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BLOW HARD: A Prithvi Jayanti rally revs it up for Nepal's founder in front of Singha Darbar Tuesday



KIRAN PANDAY

## What now?

At first glance, the withdrawal of Ram Chandra Poudel's candidacy is a positive move. There's a saying in Nepali that goes *ghaito ma gham lagyo*, which literally means that the sun is finally shining on the bottom of the water vessel. Have the political parties, and Poudel in particular, finally recognised the futility of the 16 prime ministerial elections that have taken place, and reached an understanding that will allow us to move forward?

Alas, in Nepal nothing is ever so straightforward. In fact, after months of tortuous negotiations and political feints, we may well be back to square one.

**Prashant Jha (p3)** and **Damakant Jayshi (p6)** work through the permutations and conclude that none of the currently probable parliamentary alliances are likely to sustain the polity long enough to reach agreement on the most critical issues of the constitution and the peace process. The continued inability to bridge the void of mistrust among and within political parties is distracting from the urgent need to implement measures for monitoring the armed parties to the CPA in the wake of UNMIN's departure.

Never mind the even more urgent need for the government to ensure the country is ready for a natural disaster of Vedic proportions. This Saturday, Nepal will mark Earthquake Safety Day. We talk to those working to prepare us for the worst, in a special feature on the Big One that will make 1934's quake look like child's play (p12-14). Let's learn from the lessons of Haiti, where over 250,000 were killed and 800,000 are still living in tented camps a year after the ground shook in Port-au-Prince. 🇳🇵

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In the larger scheme of things, the current political infighting over the prime minister's chair will all look very petty in comparison to the mega-earthquake that is sure to destroy much of Kathmandu one day.

As the special coverage in this issue shows: Nepal is woefully unprepared for the Big One. That is hardly surprising with a government that can't even handle day-to-day affairs in normal times. Estimates are that 100,000 will be killed outright, 200,000 seriously injured and 1.5 million rendered homeless in Kathmandu Valley alone if a magnitude 8 earthquake strikes. Epidemics and food shortages will further ravage the land. It would be wrong to call it a 'natural' disaster, as the death toll will be largely man made.

Today, the Nepali public feels its government is at best useless, and gets on with life. The preoccupation of politicians with power forces the rest of us to make our own arrangements to supply our homes with water and electricity, and fix local roads and drains. We rely on the private sector for most services even as we curse the inefficiency and corruption that stymie the public sector.

Tomorrow, when we are roiled by a geo-tectonic upheaval, government may be worse than useless. Mark Pelling and Kathleen Dill of King's College London suggest that "the socio-political and cultural dynamics put into motion at the time of catastrophic 'natural' disasters create the conditions for potential political change – often at the hands of a discontented civil society."

Beyond the immense human suffering this will entail, and the long-term damage to physical infrastructure (one year on, 800,000 Haitians are still living in tented camps) it may be worth considering how power structures themselves are



## GEO-POLITICAL INSTABILITY



KIRAN PANDAY

### ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

#### FACTIONAL HOOLIGANISM

Nice reading this piece albeit the malady Prashant has suggested is only the tip of the iceberg; the rest are hanging still like icicles ('Big Madhesi politics', Prashant Jha, #535). I have emphatic admiration for the kind of journalism being nurtured by Himal South Asia and Nepali Times in the present stalemate in Nepal where the progressive role of media becomes imperative. As a part of the host delegation from the Indian side, I met Mahendra Yadav when he was industry minister. Indeed in no manner was he deserving of such a post of high repute. Such upliftment happened only through the shaky statistical compulsions of a multiparty democracy.

The plight of the Madhes is much more grave than the rest of Nepal but that doesn't mean a legitimacy for reactionary politics should be conferred. Instead there is a way out by infusing new hope through a fair political culture grounded in a common national ethos. The reactionary politics of the Madhes have done as much harm as the divisive convictions of the Maoists with their stress on republicanism. I would love to see Nepal leave factional hooliganism and visualise a clear road map for the nation on the basis of good governance and vital socio-economic prospects. Currently Nepal as an economy is performing much below its potential – a stable and fair leadership can bank upon the rich human and natural resources of the nation. The remaining misconceptions regarding

the role of neighbouring nations would end itself under an engaged order. Thanks for focusing on a vital corner of this Himalayan nation.

Atul Kumar Thakur, New Delhi  
www.onesstandpoint.blogspot.com

- I just want to add a fact which might make clear where these Madhesi leaders are operating from. All of the three sons of this Mahendra Yadav study in India on Indian Embassy scholarships. Surprisingly enough, all his sons have Adhikari as their surname, showing their level of opportunism and depravity. Hridayesh Tripathi has a daughter studying medicine in BHU. JP Gupta's nephew is also there, studying dermatology on an Indian Embassy scholarship.

Just to let all Nepalis know at what a cheap price our motherland is being sold. For me, all this political theorisation of the activities of these traitors is just a bluff, which is just helping Prashant Jha and the like erect a fake intellectual podium in a doomed country.

Zamza

#### GOING, GOING...

The problem with UNMIN is global ('Post UNMIN tasks', Damakant Jayshi, #535). UN Missions are needed by all conflict-infected countries but the UN does not need any one. They go to help the local government minimise a conflict but help aggravate the issues. You look everywhere they have been. They pump lots of money into a poor country thus destabilising the economy. The UN bureaucrats don't have anything to lose even if they can't achieve anything and

the only thing that they are concerned about is the extension of their terms. Look at Kosovo, East Timor, Cambodia, Sudan, Bosnia and so on. Ninety per cent of the time, they have not achieved what they were supposed to. It is better they go.

Kamal Kishor

- As usual, good, unbiased analysis. I do agree that the stance being taken by the Maoists, NC and even CPN-UML is silly. UNMIN or no UNMIN, if the parties and their top leaders are seriously concerned about completing the peace process, it doesn't make much difference. Rather, I would love to see the political parties themselves conclude the peace process without any foreign help, setting an example to the world. But since they all are engaged in power-sharing politics rather than problem-sharing politics, to talk positively about them is only a non-sense.

UA

#### STRIPPING US BARE

This is really sad ('Neither forests, nor trees', Surya Thapa, # 535). Massive crime on a massive scale, while at the same time climate change projects such as REDD seem to be just pissing in the wind. Well done to the journalist for the investigation, but it seems he did not have to scratch too far below the surface to find the guilty. If the institutions are all in cahoots, what on earth can be done to stop this? Won't someone go with some spray cans and paint trees all over the walls of these guys' houses or something?

Worth recounting this:  
"If there are no trees, there will be no water whenever one looks for it. The

vulnerable to being remodeled by tectonic shifts.

As with everything in life, disasters often hit the poorest the hardest, and in doing so expose the inequities that characterise a national polity. Misappropriation of resources meant for relief and rescue further highlight such faults. If our government cannot respond adequately when the time comes, and the signs are that it will fall far short, don't expect people to sit around contemplating their fate.

Of course, citizen action could take more positive form. Expect local community groups to spring into action, and institutions such as the Nepal Army and indeed the YCL (if still around) to take the opportunity to burnish their public image. And you can be sure politicians across the spectrum will line up to make the most of the occasion: careers have been made or ruined by how public figures have rallied to the need of the moment. Ask Rudy Guillian.

Traditional Chinese thought holds that natural disasters are a precursor of dynastic change. Mao Zedong's successor Hua Guofeng took the lesson to heart. His visit to Tangshan in the aftermath of a 1976 quake that killed between 240,000 to 255,000 people did much to elevate his standing, and soon after Mao's death that year he was able to act against the Gang of Four and bring the Cultural Revolution to an end.

While we may not witness such dramatic political sea changes here, physical shocks may well have political aftershocks. Government would be well advised not just to invest in disaster preparedness, but also anticipate the socio-political aftermath.

watering places will become dry. If forests are cut down, there will be avalanches. If there are many avalanches, there will be great accidents. Accidents will also destroy the fields. Without forests, the householder's work cannot be accomplished. Therefore, he who cuts down the forest near a watering place will be fined five rupees."  
The fourteenth edict of King Ram Shah (1606-1636)

koji

#### BUYING, NOT WASTING

They are not wasting time. They are buying time ('Stop wasting time', Editorial, #535). They need time, in a war of attrition, till others just become too tired to resist. Given the situation, this is the best the Maoist bajes can do: wait for an opportune moment to arrive. Lets fools keep believing that Communists can become Democrats, this will facilitate the extension of time needed.

K. K. Sharma

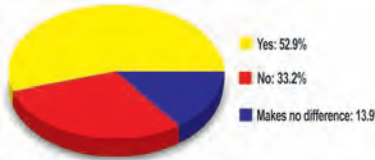


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Weekly Internet Poll # 536

#### Q. Is UNMIN right to be leaving?

Total votes: 1,889



Weekly Internet Poll # 537. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

#### Q. How worried are you about a major earthquake in Nepal?



# Vacuum ahead



**PLAIN SPEAKING**  
**Prashant Jha**

**N**ormatively, the withdrawal of Ram Chandra Poudel's candidature offers one final opportunity to break the political impasse and re-engineer the consensus needed to finish the peace and constitutional process. This would mean politicians limiting their personal ambitions, broadly agreeing on the rules of the game, stepping down from their maximalist positions, and addressing each other's mutual insecurities and vulnerabilities.

So Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Jhala Nath Khanal should be doing all they can to get the Nepali Congress on board in any power-sharing arrangement; NC, Madhav Nepal and KP Oli should undergo a change in heart and make way for the Maoists; all forces should arrive at a common conception of Nepal's future political system; and India should become a benign and supportive force.

But normative thinking is meaningless while analysing political processes. Empirically, there is no reason to believe this will happen – for the fundamental personal and ideological factors that led to the impasse in the first place have not changed but only deepened in the past seven months.

Dahal may first make a half-hearted bid at power, but since he has already realised that his prospects are weak, there is a good chance he will live up to his word and back Khanal as PM. The calculation is that this will constitute a snub to India, enable the Maoists to re-enter the power structure, and sharpen the divisions within UML – eventually benefiting the Maoists. It will also leave the Maoists in a relatively more advantageous position to deal with what happens on 28 May and its aftermath.

Even though this is

Khanal's best chance, five forces – for different reasons – will seek to block him. Within UML, Nepal and Oli will deploy the argument they used in July to impose a two-thirds majority criteria on Khanal, and ask, "Why should we replace one majority government with another and break the democratic alliance in the process?" NC withdrew on the request of its allies in UML to strengthen precisely this position, and will do its bit to galvanise opinion against Khanal.

Within the Maoists, Baburam Bhattarai will argue that it is futile to back a candidate from another party in a majority government set-up. His question will be, "Can a government that excludes NC, and sections of the Madhesi parties, create a conducive atmosphere for constitution-writing? Is integration really possible in such a set-up?" Mohan Baidya and company are already questioning the logic of

backing a UML candidate for government leadership when the roadmap is revolt. And India, which sees Khanal as a Maoist rubber stamp, will like the last time encourage its friends across party lines to undermine his prospects.

So, forming a UML-Maoist alliance will be an enormous challenge. If Khanal and Dahal succeed, the country

A repeat of the UML-NC 'democratic alliance', unlikely as it is, would be an exercise in futility too. The past year and a half has already shown how isolating the Maoists is not a solution. Dahal is also encouraging Sher Bahadur Deuba, who is disenchanted with both his party and India, to think that the Maoists may back him

## Whatever the permutations, a sustainable deal to share power is unlikely

may get a new government.

But it will isolate NC, which will not cooperate on constitution writing; alienate some Madhesi outfits, which will raise the rhetoric in the Tarai; strengthen the NA stance on integration; and anger India, which will destabilise the government almost immediately.

as PM. But the Maoists are probably trying to deepen the divisions within NC rather than back the man who unleashed the army against them. Even if it happens, it will not be a broad-based NC-Maoist but a Deuba-Maoist understanding.

The point of highlighting these various permutations

and combinations, and the challenges inherent in each, is to underline the fact that we are operating in a context where forming the government, which requires only a simple majority, is complex and enmeshed with personal interests. Determining Nepal's political system and security structure, which is what the peace and constitutional process are about, requires an even broader consensus.

Opportunistic and personality-centred alliances, either between NC and UML or between UML and the Maoists, will not work beyond a point. Only a broad political-ideological deal between the two principal actors that conceptualised the process in the first place – Nepali Congress and the Maoists – can lead to a breakthrough. Given the current trust deficit between the two, any such understanding is unlikely.

This means that Nepal, irrespective of whether a government is formed, should expect a political and constitutional vacuum this coming May. ■

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View of the Gorkha Darbar from an adjacent hill



Priest of the Gorakhnath temple Baikunthanath Yogi, whose stipend hasn't gone beyond Rs 1,666 a month in years



The courtyard in which the shrine to Gorkha Kalika Devi is located

# Forgotten founder

TEXT AND PICS BY SURESH RAJ NEUPANE

Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal, was born in 1723 in Gorkha. But the palace from where he led his campaign for unification is in a state of disrepair. The royal throne and other articles of historic significance in the Gorkha Darbar are blanketed with dust, and the path leading to the palace is damaged. The caretakers complain that the government has not shown any interest in preserving the palace, and since the abolition of the monarchy has cut down the number of staff employed for its upkeep from 114 to 56.

Baikunthanath Yogi, the priest of the Gorakhnath Temple on the palace premises, complains that the government hasn't done anything to stop encroachment on temple property. The 60-year-old priest's family have served the temple for 12 generations now. Yogi himself has been serving the temple for 40 years, yet his monthly allowance remains stuck at Rs 1,666.

Despite government apathy, over 2,000 people visit the palace on certain days, including large numbers of students.



The throne of the founder king of Nepal, Prithvi Narayan Shah. This room is not open to the public.



Prithvi Narayan Shah was born in the room this door leads to



The front façade of the Gorkha Darbar, with a sign that reads 'Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal'



# Ignorant crusaders



**STRICTLY BUSINESS**  
**Ashutosh Tiwari**

These are difficult times for privately run schools and colleges. Citing high fees and other assorted complaints, Maoist-affiliated organisations regularly look for ways to shut down private schools, either temporarily or permanently.

Recently though, stung by criticism that their own leaders send their children to expensive schools, Maoist organisations have now declared that they will urge their leaders to pull out their kids from such schools.

Meanwhile, what no one bluntly tells these anti-private school crusaders, who claim

impossible, and anarchy takes over. But these characteristics do not emerge in isolation. Years of schooling help children grow into young adults who become the backbone for democracy. College and post-college years can help them become adults who can challenge the established conventions with better alternatives.

It would have been one thing if the crusading organisations had pushed for private schools to provide scholarships to poor and underprivileged children or if they had questioned how local communities benefit from having expensive schools in their neighbourhood or how such schools are locally governed. It would have been even better had they pushed for education that rewards

can rise up in an economic system that values the role of business enterprise and entrepreneurship to create and build new ideas, institutions and companies. Because of education, these children need not be constrained by what their parents did for a living, which ethnic group in Nepal they belong to, or which parts of Nepal they come from. They can harness the resource that lies between their ears, aka their brain, to create wealth and prosperity for themselves and for others around them.

What this means is that through education, today's poor children have the potential to rise up, do well in life, and then displace yesterday's elites. They can thus become the new elites themselves and drive society



**EDUCATION OR REVOLUTION?** Students attend a national meeting of the Maoist student wing in the capital, 10 December 2010

to be working for democracy and a just society, just how misguided they are in their quest.

**Workforce for democracy:** Schools, private or state-run, are in the business of creating a workforce for democracy. Not only do these schools teach skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic, they also teach the children how to find and interpret information, how to work well with others from different backgrounds, how to follow and carry out instructions, how to observe and practice social etiquette, and so on.

All these are basic characteristics of informed and engaged citizens in a democracy. If these characteristics are absent in society, governance becomes

creativity, innovations, and critical thinking.

But to wage war against private schools simply for charging fees to willing buyers in a competitive market is to work against the very process of creating a workforce for democracy that Nepal so desperately needs.

**Circulation of elites:** The organisations portray private schools as representing the so-called feudal elites. This is an outdated view. The fact that even poor parents, not to mention Maoist netas, are sending kids to private schools all across Nepal is an unequivocal statement that they value such education as a visible way for their kids to rise out of poverty.

When poor children have education and skills, they

forward in business, the arts, civic activities, development, and the like, before being displaced by another set of elites.

This displacement of one set of hereditary elites by another within a generation is possible not through a perpetual call to arms and violence but through education, which in a free, dynamic and democratic society is a natural antidote to the problem of one set of elites being in power forever.

Next time Maoist organisations call for a shutdown of private schools, let us tell them: sure, there are aspects of private schools that could be better. But to close them down or harass them is to be against democracy and for hereditary feudalism. 🇳🇵

## Silent wash

LG has introduced the new 'LG Inverter Direct Drive Washing Machine' with Advanced Fuzzy Logic Technology that senses the wash environment and adjusts the wash cycle to give clothes a perfect wash. The 300mm portable and 180° door opening angle allows for convenient handling of washloads and the unique LG Direct Drive Motor ensures minimal noise and vibration, more durability, and energy saving.



## Winter fashion

Springwood, the clothing brand from Surya Nepal, has launched its winter collection. Springwood's clothing range includes Playwear, Workwear and Denim, and is available at all its retail outlets.

## Banking week



Bank of Kathmandu conducted its 'BOK Ghardailo Saptaha' program in Pokhara and Khairnitar. The program involves orienting locals about the benefits of banking services. The program also raises awareness about the need for birth registration.

## Squeaky clean

Ambassador of the United States to Nepal Scott H. DeLisi inaugurated a new bottle washer machine on a visit to the plant of Bottlers Nepal, the franchised bottler of Coca-Cola products in Nepal. The new machine has the capacity to clean 600 bottles per minute. Coca-Cola Sabco has invested US\$23.5 million in its Nepal operations since its acquisition from F&N in May 2004.



## Young learners

Kopila Cottage, a preschool for children below six, has opened up in Bishalnagar, Kathmandu. The school provides a proactive learning environment for children and is equipped with facilities like a children's gymnasium cum play cabin, computers, and LCD projectors with interactive touchscreens to enhance learning.



## Budget phone

Teletalk Pvt. Ltd. has introduced another low-end phone, the G-222+, in its range of Colors budget phones. The dual-sim loaded phone comes with an MP4 Player, video player, 1.3MP camera, and a stereo FM radio at an affordable price of Rs 2,690. The phone has an expandable memory upto 4GB.

## Picture perfect

Canon has announced the winner of its promotional scheme 'Explore the world with Canon, make memories happen'. The scheme ran from September to December with the purchase of a Canon camera. Sunil Dhungana of Biratnagar has won a tour to Thailand and Sobha Humagain of Kathmandu has won a tour to Singapore.

## Quality spark

Chevrolet Spark has been rated top of the Quality Awards in the India Automotive Initial Quality Study announced by JD Power Asia Pacific 2010. This prestigious win has been awarded for the fourth year in a row to Spark.



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THIS WEEK

All out



Nepali Congress has withdrawn its candidacy in the prime ministerial election after 16 failed attempts.

NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba formally announced the withdrawal of Ram Chandra Poudel's candidacy in the parliamentary session on Wednesday, ending the fruitless parliamentary rituals of the last six months. Speaker Subas Nembang then announced the end of the ongoing election process. He said the regulations could be amended if need be for a new process to elect a new prime minister. However, the political parties have not finalised their candidates for a new round of elections.

Winter session begins

The winter session of parliament began on Sunday with Speaker Subas Nembang reading out a letter to the effect received from the President's Office. Nembang urged lawmakers not to stay neutral on matters put to the House, and also asked them to take leave only with proper justification. UML and the Madhesi alliance have remained neutral over 16 rounds of prime ministerial elections, and just 200 lawmakers were present at Sunday's House meeting.

Call them back

The Committee on International Relations and Human Rights of the Legislature-Parliament on Sunday directed the government to call back the Nepali Ambassador to India, Rukma Shumsher Rana. The Committee took a decision to this effect to investigate Rana's involvement as the Managing Director of Dabur Nepal, a Nepal-India joint venture production company. Dabur Nepal has been under the Commission for Investigation of Abuse and Authority's scanner of late. The meeting also issued a directive to the government to investigate the case of the Nepali Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Hamid Ansari, and call him back if he is found guilty. Ansari has been charged with depositing the compensation given to deceased Nepali migrant workers, by the companies concerned, into his own bank account.

Seizing the moment



MY TAKE  
Damakant Jayshi

Now that Ram Chandra Poudel of the Nepali Congress has withdrawn his candidacy for the post of prime minister, the spotlight shifts back to Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and UML chief Jhulanath Khanal, the two other men who want the country's top executive post.

The onus is also on these two men to provide a way out of the political impasse that has impeded progress on the peace process and drafting of the constitution.

There are two ways to go about power-sharing, concluding the peace process, and writing the constitution. One of which is perpetuating the current climate of mistrust and division among and within the political parties. The other is simply implementing what the leaders have been saying: strike a consensus.

With just four and a half months months left for the extended tenure of the Constituent Assembly, can we finally have a prime minister to replace our caretaker?

Let us look at Khanal's prospects. Powerful leaders within his own party, PM Nepal and KP Oli, will do everything in their power to scuttle their party chairman's chances of becoming prime minister with Maoist support. Dahal is willing to lend support since that meets his three objectives: ending an alliance between NC and UML; intensifying the division within UML, a rival communist party (after all, elections will have to be fought); and extracting a heavy price from a Khanal-led government.

Khanal will not only have to compromise significantly with Dahal's Maoists, he will also have to effectively relinquish UML's reins to Nepal and Oli. Will he risk this? It depends on how desperate he is to become prime minister.

Dahal knows he cannot become prime minister

Chairman Dahal may be looking to use UML's Khanal like he did Lt. General Kul Bahadur Khadka back in 2009




with the support of UML, which is sharply divided. He still can be the prime minister if a significant number of Madhes-based parties, which command 82 seats in the 601-member assembly (now 598 after the death of a UML lawmaker) lend support to his party, which has 238 seats.

This would mean the second and third largest parties sitting in the opposition and an angry NC and UML unwilling to cooperate with the government on peace-related issues and the writing of the constitution, which requires a two-thirds majority of the CA for approval.

Dahal knows this too well and only his desperation to go back to Baluwatar might blind him to ground realities. So he might try a repeat of the Kul Bahadur Khadka episode.

Back in 2009, Khadka was second-in-rank in the Nepal Army. In return for elevation to army chief, he was willing to accept anything the Maoists proposed on integration of ex-Maoist combatants into the Nepal Army. Army chief Rookmangud Katawal had to be sacked, for Khadka's retirement was nearing. Then prime minister Dahal tried to do so, under the guise of establishing 'civilian supremacy', and immediately named Khadka the acting chief of army staff. Fortunately, the president intervened then. Khanal is nearly as ready as Khadka to do the Maoist's bidding now.

Besides, not claiming leadership of the government for his party would suit Dahal more in the current scheme of things. He can keep out Baburam Bhattarai, his party colleague and rival for the post of prime minister, and mollycoddle his party's hardliners, who do not want the party to join the government.

Dahal or Khanal, it won't solve our problems if a government is formed without NC and UML on board. So it is back to what is really needed: Dahal has to meet his side of the bargain on peace-related agreements, and that will be reflected in the agreement on making integration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants smooth and fast. NC and UML then need to accept a Maoist party-led government and together they should go about implementing the tasks that remain.  damakant@gmail.com

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काम सानो ठुलो भन्ने हुँदैन । पसिनाको कुनै रङ र जात पनि हुँदैन । काम गरेर खान लजाउनु पनि हुँदैन । चोरेर, 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  
संचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय  
संचना विभाग



“Two plotters came on motorcycles yesterday asking if there was land for sale in the village,” a local said. “They come every day, some from as far away as Kathmandu to scout out land.” She showed me the pile of business cards left behind by these ‘plotters’ – developers who buy land and parcel it into small plots large enough to build cookie-cutter homes without any reference to cultural history or landscape. “They promise to bring the bright lights of Kathmandu to our village.”

Stirred by such comments from the villagers of Namje and Thumki, I rubbed my eyes and looked around their landscape again. It was very different from the first images that had introduced me to Nepal, as a Peace Corps volunteer a decade ago. There were few signs of the water shortage that had propelled my work with the community. Was easier access to water now one of the key drivers of modernisation? About 10 new homes had cropped up in the last 3 years, and the school buildings had expanded to accommodate a +2 campus. The bumpy roads had been smoothed out by the increasing traffic. Before me lay not a village, but a rapidly developing townscape.

For my wife Priyanka and myself, these villages have been a microcosm of our understanding of the larger pursuit of development proliferating throughout the country. The infrastructural growth that began with roads in the 1950s has brought a certain version of modernisation to Nepal, which has seen traditional, cultural ways of life associated with backwardness and poverty. Developing the human connection to land and spirituality is not considered development at all. With hundreds of villages now becoming homogenous concrete-built communities, the current need is not just for water or schools, but also for newer ways to create the built fabric embedded into the history and culture of communities.

In our quest to find a solution to this problem, we met architect Travis Price, the founder of Spirit of Place-Spirit of Design, to bring his award-winning design-build program to Nepal. Captivated by the images of his timeless structures embedded in

Development can also be about embracing the past



Moving forward with the past

different landscapes, we can only imagine what excitement his architecture will bring to the villages. In *The Archaeology of Tomorrow*, Stanley Hallet notes, “His work seeks to recognize the importance of cultural myth informing the very fiber of our bodies; it colors, shades and transforms how we perceive and find meaning in the world that surrounds us.”

Travis Price is not so focused on building with natural materials as he is with playing with nature in ingenious ways. This year, he and his students at the Catholic University of America will bring their provocative ethos to Thumki village. They will seek to develop a new aesthetic archetype that embraces the village’s modern pursuits and the rich ancestry of indigenous peoples and their sacred geographies.

Thumki village has a distinct history of its own, much like the historic communities where Spirit of Place has worked in previous years, from Peru to Ireland. The history of its Magar community dates back 250 years, when they first settled here after a stint in the conquering army of Prithvi Narayan Shah. They aren’t particularly Hindu, Buddhist or even Kirat; though they are influenced by all religions, they still practice animism and worship their ancestors. Thumki hill has remained undeveloped until now because of the presence of the burial ground on top, from where the ancestors are believed to watch over the community. “It is where we go to fight the demons of the graveyard to protect our village as part of our initiation,” Thumki’s eldest shaman says. “Our ancestors live there.”

It is here that Spirit of Place will build its 18th legacy marker, which will both commemorate Thumki’s ancestral spirits and symbolise its modern future. The students will also help design the townscape in order to reproduce a similar aesthetic. Travis Price notes, “We hope to stir the spirit not only of the villages of Namje and Thumki, but indeed set a new vision that even encroaching development can emulate.”

Finally, after 10 years of working here, I feel that the project is moving forward. 🇳🇵

Rajeev Goyal, co-written with Priyanka Bista

SEEKING SPIRIT: Thumki hill from Namje, Dhankuta district

(top) Travis Price’s Spirit of Place meeting house in Finland, inspired by the epic ‘Kalevala’





MICHAEL COX

Despite cultural differences, a group of young Australians and Nepalis have found the right beat to embrace life together in Kathmandu. Charting the adventures of a platypus, the Australian musical 'sPlat will make its inaugural performance at the Shree Mangal Dvip (SMD) boarding school in Boudha tonight. Director (and businesswoman) Jodi Tweed

# Boudha finds its beat

says 'sPlat "is probably the smallest event I've organised, but it has been by far my favourite." The play is an educational resource, now incorporated in the Australian curriculum, and was written by Tweed and her husband to promote good values in everyday life. It's also created a close bond between the Nepali and Australian cast. "sPlat has enabled us to foster common values in education, promoting unity and acceptance while embracing diversity at the same time," Tweed says. Of the 65 cast members, 60 are Nepali children from the Boudha school and Tweed explains the bulk of the major roles were given to girls because she feels it is important to empower them. The Boudha school is expecting an audience of between

100 and 150 at the premiere on Friday. Among others, 40 monks have confirmed their attendance along with 70 French students. The school hall seats up to 400, and the Boudha school has its fingers crossed for a full house for the premiere. The musical's three-day tour comes in the wake of 50 years of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Australia. Ambassador Susan Grace says education is one of the principal themes of Australia's relationship with Nepal. SMD student Dorje Tsering, 14, says the five Australian cast members are really friendly. "This is the first time in my life I have been included in anything like this and if I get the chance I will do it again," he says. 'sPlat will be playing at 6pm on 14 and 15 January, and at 1pm on 16 January. Contact Miriam Fisher at 9803970764 for more details.

## Call for Proposals 2011

Passion

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Professionalism

The Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) has been established to encourage scientific research that would contribute to understanding and enhancing knowledge in social exclusion and inclusion in Nepal. The fund supports and promotes original, competitively selected research through funding and capacity building of researchers. SIRF in its second phase is inviting research proposals for Harka Gurung Research Fellowships and Matthias Moyersoan Research Apprenticeships from Nepali researchers on the research themes listed below.

**Harka Gurung Research Fellowships 2011 (Code No. SIRF/HGRF/2011)** primarily target thesis research in MPhil and PhD as well as established professionals belonging to socially excluded, marginalised and minority groups and from remote regions wanting to conduct quality research in social exclusion/ inclusion. HGRF facilitates research projects upto **18 months** duration with a maximum grant of **NPR 500,000.00** allowing the HGRF to spend 100% time in the research over this period.

Applications are invited from Nepali researcher or a team of Nepali researcher(s) from socially excluded, marginalised and minority groups and from remote regions as lead/principal researcher with minimum of Masters Degree and/or MPhil or PhD candidates. **The awarded research fellows are not eligible to re-apply for the research fellowship as a principal researcher BUT can be a team member.** Each individual researcher can only be involved in one application. **THE PROPOSAL CALLS ARE NOT FOR THE INSTITUTIONS.**

**Matthias Moyersoan Research Apprenticeships 2011 (Code No. SIRF/MMRA/2011)** primarily target young graduates (Bachelors) and professionals pursuing Master's Degree or and thesis research in Master's Degree so that individual belonging to socially excluded, marginalised and minority groups and from remote regions can enhance their research skills as well as derive specific knowledge and skills through micro level research on social exclusion/inclusion. The MMRA is for **1 year** duration with maximum grant of **NPR 200,000.00** allowing the apprentices to spend 100% time on the research.

Applications are invited from Nepali researchers with minimum of Bachelor's Degree and upto Masters Level from socially excluded, marginalised and minority groups and from remote regions. **Bachelor's Degree students are eligible to apply if they are from Madhesi, Dalit, Muslim, LGBTI and Differently Abled categories.** The awarded research apprentices are not eligible to re-apply for research apprenticeship. **THE PROPOSAL CALLS ARE NOT FOR THE INSTITUTIONS.**

### Research Themes and Topics for Research Grants 2011

#### A. Convergent/Crosscutting Themes and Topics

1. Identity Politics: Class, Regional and Caste/Ethnic Identity
2. Identity and Gender based Discrimination and Violence
3. Governance, Political Culture and Excluded Groups, Youth and Women
4. Demands, Aspirations and Challenges of Regional/Ethnic Identity Politics and Resource Sharing
5. Linguistic Diversity, Language Rights Movement, Exclusion and Identity
6. Implementation of International Instruments Related to Non-Discrimination and Equality

7. Impact of Remittance Economy on Excluded and Marginalised Communities
8. Income and Livelihood of Marginalised and Excluded Communities
9. Issues of Access, Ownership and Benefit Sharing of State and Natural Resources
10. Representation and Participation of Women and Excluded Groups
11. Proportional Representation, Affirmative Action, Reservation and Special Rights
12. Secularism, Religious Processes and Intra/Inter-Communal Harmony

#### Specific Themes and Topics

##### B. Gender

1. Comparative Study of Women's Status by Class, Religion, Social Groups and Geographical Regions
2. Status of Migrant Women Workers (International and Domestic Migration for Work)
3. Impact of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Laws and Policies
4. Implementation of Female and Disadvantaged Group Education Scholarship
5. Intersectionality of Women's Rights and Their Social Identity

##### C. Muslim and Other Religious Minorities

1. Landless Muslims and Minorities
2. Status of Muslim Women in/and Public Spaces
3. Reproductive Health Rights of Muslim Women
4. Muslim Women's Access to Citizenship
5. Muslim Children Education and Issues of Mainstreaming in National Education

##### D. Adivasi/Janajati

1. Indigenous Knowledge, Institution, Language and Cultural Dynamics
2. Endangered Indigenous Peoples and Unlisted and Unrecognised Groups
3. Discourse on Indigenous Peoples : A Historical and Comparative Perspective
4. Relationship and Interdependence of Linguistic, Cultural and Bio-diversity
5. Interpretation and Implementation of ILO 169 in Nepal

##### E. Madhes/Madhesi

1. Caste/Ethnic Diversity in Madhes and Madhesi Identity
2. Status and Issues of Other Backward Communities (OBCs) in Nepal
3. Socio-cultural Traditions Negatively Impacting Women and Children in Madhes
4. Chure-Bhabar Region: Population, Poverty and Deforestation
5. Impact of Migration in Madhes (Highland to Lowland; Cross border)

##### F. Dalit

1. Incentive for Inter-caste Marriage with Dalit
2. Views and practices of Dalit and Non Dalit on Untouchability and Caste Hierarchy
3. Dalit and Identity issues: Caste Mobility among Dalits
4. Land and Dalit Rights
5. Religious and Cultural Processes in Dalit Society

##### G. Marginalised Regions and Groups-Remote/Karnali Region, Physically Disabled/Differently abled, LGBTI and Other Minorities

1. Socio-Economic Status, Physical Infrastructure and Family Condition of Physically Disabled
2. Social and Legal Perspectives - on People with Disability, Sexual, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Internally Displaced People (IDPs)
3. Lifestyle, Status, Social Relationship and Mapping of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Individuals (LGBTI) Communities in Nepal
4. Impact of Kalipari - Low Skilled Migrants to India
5. Feudal and Caste Based Relation in Karnali Region

The research proposal should clearly mention the type of research grant by code number and specific research theme(s) categories. The proposal must be submitted in print as well as electronic version. The applicant must provide relevant and authentic documents of proof regarding academic qualification and social group & region. **The deadline to submit proposals is no later than 1700 hours 10 February 2011 (27 Magh 2067).**

The interested researchers can find the detail information in the SIRF website <http://www.socialinclusion.org.np> or can contact at the address mentioned below between 10:00 to 15:00 hours.



सामाजिक समावेशीकरण अनुसन्धान कोष  
SOCIAL INCLUSION RESEARCH FUND

Proposal submissions are highly encouraged before the deadline of 10 February 2011.

**Social Inclusion Research Fund Secretariat,**  
SNV Netherlands Development Organisation,  
Bakhundole, Lalitpur,  
P.O. Box 1966, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Telephone: +977-[0] 1-5523444,  
Fax: +977-[0] 1-5523155  
E-mail: [info@socialinclusion.org.np](mailto:info@socialinclusion.org.np),  
Website: [www.socialinclusion.org.np](http://www.socialinclusion.org.np);  
[www.snvworld.org/nepal](http://www.snvworld.org/nepal)





**TV viewers**, a photo exhibition by Olivier Culmann and Tendance Floue, *Till 16 January, Alliance Francaise, Tripureswor, 4242832, www.alliancefrancaise.org.np*

## DINING

**Black Pepper Café & Pub**, cosmopolitan dining and drinking in a traditional style courtyard, try the apple sauce pork chops and enjoy the good service, *Kopundole Height, Lalitpur, 5521897, 5536926, http://blackpepper.com.np*



**Hankook Sarang**, serves up the incredible tastes of Korea, including superlative steamed rice to anchor meals fit for kings. *Thamel, near Roadhouse Café*

**Saturday @ Hyatt**, come and spend a day with your family this winter. Your children can enjoy on-site fun and games, as well as a kid-friendly menu. *Hyatt Regency, Boudha, for reservations call 4491234*

**Momotarou now in Sanepa**, serves Japanese food that is top value for money. Extravagant taste yet humble in presentation. *4417670*

**Assorted motifs**, an exhibition of paintings by Chirag Bangdel and other artists. *Till January 15, Chai Chai Café, Jhamsikhel*

**Screening of Frozen River**, an award-winning movie written and directed by Courtney Hunt. *15 January, 5.30pm, Lazimpat Gallery Cafe, Lazimpat*

**Samishran3**, a group painting exhibition. *Till 17 January, The Art Shop, Darbar Marg, 11.30am to 4.30pm, 9841444848, 4267063*

**Let's talk about ART baby!** Collaborative solo from the series of Activities by artist Sujan Chitrakar.



**Arabian Nights**, taste culinary delights from the Middle East. *Every Friday, 6.30pm to 10.30pm, The Cafe, Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4491234*

**Boudha Stupa Restaurant & Café**, enjoy wood-fired pizza with a superb view of Boudha stupa and free wifi, candlelight dinner options are also available for the romantics every full moon night. *Boudha, 2130681*

**Singma Food Court**, for the best Singaporean and Malaysian cuisine in town. *Pulchok, 5009092 and Bhatbhateni, 4411078, foodcourt@wlink.com.np, www.singma.foodcourt.com*

**OR2K**, one of the few vegetarian restaurants in the valley, their Middle

**let's talk about ART baby!** *Till 27 January, 11am to 6pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, 4218048*

**Winter Art Collection**, works by Japanese and Nepali artists. *Till 24 January, 11am to 5pm, Sunday to Friday, Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre, Jhamsikhel, 5521120, www.kathmanduart.org*

**photo.circle's Fifth Anniversary Celebrations**, exclusive presentation by artist Sujan Chitrakar. *14 January, 5.30pm, The Bakery Cafe, Sundhara*

Eastern platter is delicious and their cocktails robust. *Mandala Street, Thamel, 4422097*

**Café de Newa**, try Newari delicacies like deep-fried buffalo tongue, brain and intestines. You will be blown away. *Next to Kathmandu Guest House, open everyday*

**Saturday BBQ Brunch**, enjoy mouth-watering Mongolian BBQ at Gokarna Forest Resort. *Every Saturday, Gokarna Forest Resort, Gokarna, 4451212, info@gokarna.net, Rs. 1500 plus taxes*

**Everest Steak House**, an old-school joint for everything steak. A sanctuary for meat. *Thamel, near Chhetrapati chok, 4260471*

**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. *Ananda Bhawan, Lazimpat, 4416027*

**Himalayan Java**, this Thamel establishment, more known for its coffee, serves excellent sandwiches too. *Tridevi Marg, 4422519*



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# Quake treatment



DHANVANTARI  
Buddha Basnyat, MD



US GOVERNMENT WORKS

One thing is for certain, it will be impossible to treat everyone who needs medical care after a severe earthquake in Nepal.

Wherever there are functioning hospitals (many hospitals and nursing homes may be reduced to rubble), a triage team will need to be set up to determine how urgently the patient needs to be admitted to hospital.

The next hitch will be the hospital system's capacity to provide adequate resources to meet the needs of the injured. Crush injuries of muscles (rhabdomyolysis) will be one of the most common medical problems encountered after an earthquake, as was the case in Haiti last year. Rhabdomyolysis leads to acute renal failure because the muscle protein is harmful to the kidneys. Depending on how promptly fluid therapy is started, dialysis (artificial kidney) may be necessary for the patient. Unfortunately dialysis is not widely available in Nepal; so even though the patient may be

alive, lack of equipment and expertise will conspire to work against him.

Many patients will arrive at hospital with open infected wounds and fractures. Apart from dealing with proper wound care and fracture repair, the patients will need appropriate antibiotics to fight sepsis, common after this kind of a traumatic injury. In Haiti, those who were rescued late and taken to hospital had maggots in their wounds. Healthcare professionals not used to dealing with new and unusual problems will have to consult others, improvise, and learn on the job.

An added problem will be a crush injury leading to gangrene of the limbs that will subsequently need amputation. Amputation will be one of the most common surgical procedures to be performed post-earthquake, as was also the case in Haiti.

Indeed the list of post-earthquake medical problems could be a mile long. Therefore, increasing awareness about earthquake preparedness is obviously useful.

Getting under a desk without running downstairs while the building is shaking will require willpower, but ducking for cover is still the prevalent wisdom of the day. If outside, getting away from buildings and power lines is recommended, but this may be hard to do in the middle of Indra Chowk. Given the rate at which dubiously built high-rise structures are being developed, it's questionable how committed Nepal is to earthquake preparedness.

How does the adage go, live and learn? Let's hope we live to learn. 🇳🇵



KIRAN PANDAY

**NOW LET'S SEE:** Outgoing UNMIN Chief Karin Landgren addresses her final press conference, New Baneswor, Monday



RSS

**MOTHER EARTH:** Illegal stone and gravel mining in Nallu and Lele of Lalitpur District, Tuesday



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KIRAN PANDAY

**UNITED WE STAND:** UML leaders KP Oli and Jhalanath Khanal present a united front at Kathmandu District's 5th convention, last Friday

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WEEKEND WEATHER by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

A prominent feature of this week's weather is the persistent foggy layer over the Nepal Tarai and the Ganga River plains of north India. It is acting like a lid over a container, as indicated by the satellite image from Thursday morning. It also shows cold air generated by a Siberian High pouring into south Asia via the Tibetan plateau. Meteorologists see a relation between strong low pressure in the Southern Hemisphere, where heavy rainfall triggered widespread floods in Australia and Sri Lanka, and strong high pressure over the Northern Hemisphere where dry weather is the dominant feature. Only a strong westerly front can sweep away the stagnant layer of smoggy cloud over the Tarai, which is too dry to generate rains and too moist to be dispersed by mild sunshine. Tarai residents can expect colder days ahead for at least one more week. Valley residents can expect more sunny days and clear nights ahead with occasional interruptions from passing clouds.

FRI	SAT	SUN
20-1	19-2	18-3





“We are not gods,” the doctor said. “At the end of the day, she might live or she might die.” I was escorting a friend to a hospital on New Year’s Day, who after having completed a 50km marathon complained of feeling drowsy, fell to the ground, and started having full body convulsions. The doctor’s solemn assertion followed a nurse’s monitoring of the patient’s vitals and a statement that “her BP is normal”. The doctor’s statement only emphasised that my friend was in need of serious medical attention and consent was given for any medical tests and procedures he found necessary. I probably would not have thought much about this exchange had a newly graduated doctor friend not said the following: “Yeah, we tell patients all the time that they might die. Doctors are getting beat up all over the place when patients die. Who wants to take risks?” The young doctor sounded reasonable, but what stood out during the exchange was the blasé manner in which the statement was delivered, as if there were no moral or ethical repercussions of an exaggerated medical prognosis. One casual conversation is not enough to make generalisations about the profession, but it does suggest that we might have a growing problem in our society. Doctors are getting beat up all over the place. As I found out later, the hospital I was in had been vandalised and padlocked by protestors over a patient’s death only a few weeks earlier. For years, doctors have asked for increased security, even calling for bandas in order do so. There was a time when doctors worried that giving bad news was akin to giving bad medicine and wrestled over whether full disclosure was better or worse for treatment. With the increase in the assertion of consumer rights, informed consent is the new norm. But here we have now gone past the truth about the patient’s illness. Doctors now feel their security lies in giving the worst possible diagnosis, i.e. death. A consent given on the

# Diagnosis of death



KIRAN PANDAY

basis of false information – blackmail of sorts when you are told you will die – is not a valid consent. Doctors are neglecting their duty to explain to patients the true status of their condition so the patient can make an informed medical decision. Worse, when blanket claims of death are made malpractice

will be harder to investigate, if investigated at all. This is our creation. First we put doctors on the same pedestal as gods, and when they fail we resort to our Neanderthal tendencies. Hospitals can perhaps help by creating a mechanism whereby medical grievances can be taken up. Legal

Are doctors exaggerating negative diagnoses because of mob rule?

DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE? Bir Hospital strikes in January last year, demanding security for staff

mechanisms to take such claims to court have now gained some precedence with the first successful claim for damages for medical malpractice last year. I have no reason to argue that the doctor who was diagnosing my friend did not tell the truth that day, or that he didn’t perform his

duty. She was given good medical care, although spatial care could have been better. The salt levels in her body had been flushed out due to excessive water intake. A few days later, her electrolytes healthily replenished, she was discharged from hospital, and was gaily climbing hills and running again. What does vex me, in retrospect, is whether he did tell the truth, or had the mob killed his ability to be empathetic? All of this comes with the caveat, of course, that doctors can never promise cures, and death is the eventual truth of all of our lives. But as someone once said we can’t be casual about the truth. And doctors should be guaranteed an environment where they feel secure enough to share the truth about their patients’ health. 🇳🇵

## Gastric Ulcer: Screaming Or Silent, Watch It With Care.

Do you feel like your stomach is on fire? Do you experience aching, burning or gnawing pain in the stomach that comes and goes for day or weeks, and lasts for minutes to hours at a time? If your answer is yes, you could be having a gastric ulcer.

- What Is Gastric Ulcer?**

Gastric ulcer, also called stomach ulcer, is a raw, eroded area in the lining of the stomach. According to Dr Benny Ang, Consultant Gastroenterologist at Mount Elizabeth Hospital, gastric ulcer is one of the most common illnesses of the gastrointestinal tract, and about 1% of the population may be affected at any one time, with the elderly more likely to be affected. In Singapore, the Chinese and Indians are more likely to suffer from gastric ulcers than the Malays.
- What Causes Gastric Ulcer?**

A gastric ulcer develops when stomach acid and digestive juices damage the lining of the stomach. It is commonly caused by the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, ponstan and synflex.

A gastric ulcer may also develop from the presence of bacteria called Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori). In fact, about 60% to 70% of gastric ulcer cases result from H. pylori, says Dr Ang. It may be contracted through ingesting food or drinking liquids contaminated by faeces or saliva of a patient with H. pylori. It exists and multiplies in the mucous layer that covers the stomach lining, and causes an ulcer by damaging the lining.
- What Are The Symptoms?**

Dr Ang says that although some people with gastric ulcers do not have any symptoms, most people experience one or more of the following:

  - Pain in the stomach (upper central abdomen or lower chest area, and sometimes spreading to the back) which is often worse at night, or when you miss a meal
  - Increased pain just after eating
  - Difficulty swallowing food
  - Indigestion or regurgitating food
  - Feeling sick after eating
  - Nausea and vomiting
  - Passing blood in the stools
- How Is It Diagnosed?**

To diagnose a gastric ulcer, your doctor may first examine you, look at your medical history, ask about your symptoms and may start you on some medicine before doing tests. This is because ulcers usually feel better within a week of treatment. You may not need any tests if you are getting better.

If you don't get better, your doctor may do an endoscopy to study your digestive tract, says Dr Dede Selamat Sutedja, Consultant Gastroenterologist and Hepatologist at Gleneagles Hospital. During an endoscopy, your doctor will look into your stomach by inserting a narrow flexible tube which carries a mini camera at its tip into the mouth and down the digestive system, to see the lining of the oesophagus, stomach, and the duodenum. The endoscope enables the doctor to take photos of the ulcers or remove a tiny piece of tissue to view under a microscope; or even inject drugs that promote clotting or to guide a heat probe that cauterises the bleeding vessel, if an ulcer is bleeding. Through endoscopy, the appearance, site and size of the ulcer, as well as information about H. pylori infection and malignancy can be readily obtained.
- Is Gastric Ulcer Serious?**

Not usually. But a gastric ulcer can sometimes lead to other problems if left untreated, warns Dr Ang. These problems include bleeding, perforation (the ulcer eats through the wall of the stomach) or obstruction (the digestive tract is blocked and food can't leave the stomach). Get help right away if you have any of the symptoms or warning signs.
- How Can Gastric Ulcer Be Treated?**

Dr Dede says that most ulcers can be treated with medication, and surgery is rarely needed except when complications have developed. The type of treatment you have will depend on whether your gastric ulcer is caused by the H. pylori bacteria, or by NSAIDs.

He describes two types of medicines that can reduce the production of acid – Histamine receptor antagonists (H2 blockers), and Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs). Both medicines are effective in healing ulcers, but the PPIs are significantly more potent and can achieve a faster healing rate. Generally, it takes about six to eight weeks for gastric ulcers to resolve completely.

For patients with H. pylori infection, triple therapy is the recommended treatment. It is a combination of two types of antibiotics and a PPI. The medicines are given for one to two weeks, with the PPI continuing for another six to eight weeks, particularly in cases where the gastric ulcer is complicated by bleeding. The H. pylori eradication success rate is usually 80% to 90%.

Dr Dede also recommends a repeat gastroscopy (an endoscopy of the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum) to be done after treatment completion to assess gastric ulcer healing, and in H. pylori associated ulcers, to document eradication. Surgery is only necessary if medical therapy fails or in cases of perforation due to late presentation of gastric ulcers, says Dr Dede.

### Tips On Healing Your Gastric Ulcer

- Don't smoke
- Avoid anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin and ibuprofen
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol (or have them only in small amounts and on a full stomach)

For more information or an appointment, Please call our 24-Hour Helpline at 4222908 Parkway Health Patient Assistance Centre (Nepal) 399 Kamaladi Street P.O.Box: 482, Kathmandu, Nepal [www.parkwayhealth.com](http://www.parkwayhealth.com) [www.ppac.sg](http://www.ppac.sg)

### Don't Take Gastric Ulcer Lightly.

It starts small but can grow into a serious problem if left untreated. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms of H. pylori infection, or have been diagnosed with an ulcer, you should seek treatment early. Ulcer complications can be serious and life-threatening.



# The Quake of '34

Moti Krishna Tuladhar, 96



I was 19, and on the way to the temple I had a premonition something bad would happen that day. The goddess looked gloomy. At 1pm I was outside my house in Bhotahiti. The ground began to shake, I was paralysed. Buildings fell like houses made of cards. People rushed out screaming. Our two-storeyed house collapsed, but my mother and aunt had a close escape. They had come down to the first floor when the roof came down. We ran to the open space near Tundikhel, there were heaps of rubble everywhere. A vendor from Thimi was buried for four days and

was rescued when people heard his cries. Things changed after the quake. Before, no one touched anyone's property even if it was left unattended. But after the quake, cases of theft became more common. The Ranas heard out such cases under a tree in Tundikhel and sent the guilty to jail.

Mukunda Bahadur Shrestha, 83

It was a bright sunny day and I was six, and playing in the garden with friends outside my house in Ombahal. Suddenly, the garden wall collapsed and the ground started shaking. After the tremors stopped, we ran to a courtyard, it was utter chaos. People were shouting. Many houses had collapsed, there was thick cloud of dust rising into the sky and it became dark. I remember my mother and aunts pressing the ground with their fingers, a Newari custom believed to stop the quakes. The ground had opened up in Tundikhel, and there were cracks everywhere.



Purna Man Kapali, 87



There was a 'jankhu puja' and we followed the procession with a chariot to Ye Bahal. Suddenly we heard a deep rumble from underground. There was a cloud of black dust rising up from Jawalakhel side. The people in the procession dropped their drums and ran off, leaving the woman crying in her chariot. I ran home in a state of panic. The house was damaged but the family made it out. The Hari Shankar Temple near Patko had collapsed and six children playing marbles nearby were buried under it. Some were crushed by the collapsing Taleju Temple. The

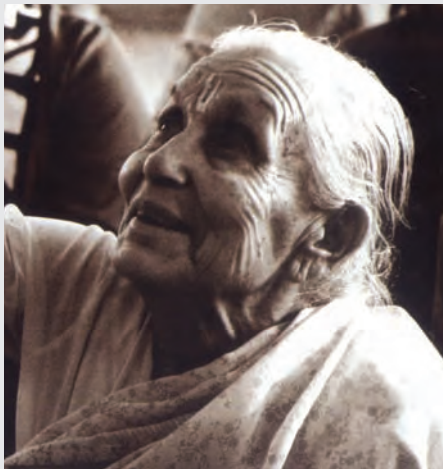
square was unrecognisable. We lived outdoors for days in the cold before we moved back into the house.

Khadga Kumari Thapa, 86

When the earthquake hit, we ran out through a narrow passage, but many were crushed by a falling building. Fourteen people in our house were killed. When the police came, Muwa and I were the only ones saved, because she hugged me to cushion the impact. She survived, but her hips were crushed and she suffered a lot for five years before she died.

A relative had just given her hungry son some chiura. He ran into their home just as the quake struck, bringing down the house. When they pulled the boy out from under the rubble, his mouth was still full of food. He was hungry but he didn't even get to swallow the food his mother had given him.

Rubeena Mahato



SUSHAN PRAJAPATI

# Not if,

Ask not what your government can do for you in an earthquake, ask what you can do for yourself

KUNDA DIXIT

At the northern end of Singha Darbar, over the wall from the busy Anam Nagar road with its tall office blocks, you can easily miss the small house with a red roof (pic, centre). Inside is a meeting room with modern furniture, satellite phones, radio sets, and emergency internet.

"This is where the prime minister will sit," says Rameshwor Dangal, head of the Home Ministry's Disaster Management Department, showing us around the new National Emergency Operation Centre. "This room will be the nerve centre for coordination for rescue and relief in the aftermath of a catastrophic earthquake in Kathmandu."

Across the Valley in Bhaishepati, the basement of the Nepal Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) is designed to withstand a magnitude 9 earthquake. Its Emergency Information



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Centre has the look of a hotel reception with clocks on the wall showing New York, Tokyo, and London time. A seismograph monitor is in the corner, there are satellite phones, and supplies of water, food, and diesel to last months. This room will be Nepal's link to the outside world when the earthquake hits.

The Haiti earthquake on 12 January last year that killed over 250,000 people, and the prediction that a similar quake in Kathmandu could be even more cataclysmic, has focused attention on Nepal. The last big quake here in 1934 was magnitude 8, and historical

# “Let's learn from Haiti”



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

UN Resident Coordinator, Robert Piper, spoke to Nepali Times about the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium, and its functions in preparing for the Big One. Excerpts:



# but when



records show a major earthquake has taken place every 50-100 years. As a former lake-bed, the Valley magnifies the shaking and there is the danger of soil liquefaction. Were a 1934-type quake to occur today, NSET estimates it would kill at least 100,000 people, severely injure twice that number, and render 1.5 million homeless. What worries earthquake planners most is a magnitude 8 earthquake during school hours. Most schools will collapse, and the injured won't be able to make it to hospitals because these buildings themselves won't survive the quake (*see overleaf, 'Unsafe schools'*).

“A catastrophic earthquake is inevitable, everyone knows it's coming, but we suffer here from an inertia of rest,” says NSET's Amod Dixit. “We are so distracted by today's crises we can't think of tomorrow.”

Yet there are islands of success. Kathmandu's 1994 building code is one of the best in the region; if only it had been followed. Government schools are being retrofitted to withstand shaking. Green spaces have

been identified and water supplies pre-positioned for survivors and the injured. The government is working on an emergency response mechanism. Nepali seismic engineers and experts have gained experience in the aftermath of recent quakes in Iran and Pakistan.

The main challenge is to scale up current initiatives, decentralise awareness and response to the community level, and coordinate

with international emergency logistics capacity so that we are prepared for the aftermath. Says Dixit: “We know what to do, we know how to do it, we just need proper policies in place and resources to implement them.”

Two years ago, Nepal's donors got together to form the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium. It has developed a three-year US\$130 million strategy to look at school and hospital retrofitting, emergency preparedness and response, and community activation. The consortium will parcel out sectors for donor response. The Asian Development Bank, for instance, has been tasked with school retrofitting, while the World Health Organization will be involved in making hospitals safer. The cabinet is also considering a draft bill to set up a Disaster Preparedness Council.

Some officials are concerned that funds will be wasted on expensive foreign consultants and imported technology when Nepal has both the knowhow and capacity to replicate existing work. Nepali buildings are unsafe mainly because of un-reinforced masonry; simple bricklayer training would be cheap, effective, and would spread awareness beyond schools.

To be better prepared, our cities need elected mayors who are accountable, and consumer rights groups should be protesting substandard cement and steel rods in the market. Architects and engineers should be stricter with designs, banks should not lend to structures that don't have built-in seismic resistance features, and hotels could be graded according to the safety of their structures.

Although things are moving on earthquake response, it has been much more difficult to get the government, municipalities, and even individuals to act on safer housing. NSET and the Red Cross have prepared 'Go bags' and Search and Rescue containers for households and communities.

UN Resident Coordinator in Nepal, Robert Piper, says, “It is difficult to rescue people from under the rubble, so we should also be trying to make sure they aren't under the rubble in the first place. Nepal isn't located 500 miles off the coast of Florida, like Haiti.” 🇳🇵



MICHAEL COX

**Nepali Times: A Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium had been formed through your initiative. Why is this significant?**  
**Robert Piper:** It is an important breakthrough. For the first time, we have brought together in one team both emergency response actors (such as the Red Cross and the UN's Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA) as well as long-term development investors (such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and UNDP). This way, we will strike a better balance between investing in preparedness, which has been the focus of most efforts so far, and concrete actions aimed at reducing the potential number of casualties to future disasters. We need long-term infrastructure and capacity building, and, frankly, fairly deep pockets. The US Government and European Commission have also joined the consortium and we hope others will, too. This means we can be ambitious in scaling up the risk reduction effort.

**What has been the government's response so far?**  
The Consortium has worked from day one with the government, and the Ministry of Home Affairs in particular. Its five flagship programs are deliberately aligned with the new national strategy for disaster risk management. The Home Ministry leads the Steering Committee. There has been a palpable increase in the level of engagement with this issue over the last two years. We need to harness this new energy

while it lasts. We are aiming to raise over US\$100 million for programs like school and hospital retrofitting, emergency preparedness measures, and community preparedness across the most vulnerable VDCs over the coming year.

**What are the hurdles to passing an act in parliament for the setting up of a National Authority to address earthquake preparedness?**  
I suppose the same hurdles that have brought us 16 rounds of unsuccessful elections for a PM... the draft legislation is not in parliament yet, but when it gets there soon it will be joining a sizeable backlog of legislative decisions. This critical issue must not become another victim of politics. Haiti lost more than 250,000 souls in about 40 seconds and the threat here is arguably even greater. What could be more worthy of bipartisan support than an act to help strengthen the government's ability to respond to, and mitigate, such a threat?

**Many UN staffers were killed in the Haiti earthquake last year, are there lessons we can learn?**  
Sadly, many lessons can be drawn from Haiti. The lack of

enforcement of a building code in Haiti is mirrored in Nepal, only we have many more people and buildings in the Valley than did Port-au-Prince. A key lesson is the need for planning in advance on how to take care of large numbers of displaced persons seeking shelter and other basic needs. We are working with the government to identify sites in the Valley that could serve this purpose and these rare open spaces will need to be protected from encroachment. Even more important, many will keep moving to seek shelter with relatives and friends in villages outside the Valley. In Haiti the response effort failed to reach those families effectively, leading to large numbers of people returning to Port-au-Prince to seek help when it would have been much better to keep them out of the city, and staying with their relatives.

**Do you get the feeling the seriousness of the crisis Nepal faces is now sinking in?**  
To be honest, we still have a long way to go. It isn't easy to find a balance in getting people to worry about this issue. We don't want to terrify everyone. We don't want to scare the tourists away. People have to get used to the idea of living with risk in Nepal. The message that has to sink in is that the threat is very real, but we can do something about it. And the best time to do it is now, before the next disaster, not looking back with regret after the next one at our failure to act on the knowledge we possessed.

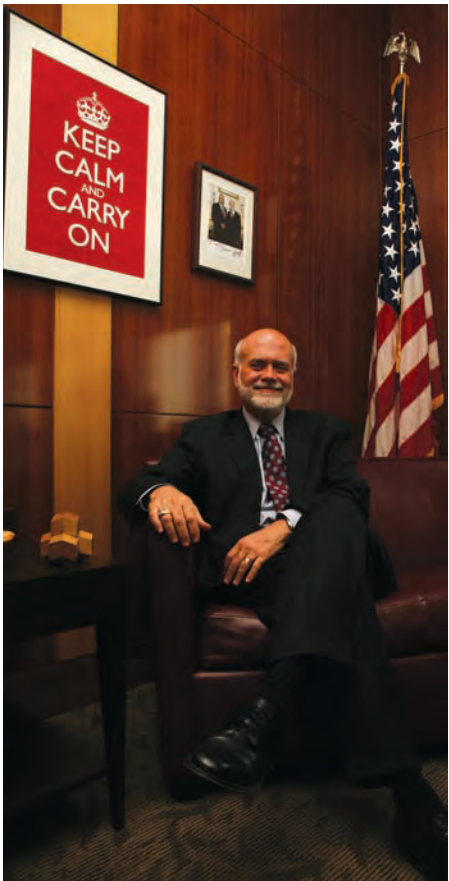


# “Doing nothing is not an option”

US Ambassador Scott DeLisi spoke to Nepali Times about the need for coordination among donors as well as with government so Nepal is prepared for the next big earthquake. Excerpts:

**Nepali Times: You seem to be taking the threat of a major earthquake a lot more seriously than the Nepal government.**  
**Scott DeLisi:** Our goal here is to help Nepal move towards a stable, democratic and prosperous society. What is more destabilising to a nation than a catastrophic earthquake? Both in terms of our policy interests, and our investment in partnership with the government of approximately a quarter of a billion dollars over the next three years, we have to take steps to mitigate the impact of the earthquake to shorten the recovery time and protect the investment.

**What are the lessons from the Haiti earthquake a year ago?**  
It is that preparedness can make a



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

difference. But to take that commitment and turn it into practical action, that's a little tougher. How do you bring a new paradigm, a new approach to disaster preparedness? What

we are trying to do is serve as a template to work in partnership with the government, the UN, and other international actors.  
The preparation is important, the coordination is vital. Another lesson is that earthquakes don't kill people, collapsing buildings do. You walk around town and see these new buildings going up and you wish there were a committed effort to ensure that they are seismically sound.

**What kind of response strategy have you drawn up?**

The embassy has a three-fold approach: we look at our own internal preparedness. I have a responsibility to take care of my people and to make sure that they are around after the quake to help us. Then there is the response aspect that we have been looking at. But the weakest part has been to address preparedness, what we can do before the quake. When I got here I found that there was a lot of good thinking that had been done but there wasn't yet an action plan. There was just so much to be done that people went 'ke game', and some people were almost paralysed. Doing anything can help, doing nothing is not an option.

We now have a Disaster Risk Reduction Office within the embassy, and we have built a partnership with the Pacific Command, they're our 911. They'll be the first responders to partner with the UN. We have a better dialogue with India, which recognises that it is an important concern for them. We are sharing all of this with the government: how long will this country be on its own just in terms of the

inability to get in? Haiti had the advantage of a port. What if Kathmandu's runway is not workable? The time to talk about that is now, not when you are into the disaster.

**How scary is the aftermath scenario?**

We have to ask the question: where are the people going to be after the earthquake? Some estimates put the number of homeless at 750,000 to a million. It's important that the aid goes where the people are. What we found in Haiti was that people dispersed, so you don't want to take the aid to a place where people no longer are. When every green spot in Kathmandu has been taken, you have to be thinking about land use planning. I am overwhelmed at times. I could do this full time.

**Do you think there is the political will here for preparedness?**

There is clearly a growing awareness, the thinking is getting crystallised, but there is a lot that needs to be done. There are many people throughout the bureaucracy and government, in positions of responsibility, who understand these issues and are trying to move things forward. The biggest challenge is at the senior most level, considering we have a new government every year. When you talk to them people are absolutely committed, but at the moment they are distracted because they have the peace process, the constitution, and government formation to worry about, so that's a challenge.

## Unsafe schools and hospitals

When the bell rang at Tika Vidyashram School in Sanepa recently, it wasn't to signal the end of classes: students put their schoolbags over their heads and crawled under their desks instead.  
The drills are part of a new initiative to save as many children as possible in the next big earthquake. So far, 300 schools in the Kathmandu Valley have taken part.  
Seismologists at the Nepal Society for Eearthquake Technology (NSET) estimate that a 1934-scale earthquake would kill nearly 30,000 students and teachers outright and injure another 43,000. Most of the injured won't end up in hospitals because these buildings will have also collapsed.  
A magnitude 8 earthquake today would destroy 80 per cent of hospitals, and the Teaching Hospital and the Chhetrapati Free Clinic will be among the

few healthcare centres left standing. Even these may not have electricity. There will be few ambulances, and roads will be blocked. Sixty per cent of Kathmandu's buildings will collapse, and the estimated 200,000 people who will be injured, and will have to be moved to open spaces where there will hopefully be open-air emergency medical facilities.  
A survey by NSET shows that 25 per cent of school structures are so poor they need to be pulled down, and nearly 50 per cent have to be retrofitted.  
Two of the new structures in the Sanepa school are earthquake-resistant, but its main building is not. In the event of an earthquake, the classrooms that survive will also serve as shelters for the community. The Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium has identified retrofitting of schools and hospitals as one of its five priority areas. Nearly US\$50 million will be needed for this in the Kathmandu



KIRAN PANDAY



Aftermath of the Christchurch quake, September 2010.

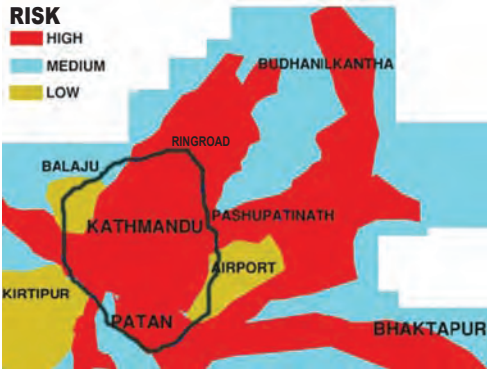
## Code red

The earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January last year had a magnitude of 7.2. On 4 September, New Zealand's Christchurch was struck by an earthquake of the same intensity. More than 250,000 people died in Haiti, but no one died in Christchurch.  
Christchurch survived because of the strict enforcement of building codes, and proper disaster preparedness and response. "New Zealand has robust building standards and implementation, there is a high level of awareness and the public listens to professional advice, and there is transparency in the compliance system," says Jitendra Bothara, a Nepali who works as a

seismic engineer in New Zealand.  
When the quake struck, emergency and rescue teams were mobilised within minutes. Two days later, civil defence personnel and volunteer engineers had completed building safety evaluations and the New Zealand parliament passed a special response and recovery act within two weeks.  
Bothara says the Nepal Tarai and Kathmandu Valley have soft and deep sediment deposits similar to Christchurch, which amplifies the shaking during a quake. "Which is why Kathmandu, in the past, has suffered far more damage than areas closer to the epicentre," Bothara explains. "Building quality is not just about money, seismic resilience can be enhanced in Nepal if there is better awareness and enforcement of building codes."  
Richard Sharpe, a seismic scientist from New Zealand, helped design Nepal's building code in 1994. He wonders how many buildings constructed since then actually meet the earthquake resilience criteria. Says Sharpe: "I would expect that much of Kathmandu would be flattened if the same level of shaking occurs as in Christchurch."  
Nepal's building code is one of the best in the region, experts say, but given urban pressure and corruption, the government and municipality have been unable to enforce it. The pressure to live in safer houses therefore has to come from building owners themselves, and enforced by architects, engineers and banks that finance them.  
*Kunda Dixit in Christchurch*

## QUAKOLOGY

The Indian landmass is still pushing into and under Tibet at a rapid 5cm a year. This creates tremendous tectonic tension, and the rock strata buckle and snap under the strain, creating earthquakes.  
The area west of Kathmandu hasn't seen a major earthquake for over 300 years. This lull is known as a 'seismic gap', and increases the likelihood of a magnitude 8 earthquake in central or western Nepal in the near future.  
The alluvium of the Kathmandu Valley's former lakebed magnifies earthquake waves, and the shaking causes structures to fail. The most vulnerable are areas next to rivers that are prone to liquefaction when the soil is squeezed like a sponge and causes even structurally strong high-rises to tilt over.  
*Anoop Pandey*







# Case stuck

Suresh Yadav in *Nagarik*, 10 January

नागरिक

Janakpur: Two years since the murder of journalist Uma Singh, several involved parties have still not been brought to justice.

Janakpur-based reporter Uma Singh was murdered in her rented room on 11 January 2009. Her mother Sushila Devi Singh filed a murder case against 14 persons in Dhanusha District Court, but only four were detained in Jaleshwar jail. One of the accused was released on parole and another on Rs 20,000 bail, but the rest are still at large. According to the district police office, three of them are from Siraha district and all the rest are from India.

Sushila, who lost her husband and only son during the insurgency, started living in India when she received threats to withdraw her case. She approached the local administration and FNJ for security, but was ultimately forced to leave the country. The case has been stuck in the courts in the absence of the plaintiff.

Swami Yadav, who took responsibility for Uma Singh’s murder, has been found to be involved in many criminal cases since. He is still at large and actively engaged in operating his network.

“The plaintiff has not been in contact with the court for two years,” said lawyer Rekha Jha during a program to commemorate the second anniversary of Uma Singh’s death. “Even the media has not shown interest in bringing the culprits to justice,” she said.

Some lawyers have voluntarily spoken on behalf of the plaintiff at hearings. But Sushila Singh’s absence has weakened the case against those accused. A lawyer has questioned the intention of the police administration. “In many instances, the police side with the defendant, and do not inform the plaintiff of court memos,” he said.

When Uma Singh’s father and brother were murdered in Siraha, she moved to Janakpur and started a career as a reporter with Radio Today. She also used to run a radio show. Among other issues, Singh was known for her investigative reporting on violence against women, and had published an article about the murders of her relatives and public land encroachment.

# Farmer’s hero

Siddhiraj Rai in *Arthik (Nagarik)*, 9 January

नागरिक

Bachelor degree holder Meghendra Gurung of Dhankuta travelled to cites in Nepal and India in search of a suitable job, but found the most lucrative one in his own backyard. Gurung learnt about off-season vegetable farming when he visited Jharkhand in India and eventually began a business in his garden, with support from the Pakhribas Agriculture Research Centre.

Gurung now earns Rs 300,000 yearly by cultivating off-season vegetables on 0.2 hectares of land. Among the vegetables he plants are cabbages, peas, cauliflowers and potatoes. His earnings are more than enough to pay for his household expenses and he is now investing Rs 5 million to build a house in Subidha Bajar. The farmers who work with him have also been able to boost their income. Under Gurung’s initiative, the surplus produce of these farmers has found a market in India. Gurung has brought together over 1,000 farmers through the Subidha Multipurpose Cooperative and he helps them in their business. He also gives them training in seed, fertiliser, and agriculture technology.

At present, 80 per cent of vegetables grown in Dhankuta are exported to India. Gurung has also begun a campaign to promote organic farming in the region, and is pushing for the elimination of chemical fertilisers.



Picture: Karin Landgren  
Crib: Peace Process  
Snake: Revolt

कान्तिपुर Batsyayan in Kantipur, 11 January

# Electricity for whom?

Editorial in *Arthik Abhiyan*, 8 January

When we talk about Nepal’s water resources, the first thing that comes to mind is electricity. A crucial question we should ask while formulating policy for water is, for whom is the electricity being generated? Though Nepal’s water policy should be for the welfare of the country, it looks as though it is made for foreigners.

Nepal’s per capita consumption of electricity is 70 units per annum; it is 10,000 units per annum in developed countries. Experts say Nepal would require between 55,000 to 60,000MW if its people consumed as many units as in developed countries. This means if Nepal’s economy grows at a rate of 7 to 8 per cent per annum, there is no question of exporting electricity at all. If we think we have enough energy to export it for money, we are just being plain stupid. But the Ministry of Energy has not accepted this truth.

A study conducted by Somnath Poudel shows that Nepal needs at least 10,000MW by 2018 if economic growth is to maintain its momentum. In this context, if we invite foreign investors for hydro projects and export 90 per cent of generated power, how can we meet even domestic demand for energy? We need to generate an additional 1,000MW per year to meet the demand. But existing energy policy has not acknowledged this fact.

For instance, 270MW of the 300MW to be generated from the Upper Karnali project is for export. We will get only 30MW. Besides, the electricity that we export at Rs 2 per unit will be imported at Rs 10 per unit later. What kind of energy economy is this that generates electricity at Rs 2 per unit to export it then imports it at Rs 10 per unit? Who is to answer this question? In fact, even if the energy is generated by foreign developers, the first priority should be to meet domestic demand. The government has not even thought about downstream benefits, which is unfortunate.

Nepali people and the Nepali economy should benefit from hydro projects irrespective of whoever makes the investment. We can only export surplus electricity after meeting domestic demand. Nepal has the first right to consume electricity generated within its borders, no matter who produces it.

Nepal should not only expect foreign investors to produce electricity for us. It should develop big projects like West Seti for domestic consumption instead of export. Where is the money? Nepal receives Rs 3 billion in remittances alone, most of which is spent on luxury goods. If we are able to divert just 10 per cent of this to infrastructure, Nepal will not have to live in darkness. For this, we need to develop a mechanism. All we need is the will and accountability towards people. But there is not much we can expect from the government.

# Solitary life

Bhuwan Sharma in *Naya Patrika*, 7 January

नयाँ पत्रिका

Former queen mother Ratna Rajya Laxmi Shah is spending her last days alone inside a house in Narayanhiti palace. Palace staff say that no one apart from family comes to visit her and she does not show interest in meeting outsiders either. Ratna was an eyewitness to the royal massacre but hasn’t ever spoken about it.

Though the former royals left the palace after the incident, Ratna has continued living there. She has expressed a desire to live in Mahendra Manjil till the end of her days but the government hasn’t agreed to her request. A platoon of the Nepal Army provides protection to the former royal. The salaries of her six maids-in-waiting are borne by Nirmal Niwas, ex-crown prince Paras’ residence.

According to sources, ex-king



KIRAN PANDAY

Gyanendra visits Ratna every Monday at four for about an hour. Ratna’s grandchildren come for a visit every Tuesday and Paras also pays visits sometimes. The 84-year-old spends most of her time in religious activity. She observes a fast every new moon and visits the Narayanthan and Ganesh temples inside the palace premises regularly.



# More monkey business



The week that the capital's traffic cops started arresting jaywalkers, towing away illegally parked cars, and demolishing hooch shops along the Ring Road, they also inducted radar guns. Problem was that while testing the contraptions on Tundikhel's perimeter the other night, the only vehicles found to be speeding were APF pickups escorting ministers. Reminds the Ass of the time they got those fancy emission testers, then stuck the probe into the rear end of the prime minister's chariot, which promptly failed the test.



Speaking of radar, the airport's radar is kaput again, so airline schedules have gone haywire this week. This time it looks like the malfunction was caused by the invasion of rhesus monkeys at **Tree-baboon International Airport** (see pic, courtesy Nomadgal). The Simian Attack follows the Earthworm Terror some time back, which was followed by a Wild Boar Incursion on the runway. The donkey has alerted folks about all kinds of monkey business at the airport in this column, but nothing like what is happening now. Question is whether all the monkeying around with radar is going to delay Karin and Samrat's flight out this weekend.



As UNMIN lowers its flag for the last time at the Conventional Centre on Friday, the Mule has finally figured out why no one seems unduly panicked about the monitors packing their bags and scattering off to bring peace and tranquility to other world hotspots. The reason is that everyone knows that the real guns and the real guerrillas were never in the UN-monitored camps. Most battle-hardened fighters were converted into YCLs long ago, and they rampaged all over the place in the past three years. They kept their M-16s, GPMGs and RPGs in barracks in towns and cities scattered across the country.

Everyone else knew this, but played along with the charade because the Junglis threatened to go back to the jungles. NC knew, UML knew, even the Maoists knew, and they knew we knew. What the UN was monitoring, therefore, was a recruitment centre where teen cadre went through military training and got an allowance for three years, and the UN monitors monitored all this through CCTV cameras.



That reminds me: Chinese state television should change its acronym so it doesn't sound like the Communist Party has its entire country under closed circuit surveillance. Besides UNMIN, the other people with CCTVs in Nepal are the folks at the Department of Transportation, which installed the devices to monitor the driving test process after reports that even a vision-impaired person managed to bribe officials to get a license. The number of people who passed their driving tests dropped by half after the closed circuit cameras were installed. This was a source of worry for everyone up and down the line who got a cut from kickbacks. Including, it seems, the **Transported Minister** who recently got the department head removed for not removing the CCTV camera.

Just a passing thought, if the cameras were so effective in reducing corruption why not install them in all the ministerial chambers in Singha Darbar also?



The 'red' carpet treatment BRB got in Delhi had nothing to do with his commie convictions. **South Blocked** was obviously sending a msg to Brother Number One back in KTM by lavishing all kinds of state honours, including audiences with movers and shakers. It worked brilliantly because PKD's hypertension shot through the roof of the Pistachio Palace. Now that BRB is flying off to Mumbai next, El Caudillo is reportedly angling for any invite from any Injun thinktank so he can also come back and say that India has nothing against a Maoist-led govt. But where it sort of backfired on BRB was that the India visit only confirmed what PKD has been saying all along to his cadre: that his deputy is an Indian lackey.



The caretaker govt has proved once again that it has its priorities right by declaring Friday a horriday on the occasion of the launch of Nepal Tourism Year. Another government-declared bund, way to go. An idea to make Friday a grand success would be to turn TIA into an even bigger zoo than it already is by inducting more fauna to complement monkeys already in residence. How about translocating some rhinos into the arrival concourse, crocs would love to sun themselves in the drainage ditch near the apron, and we could replace the **human hyenas** at immigration with real hyenas. We don't need vultures because there are already lots of them at the pre-paid taxi stand. This way arriving tourists in 2011 could get a glimpse of Nepal's amazing biodiversity in a microcosm.



max L'agence/11

## A greener way to fly...

District Road Support Programme

Partners: RAAIKA Tours & Travels

Yeti Airlines in partnership with DRSP (District Road Support Programme) launched the pilot Green Far-west Project to plant one tree for every ticket sold in the Kathmandu-Nepalgunj-Kathmandu Sector, for which Rs.20 on every one-way and Rs. 40 on two-way tickets sold in the Kathmandu-Nepalgunj sector will be set aside for the funding of the programme. DRSP will be executing this programme in Baitadi District in co-ordination with District Road Technical Office and the Local Community.

Yeti Airlines in partnership with RAAIKA has launched the pilot Green Dhangadhi Project to plant one tree for every ticket sold in Kathmandu-Dhangadhi-Kathmandu sector for which Rs.20 on every one-way and Rs. 40 on two-way tickets sold in the Kathmandu-Dhangadhi sector will be set aside for the funding of the programme which is in Kailali District, Regional Head Quarter Far-West - Rajpur & Doti, and Kanchanpur area.

Come fly with Yeti Airlines and help make the world a little more greener.

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