waste treatment plants, and we also need to recharge the groundwater, harvest rainwater and build check dams to revive the river.” The city plan prohibits building construction within 20 metres of either side

of the river, but that rule has been ignored for a long time now. The Committee plans to develop a green belt of 12 metres on either bank and an 8 metre road. But demarcating the river border is a real problem as the land is already registered in the names of individuals. The health of a city’s river says a lot about the city itself. There are a few bright spots along the stretch of the Bagmati, mostly on account of local endeavours, but we will all need to be involved if we are to bring the river back to life. 🌱

Sundarijal to Gokarna

The river course begins to fill up again, this time with raw sewage. The High Powered Committee for Integrated Development of Bagmati Civilisation is busy constructing river training between Sundarijal and Gokarneshwor. Suburban housing is gradually advancing towards the riverbanks.



SUNDARIJAL

The water is still relatively clean here, despite significant upstream settlements where government has neglected to spread awareness of sanitation, hygiene, and sustainable farming practices. Syalmati and Nagmati join the Bagmati to be channelled into Sundarijal reservoir, which runs a mini-hydropower plant. The entirety of the water is then supplied to the Valley as drinking water, with only seepage going to the river.



BAGDWAR

BAGDWAR

The source of the Bagmati lies in Shivapuri National Park.

SUNDARIJAL

GOKARNESHWOR TEMPLE



JORPATI

Ducks make merry in the muck. The river has become a prime location for duck husbandry.



JORPATI

GUJESWORI

GUJESWORI

A wastewater treatment plant was built 10 years ago to help clean up the river as it flows through Pashupati, but the volume of effluent is too big to manage anymore. It only sieves out solid waste and diverts the worst of the river to Tilganga. Local youth have endeavoured to keep at least their stretch of the river clean, by holding periodic sessions to pick out rubbish around the temple of Gujeswori.



PASHUPATI

The holy site of Pashupati, when the river has water to accept the cremated remains of the deceased, looks like a mini-Varanasi. For all the wrong reasons.



TILGANGA

From here on, where the diversion rejoins the river, the Bagmati is an open drain. Yellow household sewage empties into the river in fat pipes. It’s clear that if the drains did not empty into the river, the Bagmati wouldn’t have any water at all.



TAU DAHA

About 600 metres away from Chobhar gorge, Tau Dahan is an oxbow lake left behind by the Bagmati. A local committee was formed six years ago and cleaned up the lake, but it lacks a proper drainage system and the committee can’t intervene in the ongoing construction around the lake.



TEKU

The sight is apocalyptic. Mountains of rubbish, carcasses of buffaloes, flocks of scavenging birds, bedraggled children sorting the rubbish for recycling. If you want to see how idyllic Kathmandu has turned into hell, go to Teku.



CHOBHAR

Legend has it that Manjushree let out the waters of the Kathmandu Valley lake by cleaving the hills at Chobhar with a sword. There is a park here and an extensive complex of caves that is becoming popular by the day. The air inside these caves is cool and fresh, unlike the open air above the festering gorge.

UN PARK

The construction of a proposed UN Park site from Sankhamul to Teku is one of the few areas of greenery still to be seen along the river, but the government hasn’t allocated any money for its further development. Squatters have occupied most of the park. Surya Bhakta Shrestha, executive director of the UN Park Development Committee, is blunt: “This place is not in anyone’s priority.” Surprisingly, the section taken on by the United Nations Women’s Organization in Jwagal (see pic) has proved to be a hit. It’s slightly unkempt, but the rare slice of greenery does draw the crowds, despite the summer stench.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

E-car rally on Saturday

To mark World Environment Day and raise money to pay for the treatment of poor patients at the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre (SIRC), 25 electric cars, vans and three-wheelers will take part in a rally from Maitighar Mandala to Banepa on Saturday. This is the second e-car rally organised to fundraise for SIRC, and the vehicles will all do the 50 km roundtrip on a single charge. It's still not too late to participate or sponsor an electric vehicle. [kumudini\(at\)info.com.np](mailto:kumudini(at)info.com.np)

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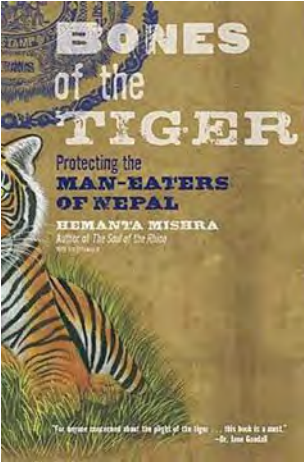
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Green reading

Tiger tale

During the last Year of the Tiger in 1998, *Time* magazine predicted that the tiger would be extinct in the wild by the end of the century. Like many such media predictions, the prophecy, thankfully, proved premature. That was largely due to the efforts of conservationists and governments to rescue the big cats from the threats of poaching and habitat destruction.



Hemanta Mishra is Nepal's foremost tiger conservationist and a veteran of Chitwan National Park. *Bones of the Tiger: Protecting the Maneaters of Nepal* is his just-released memoir about tiger conservation. It has fascinating insights on Nepal's tigers, all the way from the early hunting expeditions, the royal patronage that led to the setting up of the Chitwan sanctuary, and tiger research and relocation. Mishra left Nepal in 1996, worked for the Smithsonian and the World Wildlife Fund and published *The Soul of the Rhino* in 2008. His latest book is a significant contribution to the endeavour to ensure the survival of the wild tiger until the next Year of the Tiger in 2022.

Bones of the Tiger: Protecting The Maneaters of Nepal
Lyons Press, Connecticut, USA
2010

Glacial lakes

Climate skeptics have had a field day with the controversy over the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change's fudging of figures on the extent of glacial retreat. But for the citizens of the Himalaya, climate change is not just theory, it is a fact of life and they see its effects all around them everyday. However, there has been no real study about how far the expanding glacial lakes are a result of global warming, which



lakes are vulnerable, and indeed, the field has been lacking an inventory of Himalayan glacial lakes in China, Bhutan, Nepal, India and Pakistan. Kathmandu-based ICIMOD seeks to plug the gap with the definitive tome on glacial lakes and the risk of outburst floods. *Formation of Glacial Lakes in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas and GLOF Risk Assessment* was co-authored by three of the world's specialists on glacial lakes: Jack Ives, Rajendra Shrestha and Pradeep Mool.

Formation of Glacial Lakes in the Hindu Kush-Himalayas and GLOF Risk Assessment
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EVENTS

Green Dance Party, Tri-Chandra College's students want to raise awareness about climate change by dancing the afternoon away. We do not really know how the two go together, but everyone needs a reason to party. *Friday 4 June, 2pm onwards, Insomnia Club, 9841647718*

Baneswor Street Festival, pay a visit to the Carbon Neutral Concert featuring Nima Rumba, Rubicon, Mukti & Revival and other famous names in music, as well as the mural art, photo exhibitions and documentary shows to mark the World Environment Day. *Saturday 5 June, starts at 12pm, Baneswor*



Docskool Friday Film Show, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex, But Were Afraid to Ask*, a sequence of comedic shorts by Woody Allen, loosely based on the book of the same name by David Reuben. *Friday 4 June, 3pm, Docskool, Gaurighat, 4471104*

E-car Rally, the second such rally in Kathmandu has this tiny, sprightly cars driving to Banepa and back on a single charge, as a fundraiser for the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre. *Saturday 5 June, Starts at 8am, from Maitighar Mandala*

Bagmati River Festival, it's not much of a festival, more a cleaning session of the stinky river than runs through the capital – well, at least a part of it. Bring a nose mask and lots of good vibes. *Saturday 5 June, 7am, Pashupati*

Saturday's Farmer's Market, a weekly farmers' market that is different from all the other farmers' markets in town with lasagne, pies and Mediterranean treats along with organic fruits and vegetables. *Every Saturday, 9am to noon, 1905 Restaurant, Kantipath*

Putaliko Ghar, a Nepali adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, which has seen more than 180 performances in Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Denmark and Norway. *Starts Friday June 4 (everyday except Mondays) 5.30pm, Gurukul, Old Baneswor*

Book Reading, Manjushree Thapa reads from her new novel *Seasons of Flight*. *Friday 4 June, 5.30pm, Pipalbot, Babar Mahal Revisited, Tickets Rs 1000*



Searching for Utility, Gaurav Tripathi is a recent graduate of Kathmandu University's

School of Arts. This will be his first solo exhibition. *Saturday 6 June 3pm, Nepal Art Council, Babar Mahal*

Royal Nepal through the Lens of Richard Gordon Matzene, Marcella Sirhandi will present her book of the aforementioned title and a rare collection of photographs shot in Nepal in the 1930s. *Opens Sunday 6 June, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited*

MUSIC

Third time is a charm, Mukti Rai will play the 'Himalayan Blues' at the House, where they are also serving a new Asian Fusion menu. Good food, good music. You can't go wrong. *Friday 4 June 7pm, House of Music, Thamel*

HyJazz, Relax with your favourite drinks at the Rox bar with live jazz. *Every Friday, Rox Bar at Hyatt, 4489362*

Attila Manju live in concert, of German and Turkish origin, Manju is a free spirit rocker now based in India. Some say lyrics like Eric Burdon, some say the charisma of Jim Morrison. Call it what you want, it's a real shamanistic experience for everybody who likes to dance and cheer up. *Saturday 5 June 8pm, 1905, Kantipath*



DINING



Irish Pub, not only does it feel like one, but it's Irish all the way down to the original recipes from the owner's wife. Go green with their fish and chips. *Ananda Bhawan, Lazimpat, 4416027*

Café Mitra, Chef Mohit presents a four-course tasting menu with vegetarian options featuring seasonal organic produce. *Every Wednesday from 7pm, Café Mitra, Thamel, 4259015*



New Orleans, offers a wide variety of western dishes that are scrumptious yet healthy. We got hooked on the rosemary chicken and hamburgers. *Jhamel, 5522708*

Boudha Stupa Restaurant and Café, for the real taste of Tibetan Gyakok, a hot pot affair with dumplings, meats and vegetables. Candlelight dinner options are also available for the romantics every full moon night. *Boudha, 2130681*

The Factory, a trendy restobar for a refreshing stopover in the chaos that is Thamel. Great food and drinks, with zesty music. Don't miss out on their cheesecake, it's a must. *Mandala Street, Thamel*

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

POSITION: Programme Coordinator

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Further information about the work of JYOTI can be found at www.cwsuk.org. Interested applicants should, in the first instance, forward a copy of their curriculum vitae along with a statement of interest to: hrrm@cwsuk.org
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Female candidates from Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesis, and other minorities are especially encouraged to apply. Only short-listed candidates meeting the above criteria will be contacted for the selection process.



KIRAN PANDAY

HELLO HELLO: President Ram Baran Yadav and Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal wave to the public during second Republic Day in Tundikhel on Saturday.



KIRAN PANDAY

SCHOOL IS HARD WORK: School children from Kathmandu take a hike in Sundarimal as part of their school field trip on Sunday.



KIRAN PANDAY

OLD TRADITIONS: Young girls and women queue outside Chobar's Jal Binayak on Mangal Chaturdashi on Tuesday.



RSS

TRIPLE TANDEM: Mohammad Isdakhad of Ghorahi takes a ride on his bike designed to carry three people, which can be pedalled by two.

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WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

The monsoon is still at least a week away. But with the humidity building up, the pre-monsoon showers are upon us. The moisture build-up has intensified with the injection of water vapour from a cyclone that is battering the Arabian Peninsula and its tentacles are riding the jet stream towards us. Expect afternoon thunderstorms, lots of sound and fury, but not as much rain over the weekend. The real monsoon show should start next weekend, and this satellite radar composite on Thursday afternoon shows monsoon systems over Bangladesh and offshore from Kerala.



FRI	SAT	SUN
 29-16	 28-17	 28-17

STALLED: Project staff inspect the tunnel of the Upper Marsyangdi-II project in Syange, Lamjung



PICS: DAMBAR KRISHNA SHRESTHA

Maoists block Upper Marsyangdi

A stalled hydro project proves we will remain in darkness until the politics are sorted out

DAMBAR KRISHNA SHRESTHA in LAMJUNG

Maoist threats have stopped preparatory work on a 600 megawatt Indian hydropower joint venture on the Marsyangdi, showing how political instability is affecting infrastructure work on the ground and possibly what lies in store for the country under federalism.

The Rs 70 billion Upper Marsyangdi-II project entails building a 15 km tunnel from Dharapani, Tal Bajar in Manang to the powerhouse in Syange of Lamjung, and is being jointly built by India’s GMR and the Nepali company Himtal Hydro. When completed in five years it will export electricity to India and also provide power to Nepal’s domestic grid.

However, the preparatory work on the project has been stalled since February by the Maoists as part of their anti-India campaign. Eighty per cent of the detailed project planning had been completed, including a 300 m tunnel to study the geology of the area. Eight engineers and 80 workers have left because of the prolonged deadlock.

The Maoist Tamu Liberation Front closed down work, threatening dire consequences, and the district administration has stood by, helpless. They say the project is ‘anti-national’ because the electricity will go to India.

“We will only allow large projects like these after the state restructuring commission determines the sharing of natural resources between the centre and federal units,” Maoist Lamjung in-charge Devendra Parajuli (*pic, above*) told us.

However, district leaders of other political parties say the only thing holding things up is the Maoist demand for a payoff before letting the work resume,



which GMR and Himtal have denied them.

“This is not about nationalism or sovereignty, its because the company and the Maoists are bargaining about extortion,” says Krishna Koirala of the NC. The UML’s Jamindra Ghale agrees. He says local all-party meetings have proposed that the work should be allowed to go on because the locals would benefit from jobs, but the Maoists refuse to listen.

Seventy per cent of the population of Lamjung are Gurung and other indigenous people, and the district chairman of the Janjati Federation Khem

Jung Gurung says: “The project people are willing to talk, but the Maoists are pursuing their own political agenda at the cost of our development. I don’t understand what the Maoists get out of this.”

The stoppage of the Upper Marsyangdi-II project mirrors national level political polarisation, and provides an ominous portent of how carving up Nepal into federal units will complicate natural resource exploitation at a time when both water and power have become precious commodities.

Gyanendra Lal Sharma, coordinator of the FNCCI Hydro Power Development Forum, warns that the Maoist attitude will prove ruinous to Nepal’s development. “No one will invest in our 200,000 MW potential. For the Maoists to promise 10,000 MW while they were in government and obstruct work here now doesn’t make sense. Development should not have to wait for federalism. After all, whoever lives here will benefit from the project.”

Lamjung CDO Hom Nath Thapaliya says he is prepared to provide security to the project “after a political agreement is reached”. But Himtal Hydro’s Ram Hari Sharma says he can’t complete the 20 per cent of remaining work on the detailed project study until there is security. Most of the work done so far will be destroyed by monsoon rains, and will have to restarted at enormous cost.

If started next year, the project will be completed by 2016, and will provide jobs to at least 3,000 people in that period. The project has helped build 14 km of the Besisahar to Chame road. The 70 megawatt German-supported Middle Marsyangdi project, inaugurated in 2008, was delayed by five years because of Maoist obstruction during the conflict.



Revisiting Crapmandu



KALAM
Rabi Thapa

This Saturday’s World Environment Day (WED) will be marked by the usual suspects. Seminars (and news that jars), launches (and lavish lunches), and rallies (of big people in little e-cars). But the 800-pound gorilla in the room will be, you guessed it, climate change.

Now there is nothing wrong with all of the aforementioned. There will be findings, identified threats, initiatives, commitments and most important, young people will be inspired by the refreshing knowledge that there is more to life than politics. Climate change is now acknowledged as the premier threat to life as we know it, and efforts to mitigate and adapt deserve the attention they are finally getting, no more so on WED.

Or do they, here and now in Nepal?

Mitigation, or measures to reduce climate change, is not something Nepal needs to prioritise in Nepal. We are ranked 195 for producing 0.1 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide per capita in 2006 (compared to Qatar, with a whopping 56.2 tonnes). Yet it is precisely because of these environmental predators that we need to rave and rant about what their dubious development is doing to our glaciers and all that follows downstream. This we are doing quite well, from Copenhagen to Everest Base Camp.

Adaptation, or measures to reduce our vulnerability to climate change, is a much more urgent proposition for us. This less glamorous aspect of the response to climate change is finally getting underway with the formulation of Nepal’s National Adaptation Plan of Action.

The worry however is that the 800-pound gorilla will end up diverting attention from all the other monkeys on our back: the destruction of fauna and flora, the defilement of air, water and earth in town and country, and the energy crisis. All the other environmental bugbears that decrease our quality of life. Where’s the dignity of telling the world to get their act together when we live in the cesspool that is Kathmandu? There’s no blaming the rain for the Bagmati Sewer.

Has Kathmandu’s environment had its day?

Whatever happened to that great catchphrase of the last decade, ‘think global, act local’? Thinking global is just about all we seem to have accomplished. All that requires is a sense of drama and a penchant for rhetoric – from Switzerland to Singapore and back to Everest. We can’t really do very much to mitigate climate change, but we sure can protest with the support of a government that has to do very little about it. Is it just me, or do those 600 who carbonned off to Copenhagen last year on taxpayers’ cash (only to be reminded that it was not up to them) bring you in mind of another very similarly positioned 600?

Acting local is rather harder. It means doing your bit to solve the problems you see around you. Using less water. Using less power, eschewing inverters, and investing in solar. Using fewer plastic bags, and not dumping your rubbish wherever it takes your fancy, like an animal. It means cycling, if you can, and if you can’t, ensuring your fossil-fueled *yantra* actually earned the green sticker it sports. And where any of this is unfeasible, we have to lobby for the relevant authorities to make it feasible. A little here, a little there can make for a lot everywhere.

There used to be a time people actually seemed to care about the environment of the Kathmandu Valley. For a while there in the 1990s, still basking in the global approval that followed the success of Nepal’s community forestry programs, we were concerned at the route the Kathmandu Valley was taking. Several revolutionary upheavals later, this city has morphed into a filthy beast even as deforestation and excavation disfigures our landscapes. Are we beyond caring?

If we believe it to be so, it will be so. This Saturday may be the time to reflect upon how we live in the environments we claim as ours.

A weathered people

PHOTOS by NAYANTARA GURUNG KAKSHAPATI
TEXT by PRAWIN ADHIKARI

Imja glacial lake, at 5,010 metres above sea level, is some 1,700 metres long and 500 metres wide. This body of water was created in the last century by a rapidly retreating glacier, and is still growing. If the lake were to burst its banks, it would sweep away many downstream settlements, destroy infrastructure, and forever erase parts of an ancient culture.

There is plenty of information about the threat of this and other

glacial lake outbursts in Khumbu, also known as the Everest region. But there is very little documentation of the human aspect. How do Khumbu people perceive this threat? What changes do they see, and what alarms them most? What are the solutions to these problems, and where should they come from?

Some are not sure about the signs of change; they are restless and angry, demanding scientific solutions. They see their future

threatened – language, culture, livelihood, all melting away with the snow on the mountains. They live in constant paranoia that glacial lakes will burst and sweep away all of Khumbu.

Others place the blame locally, and therefore see the possibility of redemption through a change in behaviour. This group blames itself for veering away from traditional modes of living to one that

generates a lot of waste. If the people of Khumbu stop angering the gods, they say, the apocalypse as described in Sherpa scriptures – during which nine suns will fill the sky and melt Earth – will be postponed until such a time when people forget their Dharma again.

This series of portraits and interviews is part of a larger body of work commissioned by the Alliance Française in

Kathmandu that traces the Himalayan waters down to the Kosi and Eastern Tarai. It seeks to ask how real the changes in climate patterns are, and what threats these hold for the Sherpas of Khumbu, who are interconnected with and affected by these changes. These works will be exhibited during *Planet Nepal: a Festival of Arts and Environment*, scheduled for November in Kathmandu.

Bhesh Bahadur Ghimire, JTA at the Yak Breeding Farm in Syangboche

Bhesh Bahadur Ghimire is in charge of the well-being of the yak and nak at the Yak Breeding Farm at Syangboche. He follows the herd from pasture to pasture for a few weeks each season, supervising the calving and selecting animals to sell to the people of Khumbu.

“There is no commercial benefit in keeping yak and nak any more. Who wants to chase after cattle and live in remote pastures when they can join the tourism industry? When old men who keep yak die, their sons sell off the herd within two, three months. The yak was a part of the culture, but tourism is killing it off. They are mating and calving earlier than usual. Their time to head north has changed by almost two weeks. Everything is changing around them. If nothing is done soon enough, the yak will be found only on old postcards about Khumbu.”



Pemba Digi Sherpa, 69, farmer in Shomare

Pemba Digi Sherpa has lost one husband and one son to the wrath of the mountains. She doesn't blame the mountains for their death: they died on the job, after all. She spent the insurance money on rituals and donations. She believes the Rinpoche of Tengboche holds back Imja with his powers.

“The small stream from Tobuche flooded suddenly. It dragged our fields to the river below. People returning from market thought water seeping from the ground was ruining the paths. They were repairing the paths when a huge flood came down the mountain and took them. A girl I knew – Dawa Lhamu. A Tamang named Chakra Bahadur. Four others. Of course I am scared of another flood. What will I do if it takes my house? We have no powerful Lamas here, the people have forgotten their Dharma, there is no Mani to walk around. My fate is to die here.”



Ang Kanchhi Sherpa, 56, health work pioneer in Debuche

Ang Kanchhi Sherpa saves lives. For 32 years, her home in Debuche has often been the place where many trekkers imagine they will breathe their last. She heals them; they remain grateful forever.

“Although people today have become more intelligent, have more knowledge, they have also become weaker. In the old days, all food came from the fields, you knew what you ate, everything was fresh. Now, everything is packaged in a factory – who knows what goes into those shiny packets? People these days look cleaner, wear nice clothes, but they have a lot of stress. Their minds are more disturbed. Now Sherpas have diabetes! All kinds of people come to Khumbu and mix with Sherpas, bring diseases.”

www.planetnepal.org.np

Lobsang Sherpa, 28, entrepreneur in Dingboche

Lobsang Sherpa blames industrial nations and the rise of human population for global warming that is melting the glaciers. He blames research groups for failing to respect local cultures and concerns, and for failing to propose solutions. Lobsang's lodge at Dingboche is called the Arizona Lodge because Arizona looks like Dingboche.

“This scaremongering around Imja is 7-8 years old. Some unscrupulous types scared people to get them running, so their land could be bought for cheap. Just last year, people were scared to build new homes, but they have forgotten everything now. So much research has been done, but the lake hasn't burst. The locals want someone to propose a safety solution, instead of spreading fear. What use is an internet-based monitoring system for us? People in Japan will know that the lake has burst, but how does that help us here?”



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Maoist trust deficit

Keshar Jung Rayamajhi in *Nagarik*, 2 June
नागरिक

You can extend the CA as many times as you want, but it has no more relevance. Regime change at the behest of outside powers will undermine the country's independence. That has been Nepal's fate ever since the Delhi Agreement of 1950. The current tug-o-war between the Maoists and the rest is the result of an imbalance in the geostrategic power balance in the region, and the absence of a statesman in Nepal who can assure both China and India about domestic stability. The lesson of the past few years is that only the monarchy is the institution that can restore that balance.

The regional powers and the superpower look at their own strategic interests, and they

will look at Nepal through that prism. There is no ideology involved, just national interest. So communism can also be in the interest of those who espouse democracy and vice versa. Our existence as a nation state is now caught between the strategic interest of the United States and those of our immediate neighbours. With support for communism waning, the Maoists are trying to define themselves through nationalism. They may be the biggest party, but the Maoists have proven themselves to be unreliable friends. The factionalism within the party has also reduced the credibility of the party. Outside powers are now worried that they don't have a political force in Nepal they can trust.

The Nepal Army is one strong, organised force, but the military has felt orphaned ever



KIRAN PANDAY

since the monarchy was abolished. Which is why to balance the interests of the regional powers and to guarantee their minimum security needs, there is no alternative to the monarchy. Was the monarchy abolished with a revolution or a referendum? Who are the people who have called for a constitutional monarchy, a ceremonial monarchy, a baby king, a cultural king? The country is in crisis because of a leadership vacuum and mindless

politics. Those who want to benefit from the instability are fishing in troubled waters.

Despite its own Maoist problem, India is not threatened by Nepal's Maoists. After all, our Maoists lived in India and felt protected there. Whatever the slogans about integration and the constitution with the one year extension of the CA, the parties are just going to use the time to try to weaken each other. They have no other agenda.

Moving on

Suraj Kunwar in *Kantipur*, 1 June

क्रान्तिपुर

This year, too, the numbers of those flocking to Kathmandu because of social instability, economic pressures, concerns about the future of one's children and employment opportunities remained as high as in previous years.

According to the registration division of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, 2,236 families comprising 7,164 individuals moved to the capital in the last year. The majority of these are from the Newari community, who originally moved to the eastern Tarai and some hilly towns two generations ago from Kathmandu. These families moved for the purpose of business, farming and other jobs but are now spooked by the spectre of ethnic strife in these parts.

People continue to move to Kathmandu for the



usual reasons as well: the attractions and conveniences of the big city, the presence of government offices and attendant opportunities, for example. But only those comfortably employed can afford to actually buy houses in the city centre. The rest have to be satisfied with satellite towns or highway settlements.

There is also movement within the urban sprawl of Kathmandu. Many families now prefer to live in more open, greener spaces and have sold up to settle in neighbourhoods such as Matatirtha, Sitapaila, Dhapasi and Budhanilkantha. About 500 families did so last year.

According to the Ministry of Local Development, 21,340 families moved from one district to another across Nepal in the past year.



Pushpa Kamal Dahal: (We ruled you.)
Madhav Kumar Nepal: (We fooled you.)
Paper: Agreement

क्रान्तिपुर Abin Shrestha in *Kantipur*, 2 June



HIMAL KHABARPATRIKA
30 May-14 June 2010

COVER STORY:

One Step Back for the Country,
One Step Forward
for the Country
Maoist-Royalist Front?
Rejecting Rebellion
Purshottam Dahal on what's next
for the constitution
Mohan Bikram Singh on
intellectuals who don't
understand the Maoists

EDITORIAL:

The Defeat of Extremism

REPORT:

Gorkhaland in Turmoil
Nepalis from Meghalaya

FOLLOW-UP:

Unity Investigation Just for Show
JB Pun on the media's coverage
of the Unity scandal: Watchdog
or Lapdog?

FIELD REPORT

The Karnali's Food Crisis
'Rice Hunger'

BACK PAGE

Major Bijayant Sherchan on the
Peace Process



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The World Bank Nepal Office in Kathmandu

The World Bank Nepal Office in Kathmandu is seeking highly qualified and experienced candidates for positions within the South Asia Sustainable Development Department and the South Asia Resource Management Department to assist its program in Nepal. These are country office positions in Nepal subject to local recruitment under the Nepal compensation plan. The World Bank offers a locally competitive package and is committed to attract and maintain a diverse, highly qualified and dedicated workforce. Equally qualified women and members of disadvantaged groups are encouraged to apply. All Extended Term positions are for one year but extendable for another year depending on business needs and candidate's performance. Depending on business need, these positions may be advertised as term positions at the end of the extended term period.

The details of the individual positions are available at www.worldbank.org/jobs. Qualified candidates **should apply on-line referring to job # as specified against each of positions by June 22, 2010.**

- **Senior Rural Development Specialist (Job# 101071):** a three-year Term position within the Agriculture and Rural Development Program in Nepal. Minimum Masters level (MA/MS) education required, doctorate level desirable, in a relevant field such as agricultural economics or relevant technical areas such as agriculture, agronomics, natural resources management, land reforms, forestry, water, agribusiness or finance. Minimum 8 years of relevant operational experience.
- **Agricultural Specialist (Job# 101072):** a three-year Term position within the Agriculture and Rural Development Program in Nepal. Minimum Masters Level (MA/MS) education required, with a major in agriculture, rural development, agriculture/natural resource economics or irrigation and water resources. Minimum 5 years of relevant operational experience.
- **Senior Water, Sanitation and Urban Development Specialist (Job# 101084):** a one-year Extended Term Consultant position. Minimum Masters level education required in Public Policy, Public Administration, Business, Engineering or a relevant Social Science discipline complemented by relevant work qualifications. Assisting the South Asia Urban Unit, which also covers rural potable water and sanitation, to manage its Nepal work program. Minimum 8 to 10 years of work experience in development projects and/or development issues, with solid exposure to water supply/sanitation/urban/local government issues.
- **Senior Energy Specialist (Job# 101113):** a three-year Term position in the Energy Unit in Nepal. Minimum advanced degree in engineering/business management/finance/economics required. Minimum 8 years of relevant experience implementing energy/power projects in developing and/or developed countries. Experience in, or working knowledge of, South Asia and/or development issues in conflict/post-conflict environments would be an added advantage.
- **Senior Transport Specialist (Job# 101125):** a three-year Term position in the Transport Unit in Nepal. Minimum advanced degree (Masters' level or higher) in transport economics, planning, engineering, management, or finance, with specialization on roads and rural transport. Minimum 8 years experience in the transport sector with proven ability to work on: (a) policy, institutional and financing aspects of the various mode of transport (essentially highways and rural roads); (b) transport infrastructure construction and management; (c) transport operations and planning; and (d) experience/knowledge of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in infrastructure both regarding the required institutional environment and PPP transactions.
- **Resource Management Officer (Job# 101083):** a one-year Extended Term Consultant position within the Resource Management Department to assume the responsibility of overseeing the resource management, administration, accounting and security management functions to support Nepal's program. Minimum Advanced Degree in a relevant field required, preferably MA/MBA (e.g., Finance, Accounting, Business, Economics, etc.) or a relevant Bachelor's Degree plus an internationally recognized professional accounting qualification (e.g., CPA, CA, ACCA). Minimum 5 years of experience either in Administration, Finance or Operations in an international private or public sector setting. Candidate would require demonstrated skills and maturity to provide effective financial management and smooth administration of the Nepal Country office.
- **Administrative Assistant (Job# 101086):** a one-year Extended Term Temporary position. Minimum High School Diploma required (Bachelor's degree is desirable) with minimum of 6 years of relevant experience or equivalent combination of education and experience. Working with the South Asia Social Unit of the World Bank to provide administrative support to the task team for a new program in the area of strengthening social accountability mechanisms.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for interview.

Power of dance

PRAKRITI PATHAK

Charan Pradhan, 46, is on a mission. He wants to use his expertise as a dance therapist to help differently abled people.

Pradhan graduated from Coventry University (UK) with a degree in Dance and Professional Practice, with a specialisation in therapeutic use of dance. His first show in Nepal, *Peace is our Aspiration: Expression of Peace through Dance*, was held at the Rastriya Nach Ghar on April 23.

The event showcased mentally and physically challenged children and the victims of the conflict in a performance of *Shanti Lukaun Kahan*, penned by Basanta Chaudhary and composed by Nhyoo Bajracharya. Support was provided by CWIN (Child Workers in Nepal), Asha Bal Bikash Sewa (ABBS-Children's Hope Development Service), SIRC (Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre) and SOS Children's Village Jorpati.

Though dance therapy is widely practised in the western world, it is new to Nepal. "It took me one and half years to make people understand this concept," recalls Pradhan. "I want to show dance not only as an art form, but also as a means of therapy." He says dance therapy brings a wide range of benefits, such as increased body awareness, strengthened coordination between body and mind, increased self confidence, and the opportunity to open up and release one's emotions. If undertaken regularly, dance therapy can improve a patient's condition.

Pradhan is known as a 'man of miracles' whose skills and healing power put him in a league of his own. But his achievements have been possible only because of the own pressures he faced from his father, who wanted him to be an engineer. Pradhan transformed that pressure into the motivation to tread a singular path.



SUMEET SHAKYA

The man of miracles is intent on bringing the power of dance to those who most need it

Pradhan has been working in Edinburgh, Scotland since 1998, but wants to settle in Nepal permanently. "I worked voluntarily for a year and a half in Nepal, but one can't do this indefinitely," he says. He plans to open a dance therapy institute in the future but substantial investment is needed. "This will only be possible when I resume my work in Edinburgh," he says.

To carry forward his work in his absence, he is mentoring a group of people so differently abled children and adults will benefit from the therapeutic use of dance. "We felt the need for dance therapy and plan to continue it," says Sumnima Tuladhar, executive coordinator of CWIN. "Though it is difficult to continue in the absence of Charan, the supporting organisations are working together to make it possible."

According to Tuladhar, to discontinue the project would be to let down the children, as well as their parents. It was, after all, the dedication and patience of the children that brought magic to the stage last month. The standing ovations from the hundreds present acknowledged as much. Before leaving Nepal, Pradhan wants to stage show in the last week of June in Pokhara.

Pradhan argues that government needs to take the lead in providing equal access for mentally and physically challenged individuals. After all, he says, "The show itself was proof that disabled people can perform as well as able people if only they are given the chance."



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Summing up the economy

Nepal Economic Forum's latest report is tailor-made for those who know it's the economy, stupid

In Nepal, political analysis often overshadows economic analysis. There is a deficiency of accurate and unbiased economic data, and whatever is available is usually from a development sector perspective that is inadequate for the private sector. Nepal Economic Forum's NEFport is meant to bridge this gap, with the second issue published in April this year.

On the global front, the international economy showed signs of recovery as prudent fiscal and monetary measures taken by governments and central banks helped shake off the effects of the global financial crisis. Nationally, the economy of Nepal experienced some major setbacks due to the bleak political outlook, coupled with a significant downturn in the financial sector. The key stories and business highlights of the year included the liquidity crisis, capital flight, balance of payments, real estate market, gold imports, and inflation.

The liquidity crisis deepened after Dasain 2009, with financial institutions unable to access ready pools of cash. It was then that capital flight was assessed. NEFport reveals that 'USD 100 million (over Rs 8 billion) from Nepal found its way into banks in Hong Kong during the first five months of the fiscal year'.

Similarly, 'gold imports crossed 14 tons in the first seven months of the fiscal year 2009/10'. The Nepal Rastra Bank banned the import of gold from mid-January, on the grounds that gold imported into Nepal was being smuggled back into India. The bank feared excessive spending of foreign reserves on gold imports.

Inflation soared to 12 per cent in the first seven months of the current fiscal year, increasing the price of sugar and related products by almost 80 per cent. The government cut import duties and the Agricultural Reform Fee on raw materials for the edible oils industry, and also pledged a 50 per cent VAT refund, in order to curb inflation.

The real estate market in Nepal continued to boom, in sharp contrast to the serious slump in land and property markets globally. Land prices are estimated to have risen by close to 200 per cent in the past three years. Concerned that the real estate bubble would burst, Nepal Rastra Bank decided to impose a cap on financial institutions' loan exposure to the real estate sector. Following this move, the lending rates of financial institutions arbitrarily increased to 15-16 per cent, up from 10 per cent.

The negative balance of payments, NEFport noted,

reflected a 'heavy reliance on imports for goods including gold, petroleum products and vehicles, coupled with a decline in foreign exports and low overall economic growth. The slowdown in remittance growth coupled with an increase in imports has led to a BOP deficit of around Rs. 19.7 billion, compared to a Rs. 28.53 billion surplus the previous year'.

NEFport concedes that the dominating influence of politics will make it difficult for the economy to buck the trend. Nevertheless, it is hoped the appointment of Yuvraj Khatiwada as the new governor of Nepal Rastra Bank will accelerate a much-needed macroeconomic clean up and enforce stronger financial discipline.

Inflationary pressures remain a distinct possibility because, as international growth picks up, Nepal too will be affected by the concomitant rise in oil and commodity prices. There will be no major changes in foreign aid. Nepal is likely to make use of the IMF's standby credit facility in order to address its short-term macroeconomic imbalances. Capital markets will show signs of improvement, and the NEPSE index will rise as the end of the fiscal year approaches.

For further information, visit www.nepaleconomicforum.org

काम सानो ठूलो भन्ने हुँदैन । पसिनाको कुनै रङ र जात पनि हुँदैन । काम गरेर खान लजाउनु पनि हुँदैन । चोरैर, 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 ।

नेपाल सरकार
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
सूचना विभाग

Football fever

Bottlers Nepal Ltd. and Bottlers Nepal (Terai) Ltd., official bottlers of Coca-Cola, Fanta and Sprite in Nepal, announced the final winner of 'Coca-Cola Football Maha Utsab'. The lucky number 1752316143 has been announced as the final winner of this offer via a lucky draw at a program held at Sherpa Mall on Wednesday. The winner gets to visit South Africa to watch the FIFA World Cup with other winners announced previously. The scheme ran from 1 April to 31 May. Coca-Cola is the official sponsor of FIFA World Cup™ 2010.

Real goal

Pashupati Karki won the weekly highest correct SMS prize, a Sony Bravia 22" LCD TV, in Dabur Real's 'Score the Real Goal' campaign. The campaign started on 30 April, and World Cup 2010 is now just around the corner. Identify the real football in the contest photos (in national dailies) and sms the number to 5004.

Spreading wings

Nabil Bank opened its 39th branch with an ATM facility in Charikot, Dolakha. The bank aims to reach the remote districts of Nepal so as to improve access to banking for rural populations. Four new branches will be opened soon.

Pepsi mania

Manik Nepal from Kathmandu and Tirtha Kumar Shrestha from Morang won this week's lucky draw of a 32" Samsung LCD TV of 'Pepsi Football Mania'. This promotion started from 21 May and will run till 11 July. Pepsi glass bottles have a blue band on the crown. Consumers will need to collect three crowns featuring Didier Drogha, Lionel Messi, and Thierry Henry, and 1 Goal Crown, after which they have to SMS their name to a dedicated number. The grand prize winner will win a Hero Honda Karizma ZMR at the end of the promotion.



New mobile

Call Mobility Pvt Ltd, the sole authorised distributor of Yasuda mobile phones in Nepal, has launched the Yasuda Q5 model in the market. As the name suggests, Q5 is a full QWERTY keyboard handset with camera, FM radio, video player, Bluetooth, MP3 and MP4 players. The phone supports Micro SD card and dual GSM SIM cards. The handset, priced at Rs 5,090, comes with preloaded Facebook, MSN (e-buddy) and Yahoo applications. The set comes with a2 GB memory card and has a one-year warranty.

Rescue operation

Fishtail Air is laying the groundwork for an Alpine Rescue System in the Himalaya. It has partnered with Air Zermatt, a Swiss helicopter company, which will transfer technology. A Nepali team, including the CEO of Fishtail Air Suman Panday, Capt Sabin Basnyat, Chief Pilot Pradip Gautam and a civil aviation official attended a week-long observation training program on Alpine Rescue Operations in the Swiss Alps in March. Fishtail Air has already successfully completed many rescue missions with Air Zermatt.

Winner

Om Kumar Shrestha from Bhaktapur is the first winner of AllOut funanza, and will be going for an all expenses paid Malaysia trip. He got lucky with the purchase of an AllOut Combi from a grocery store in Narayanghat. The scheme has been running from March in all the major markets of Nepal. The good news is that there are still other Malaysia trip coupons available, as well as prizes like refrigerators, microwaves, mixers, emergency lights and lots of cash.

Branching out

United Finance Ltd has opened its sixth branch in Narayanghat. The Chaudhary Group and Morang Auto Works are the promoters of United Finance, which has been operating since 1996.

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ECONOMIC SENSE
Artha Beed

When everybody was talking about the Unity scam, the Beed was reminded about an excellent piece in this same paper ten years ago by Manish Aryal, unearthing a Ponzi scheme started by Nepali elites (Scheme/Scam, #54). Ten years later we have another scam but this time, all the high profile people allegedly involved have remained behind the scenes. While one section of the media was working on investigative journalism to expose Unity, another section was carrying advertorials explaining why the scam was good for the Nepali economy.

But successive scams expose not only crooks but also the lottomentalism of Nepalis, who believe that windfall profits are the norm. In casinos, carrom and chess games, and in the financial services market, there's always a wager to be won. No wonder banks attract deposits by providing gold coin prizes rather than ATMs that work or better

customer service. No wonder Nepalis prefer to keep casinos in business rather than trying their luck with micro-enterprises. Perhaps we should allow Nepalis to enter casinos legally!

Ask an average Nepali on the returns to the investments they want to make. It seems people visualise slot machines. How else can a pyramid scheme attract more than half a million people in a country with such liquidity problems? People still feel more comfortable putting their money in unregulated cooperatives than go to banks; the words tax and disclosure scare them. This Beed is still amazed at the numbers of people, including professionals and bankers, who have promoted cooperatives. No one knows how many co-operatives fold and abscond with people's money, because no one wants to attract undue attention from the authorities.

How can a Rs 300 million land sale deal go ahead without the taxman getting a single rupee? How can a country boast of collecting income tax that equals the real estate price of a strip of land in the heart of Kathmandu? How can a country progress when

most taxi drivers con you on fares, ISPs con you on bandwidth, gas stations sell substandard fuel, courier companies ask you to collect your documents, telecom companies get away with bad service, and restaurants charge service without providing it?

If Nepal is to progress we need to really tackle the issues of professionalism and transparency. If people in the most respected professions do not emerge as star tax payers, it will never encourage other sections of society to follow suit. If entrepreneurs do not embrace transparency in their dealings, they can never inculcate transparency within the people in their institutions.

The advent of IT has made it possible for systems and processes to be transparent, and could encourage professionalism. This happened in India, changing the way companies operated and making it possible for them to globalise and take on global markets and customers. Young Nepali entrepreneurs who have had global business education and exposure could also change the rules of the game here. Nepal awaits their professionalism. www.arthabeed.com

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Ménage à trois

The three-party threesome are at it again. They managed to postpone a crisis in the nick of time last week, but we are now back to where we started arguing about whether integration should follow resignation or resignation should follow integration. The ménage à trois was caught in flagrante at the BICC chambers at the stroke of the midnight hour making its tryst with destiny live on nationwide tv.

Those of you who have by now given up trying to make sense of it all have my deepest sympathies. As an Ass fan wrote in to say last week: these guys seem to be achieving previously unseen levels of uselessness. But what can they do? They were raised in our traditional culture, which values back-stabbing, procrastination, and **never doing today what can be done tomorrow.**

The Interim Constitution was signed at 4am, the elections were postponed twice, UNMIN's mandate has now been extended four times, it once took two months to form a cabinet. When in doubt, extend and prolong is our national credo, so it is no surprise that when push came to shove, the political parties decided to rejuvenate themselves



so they could live to fight another day.



The trouble is that no one knows what the real agreement is. Oh yes, they got the three point resolution in writing, but how many unwritten sub-points are there to Point No. 3? There seem to be at least six sub-clauses to Point No. 2. Then the question: does No. 3 follow No. 1 or not? It is now clear that a lot of it all hinges on what transpired in the critical meeting between KPO and PKD on Friday. Did KPO ghusao the word 'agreeing to resign' into the resolution and then verbally assure him that he'd get

Makunay's resignation 'within five days'? Well, five days passed and when there was no sign of MKN budging, an agitated Comrade Bhayankar called Comrade KP from an unknown Ncell number reminding him rather testily about their conversation. Oli replied "Yeah, he'll resign in five seconds, not five days, if you first demobilise your fighters." At which point Awesome hung up.



The leaders stayed up all night hammering out the deal on Friday, but on Saturday they were all there at the Sainik Munch bright eyed and bushy

tailed for the Republican Day parade. What was surprising to most of us Asses out here was not that nothing has changed since the monarchy days when helicopters dropped rose petals and the Rangers marched past to commemorate the king's happy birthday. What **got our goat** is that at a time of great national crisis, the president, prime minister, chairman of the assembly and other heads of constitutional organograms had three hours to burn watching kids performing wushu and taekwondo.



And what are they now going to do with all the medals that folks have refused? One idea is to send the metal to a foundry and turn them into **gun barrels**. The other is to henceforth only give medals posthumously so all those thankless living heroes don't have a chance to turn down the honour that the nation has bestowed upon them. The great thing about dead people is that they don't complain.



One guy they missed giving a medal to, and someone who would have grabbed the limelight without any hesitation, was His

Omniscient Rishi Dhamiro. The man has done more for the protection of democracy and the free press in Nepal by arranging regular cockfights at the Reporters' Club than anyone else. But wait, Sishi Gamala seems now to be tired of hanging on to the coat-tails of politicians and has made a debut in the **Rastriya Git** music video. As long as they don't allow him to sing in it.



Comrade Superfluous has now decided that his dream of staging a comeback as prime minister is receding fast. Which appears to be why even his opposition to the candidature of arch nemesis, BRB, has waned. He now has his sights on pushing a presidential system through the state restructuring committee into the new constitution, and then in the first general election, getting himself elected as Nepal's first **Executive President**. This way, he keeps his campaign promise of becoming the first elected president of the Republic of Nepal and he can also mould himself in the image of Leaders Great and Dear, the father and son Kims of Northernmost Korea.

So long as PKD doesn't get the idea that the role of an Executive President is to execute people, the Ass has no objection. [ass\(at\)nepaltimes.com](mailto:ass(at)nepaltimes.com)





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- Native Resolution : 1024 x 768
- Contrast Ratio: 3000:1
- With HDMI and VGA Connectivity.

EX615

- Bright Projection: 3500 ANSI Lumens
- 1024 x 768 Native XGA Resolution
- 3000:1 Contrast Ratio
- With HDMI and VGA Connectivity
- Networking with RJ45 control & monitoring

For Home Theater

HD65

- 1600 ANSI Lumens
- HD Ready for High Definition
- Movie Gaming & TV
- HDMI Input
- 4000:1 Contrast Ratio

HD20

- Full HD 1080P Resolution (1920 x 1080)
- 1700 ANSI Lumens
- 4000 Hours Lamp Life
- 500:1 ANSI ³ True Real World² Contrast Ratio
- 2 x HDMI Inputs

Ultra Portable

EX330

- 2200 ANSI Lumens
- 1024 x 768 Native XGA Resolution
- 5000 Hours Lamp Life
- Ultra Light only 1.1 Kg

EX7155i

- 3000 ANSI Lumens
- 1024 x 768 Native XGA Resolution
- 2500:1 Contrast Ratio
- Ultra Light only 1.4 Kg

Sole Authorized Distributor and Service Provider



Khichapokhari, Kathmandu

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4225486, 4220659

EvoStore

Kumaripati, Lalitpur
Ph: 5008646

18 Months WARRANTY

Insist on a warranty card and a VAT Bill.

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