

NEPALI Times

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LOVE TRIANGLE

Consensus talks this week didn't get anywhere, so Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Maoist), Ram Chandra Poudel (NC) and Jhal Nath Khanal (UML) are again preparing to slug it out in parliament after changing the election rules. But the rivalry and ambitions among within the three parties remain the same.



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SUBCONTINENTAL FRACTURES

We discuss our politics endlessly, in living rooms, at wedding parties, in teashops. In Jaipur, too. Last year's participants at the Jaipur Literature Festival complained that Nepal was not included in a session on the subcontinent. This year, Manjushree Thapa, Narayan Wagle, and Sujeev Shakya were invited to several panels, including 'Fractious Borders: The Ups and Downs of Himalayan Relationships' and 'Nepal...in Search of a Song' (see p 7).

The former session, meant to have featured speakers from Bhutan and Afghanistan, was pared down by circumstance, allowing Wagle and Shakya to spar with Nirupama Rao, the Indian Foreign Secretary who had just flown in from a Nepal visit herself. What followed, within the confines of what Rao could actually say, was sometimes piky.

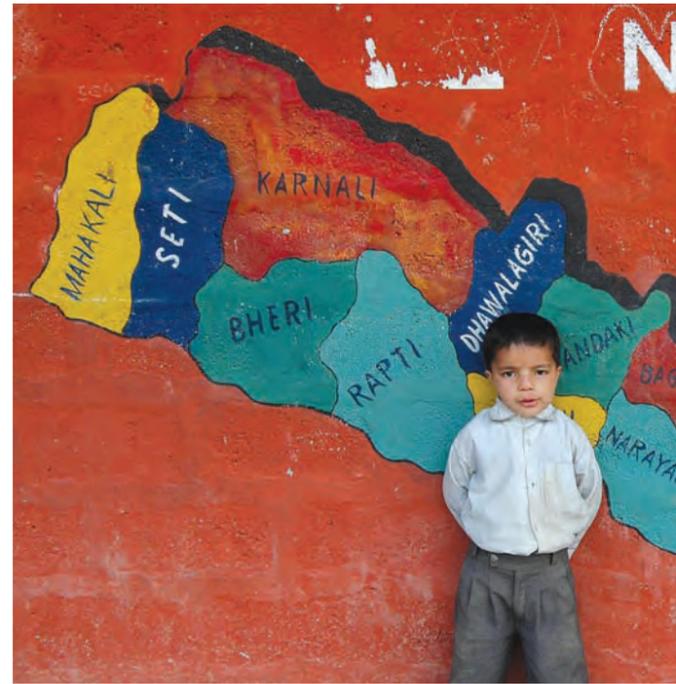
Shakya focused on the economic aspects of the relationship, emphasising the future of economic integration with India. As expected, Wagle was more political. His characterisation of Nepal as India-locked (while underlining the age-old bonds between the two countries) immediately put Rao on the defensive, prompting her to suggest that 'India holds the key'. This was taken up by one of the audience members, who declared that all South Asian states needed a 'master key'.

Rao explained that she hadn't meant India held the key for the entire region, but with a combative audience by no means sympathetic to the idea of India as hegemon, she was walking in

a minefield. Nonetheless, she assured the Nepalis present that there were no plans afoot to fence the border. Wagle had earlier noted that in the wake of the Mumbai attacks, had there been evidence that a single terrorist had crossed over from Nepal, this would have been the Indian response. The open border would remain open, Rao confirmed. Better management of this border would, however, be key.

Rao also suggested that South Asia had to grow up (as Europe did, through much strife, from the 19th century on) and restore the radial connections with Southeast Asia that have been snapped of late. India, she said, only wished the best for its neighbours, this being in its own interest. Of course, such a statement from the Foreign Secretary, uttered at a literature festival, amount to a hill of beans in the face of all the grievances India's neighbours would cite.

This week, Nepal's president is on a low-key visit to India. It is an opportunity lost that he wasn't deemed important enough to be at the Republic Day function in New Delhi. Despite his ceremonial role as head of state, Ram Baran Yadav's visit can still be put to use to correct imbalances in our asymmetric relationship by building trust and lift bilateral relations from one based on emotional gut-reaction to more stable ties founded on mutual respect. Nepal's overwhelming economic and political dependence on India is not in India's national interest, either. Nepali politicians, too, have to rise above knee-jerk nationalism and stop playing reckless brinkmanship that ends up harming our



DEEPENDRA BAJRACHARYA

own interests. The real question is not what degree of influence India has on our politics, it is what we are going to do about a moribund economy that isn't able to create jobs for our citizens, million of whom have to escape to India for employment.

In Jaipur, the audience once more reminded the panelists that they had neglected to even speak of China, whose policies determine India's reactive ones. Perhaps India also needs to grow up.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

LENIN GURU

Re: Prashant Jha's column (Fork in the path in Nepal, # 537). The two major disagreements between Babu Ram Bhattarai and Pushpa Kamal Dahal seem to be on two points only: both want to capture the state, Prachanda wants to do it sooner and Bhattarai later, Bhattarai believes somehow India will be helpful to achieve this, and Prachanda believes India will be an obstacle. They agree on all other points. Both are devout disciples of Gurus Lenin and Mao. Here are some of Lenin's teachings:

'To rely upon conviction, devotion, and other excellent spiritual qualities; that is not to be taken seriously in politics.'
'There are no morals in politics, there is only expedience. A scoundrel may be of use to us just because he is a scoundrel.'
'One man with a gun can control 100 without one.'

'When one makes a Revolution, one cannot mark time, one must always go forward, or go back. He who now talks about the "freedom of the press" goes backward, and halts our headlong course towards Socialism.'

'The press should be not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, but also a collective organizer of the masses.'

Anil

- The Maoists are neither a movement nor a political party. It is a Mafia organisation and the behavior of its leaders is consistent with this fact.

Jange

- Why not skip the gossip as though you were quoting Prachanda and Bhattarai? Neither of them said anything like what is said on their behalf by Prashant Jha. It is just pure gossip.

Why not discuss the "genuine differences over political line". Wouldn't that be more useful?

Arthur

- Why do we need to wait for Prachanda and Baburam to agree? Do they represent you or me? Just because two people cannot compromise, it must be their personal problem, nothing to do with the rest of the country. Keep the agreements with them intact and get on with the life.

Vija Shrestha

the likes of Kunda Dixit that the Maoists were more than willing to transform. Only a dictatorial king (who was trying to hold long-delayed elections, by the way) stood in the way. Now nearly 6 years later, the Maoists still show little sign of "transforming".

Satya Nepali

GROSS NATIONAL SADNESS

After reading CK Lal's review of Tek Nath Rizal's book (Gross National Misery, #537) I was reminded of meeting a Bhutanese of Nepalese origin many years ago who was a passionate patriot and loved his king sincerely. He sang praises for his king and the privileges he enjoyed as a college student (free high quality education, etc.). Eight years later he called me from Damak to inform me that he was living there as a refugee. My heart ached for him and I was speechless. I could not understand how it could happen to a hard working, honest monarchist who would have died for Bhutan. I now hear he is in US. Why do bad things happen to good people?

R Rai

- Rizal + His Life Story = Truth
Rizal + His Rage+ Blame to Countries/UN = Suicidal to the Democratic Struggle

Dick Chhetri

- India's role in the Bhutanese refugee fiasco is the proverbial hidden iceberg in this whole sorry saga. Rajiv Gandhi instigated the Druk monarch to carry out ethnic cleansing of Lotshampas in 1990, the same time his regime engineered the political change in Nepal. India's role in all this is the real story that needs to be uncovered...but how can we expect Nepali Times and its columnists to do so when they are totally under India's spell?

BB

Nothing can move in Bhutan without India's permission. The fault lies with the Indians who claim to be the greatest democracy in the world while historically supporting all suppressive neighbouring governments and at times undemocratic movements that suited their politics.

SSRJ



- ...or the movement can continue unhindered, if one of them is made a Trotsky or Lin Piao of Nepal.

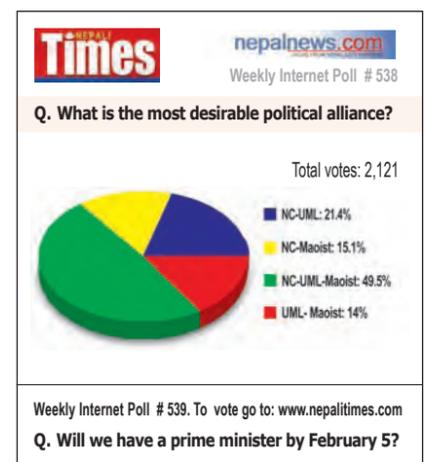
KK Sharma

TRANSFORMERS

Right, same old refrain from you for the past five years: the Maoists should "transform" themselves. (Editorial, Dahal on warpath again, # 537). Back in 2005 we were told by

- The Bhutan regime has earned a lot of bad karma for the ethnic cleansing of its population, the curse will fall on future generations of Bhutanese. You will notice that whenever the apologists for the regime (this includes European fascists) can't defend the indefensible human rights violations they unleashed, they will start insulting Nepal and Nepalis. Then there is Bhutan's sleeping partner, India, which is complicit in this crime.

Kiran L



The politics of the economy



PLAIN SPEAKING
Prashant Jha

Across the political spectrum, there is a consensus that Nepal needs to create more jobs. All parties also agree, at least theoretically, that this can happen only through a mixed economy approach where the government is a direct employer, besides creating an enabling environment for private investment.

Two news reports this week highlighted the state of state-driven employment. Amidst much fanfare, the Maoist government initiated the youth self-employment program. This was their flagship welfare initiative much like the build your own village programme of the short-lived UML government in the 90s. It was meant to provide vocational training, and loans without collateral to begin businesses.

More than 600,000 young people put in their applications. The Youth Self Employment Trust supposed to implement the initiative has Rs 4.5 billion in its coffers.

More than two years later, guess how many individuals have really benefited from the initiative? Rickshaws were distributed to 28 individuals in Dhangadi, and "a few thousand" received vocational

training. That's the extent of the achievement as admitted by those who run the program. The Trust has already passed on the buck, and claimed the delay in the budget-blocked progress.

Another news story reported on the government's privatization plans. Categorizing public enterprises into six different categories, a high level commission has recently asked the government to liquidate four companies, merge six others, divest its shares in four (including Hetauda Cement Factory, Janakpur Cigarette Factory), steer reforms in eight major ones (including Gorkhapatra, Nepal Television, Nepal Oil Corporation, Nepal Electricity Authority), operate eleven others under public-private partnership (like Udaypur Cement, Nepal Telecom, Nepal Airlines), and run six others as co-operatives with greater participation of stakeholders like farmers (Nepal Drugs, Dairy Development

Corporation, Agriculture Inputs Company).

The commission pointed to the gross lack of financial discipline and estimated that the government had lost 30 percent of its investment of Rs 86 billion in these public enterprises. Collectively, these undertakings are among the biggest employers in the country. Privatisation will inevitably shrink these opportunities.

Moving on the private sector, business leaders have repeatedly emphasised how "political instability" has hampered their prospects. The growth rate in the past four years after the peace process began is less than the rates of growth during the peak of the conflict, which is a reflection of the uncertainties that constrain investment but also the nature of the economy and growth itself.

Fragmentation of land, limited productivity, and growing aspirations of the young who do not want

to work in the fields is a natural, but toxic mix limiting agricultural growth. The transition to industrialisation is happening, at a painfully slow pace.

In Nepal we are yet to reach equilibrium between capital and labour, and between state and capital – this leads to insecurity and both businesses and labour move out. The service sector has grown, but that is not enough to cater to job demands in societies where equality of access and opportunity is a distant dream. With limited education and multiple layers of discrimination, a large section of the population can never aspire for such jobs.

It is tempting to point to the failed efforts of the state, blame the Maoists for ruining the industrial climate, and then focus solely on making it easier for private capital to operate as the panacea for unemployment. Are state enterprises doomed to fail,

or are there political and economic forces which benefit from ruining them? There is a need for more detailed look at which public functionaries were in charge when many of these units became dysfunctional, which lobbies back them, and whether they can be reformed. What are the consequences of rampant privatization? A Birgunj-based political activist often points out how the closure of public enterprises in the central Tarai belt left thousands unemployed, providing fodder to the violent militancy in the region. How can the state be forced to implement its schemes and promises? Besides focus on the delivery mechanisms, perhaps it is time to think of a national rural employment guarantee scheme, on the lines of the Indian model which has partially dealt with rural distress.

Nepal's political economy is such that only a mixed economy can build on its diverse strengths. The challenge is in finding a political balance where the market wallahs shed their dogma, and state fundamentalists open up. 

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A default state

The far-west isn't "far", it is being denied resources



GUEST COLUMN
Bibhav Acharya

Of all the factors that keep the people of Achham and other districts in far-western Nepal deprived, perhaps the most important is poor transportation. Roads, where they exist, are rough, narrow and dangerous.

Lack of bridges and frequent landslides make getting from here to there even harder, slowing down essential supplies like food and medicines, and making it difficult to get the sick to hospital.

Western Nepalis are often described as being "resource-poor". While not incorrect, this phrase is misleading in districts like Achham. For example, landslides and their consequences are usually portrayed as unfortunate "natural" disasters. Actually they are largely man-made because the agencies that could have helped prevent them and rushed relief after they occur are portrayed as unable to deal with such an overwhelming "act of god".

Inaction is thus excused and the lack of response becomes the norm. The rugged topography of western Nepal makes roads difficult to build and maintain, but much of the inaccessibility is caused by poor design, corruption, and the lack of a maintenance ethic. When a landslide does occur, waiting several days for the debris to be cleared is a given and people have never expected emergency services to be immediately pressed into action.

When roads are blocked, the prices of commodities shoot up. Transportation costs are high even in the best of times because of cartelling by bus and truck syndicates. Estimates put fares at up to 55 per cent higher than what they should be. This is not because the far-west is "far", but because the poor in the region are the victims of anti-competition price-fixing. Cartelling is commonplace all over the country, but it is especially damaging in the far-west where people just cannot afford the markup in prices of food and medications.

When we think of a region as "resource-poor", suffering is presented as a default state and no one is asked to take responsibility for causing it. This bolsters the fatalistic belief that people suffer because they happen to live in a "resource-poor" part of the country. Actually, resource deprivation is a consequence of the denial of resources.



BIBHAV ACHARYA

STUCK IN THE MUD: Passengers try to push their jeep out of a landslide on the only road that connects Achham to the rest of Nepal.

In a well-functioning democracy, the residents of far-western Nepal would be able to hold their governing bodies accountable for the inequitable distribution of resources. In Nepal, the accepted form of protest is to block roads but for the people of Achham this is not an option because the paved road ends in the district.

The first thing we can do is recognise that although resources are scarce, we should stop calling western Nepal "resource-poor". This distorts the reality, and lets those who are responsible for preserving the status quo get away with it.

Let us put pressure on those with resources to improve road conditions, respond to landslides and loosen their grip on the poor by opening up transportation options in this remote, impoverished and resource-denied region. 🇳🇵

Bibhav Acharya is with Nyaya Health, which operates the Bayalpata Hospital in Achham in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Population.

<http://www.nyayahealth.org/>



MICHAEL COX

Missionary zeal

MICHAEL COX

Despite the spread of new hospitals in towns across Nepal, doctors are still reluctant to serve in remote areas. The newly established Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) aims to change all that by training doctors who are committed to working in the districts.

The retention of doctors, especially in government hospitals in rural areas, has always been a problem in Nepal, and PAHS aims to

after they graduate, and Karki is confident that his plan will work because inculcating a sense of motivation and commitment are an important part of the school's philosophy.

"We want to produce health care personnel with a social responsibility and a keen desire to work in remote areas," says Karki, "we want to help strengthen the national health system, but not create a parallel structure to the Ministry of the Health."

This year, PAHS

HERE AND HERE: Arjun Karki points to the 22 districts of Nepal that are classified as "remote" and where his students will go when they graduate to be doctors.

they're posted as interns in rural hospitals as part of the course. "The hidden objective is to expose them to the disparity of opportunity and health care in this country," says Karki.

Nepal's private and government medical schools produce 1,500 doctors each year, but half of them migrate overseas and the ones that stay in Nepal choose to work in urban areas.

The six-year PAHS program will try to change this and more importantly combat the two-decade difference in life expectancy between people living in Kathmandu and those in remote districts like Mugu.

PAHS will also work on improving public health through awareness about communicable diseases in remote areas through their doctor placements. He adds: "Until people are prosperous and have the means to find a way out of the poverty cycle, people will be vulnerable to diseases." 🇳🇵

New Nepal medical school aims to motivate students to serve in rural areas

change that by making a paradigm shift in medical school philosophy, a part of its curriculum.

"We have a clear mission to extend health care to people outside the Valley," says Arjun Karki, founder and vice chancellor of PAHS, "we select students by assessing their academic ability and humanistic qualities."

In this year's batch of pioneer students, for instance, 60 per cent of those enrolled are from underprivileged families. Their scholarships require them to work for two to four years in rural areas. If they don't, they won't get to graduate. The remaining 40 per cent are not obliged to go, but Karki hopes they will.

The students will be posted to remote area hospitals every six months for two weeks each so they get over their fear of the unknown, and get to see how they can make a difference right from the start of their training.

PAHS collaborates with the Ministry of Health for the placement of future physicians into rural areas

selected 60 of the finest medical students from over 2,000 applicants, focusing on a holistic model that emphasised personal qualities that could potentially change attitudes in health care workers. The idea was to ensure that more compassionate and empathetic physicians will enter the public health system.

The students will face their first real test when

e-Medicine

Telemedicine is about to take off in a big way with Patan Hospital and its affiliated Patan Academy of Health Sciences implementing a program to help in the diagnosis and care of patients in remote areas via the Internet. PAHS hopes that its interns and graduates will also be able to refer patients to Patan when they are placed in remote parts of the country. Patan already has five doctors assisting district hospitals with feedback on patients.

Telemedicine is already working through a prototype in 20 villages in Myagdi, Kaski and Parbat districts conducted by Nepal Wireless Network Project, a brainchild of Mahabir Pun. The project has also been extended to Makwanpur, Palpa and Dolakha. Doctors at the Model Hospital in Kathmandu regularly consult patients and health workers at the Gaurishankar Hospital in Dolakha via webcam.

The Indian government announced this week that it would help Nepal with a Rs 30 million telemedicine project that will allow Nepali doctors to refer cases via the Internet to medical facilities in India.

The slap that shook Nepal



STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari

Devi Prasad Regmi got applause from people right across the country for smacking a political leader on the face

How long have you been reading about “imminent consensus” among political parties in Nepal? Yet after the 16th failed parliamentary elections for a new Prime Minister, bickering goes on and on among the *taukeys*.

So tired have the people been of the *netas*' interest in their own survival rather than in getting down to the business of completing the constitution that when a Devi Prasad Regmi slapped the “cotton-soft cheeks” of Jhala Nath Khanal, letters to editor sections, Nepali blogosphere and Facebook comment spaces lit up with emotions of approval. Many commentators hailed Regmi as a hero. Some urged that Khanal's peers should also be slapped “for destroying the country”.

Slaps may provide temporary relief. But they don't solve long-term problems. Media and civil society can, however, take cues from Regmi's slap to help create a climate of accountability from which even Khanal cannot escape.

What can the media do? It's no secret that Nepali language media is dominated by either political party sympathisers (clue: when you see Madhav Nepal on too many magazine covers, you

can guess where the editors' political affiliations lie) or political party aspirants (clue: *taukey* politicians are given star treatment on talk shows, radio interviews and new analyses).

Such journalists like to impress one another with the demonstration of their access and proximity to politicians. Is it any surprise, then, that headlines and cover stories are all about the same old dysfunctional politics?

In other countries, journalists are adept at routinely re-using news archives to show the contrast between what the politicians said at one point in time, and what they did later. Repeated often, this simple device has an unnerving effect: either the politicians will be proven to be brazen liars who should face electoral wrath or they will end up doing close to what they said they would do.

In either case, by showing the contrast between the past and the present, media can help inject a sense of accountability in the political discourse. Else, politics will continue to be seen as some sort of a flowing river: what happens today is treated as fresh news, with no connection to what the politicians did in recent past. And a chance for the media to champion accountability will be lost.

What can civil society do? Behind every Nepali civil society leader is an NGO in need of funds and support from donors, government and political parties. This is not a cynical observation, but an acknowledgement of the realities of our civil society dynamics. Except for a few who are either retired or wealthy, most

such leaders are constrained when it comes to what they can say and do. The result is that their roles become too NGO-fied, with their being more interested in getting along nicely than in acting as public spokespersons.

In such a context, the least civil society leaders can do is not continue to wax eloquent about the platitudes about democracy to the point of mass irritation, but to challenge the politicians to make their visions and pronouncements specific and concrete: will the constitution

be written by May? If not, why? What specific ideas do the parties have to stop holding the ambitions of millions of Nepalis hostage just because their leaders cannot get their act together to govern the country? Is it Nepal's destiny to merely be the armpit of land between the fast growing economies of China and India?

There's no point expecting the politicians to strike light and transform themselves: they simply won't change on their own. What can be changed is our collective response to politics in the public sphere through a media and civil society that values accountability over antics. 



DAMBER KRISHNA SHRESTHA

Free check-up

Skoda has launched a nationwide Free Winter Check-up Camp for customers across the country. The camp offers comprehensive check-up and a thorough examination of parts as well as service and repair on all makes and models. Customers can also get free car washes, test drives and attractive discounts on all spare parts.

All new Tucson

Laxmi Intercontinental, the sole dealer of Hyundai cars in Nepal, has launched the next generation Tucson in Nepal. The new Tucson's exterior is sharp, with a flowing, European design, with graphic elements including a hexagonal front grille, lower air intake, sculptured hood creases, contemporary headlights and modern wrap-around taillights.

Easy money

Bank of Kathmandu has installed two ATMs at Civil Mall, Sundhara and Bluebird Mall, Tripureshwar, Kathmandu. It now has 47 ATMs across Nepal. The Bank's visa cards can be used for withdrawal and transaction purposes in the POS machines in departmental stores, hospitals and hotels.

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MY TAKE

Damakant Jayshi

Will the Nepali Congress squander the gains made so far regarding the peace process? Or will it come across as a poor copy of the UML by trying various means to prevent a Maoist-led government?

Though the possibility of a consensus government under the Maoists has not been completely ruled out until presstime Thursday noon, the roadblocks from the NC and UML remain. The Maoists have finally delivered on their commitment to bring its army under a government-led Special Committee. The risks of the party backtracking (thanks to its history over honouring commitments) and the vacating of cantonments by Maoist ex-combatants not happening are great. But this should not prevent the non-

Maoist parties from taking reciprocal action.

The likes of Shekhar Koirala understand what is at stake. He is among those advocating a Maoist-led government provided it makes true its peace-related promises. But some of his own partymen (the so-called hardline faction espousing the no-Maoist-led-government-at-all line) are working behind scenes to not let this happen.

The NC has made all the right moves except making a big mistake over its choice of ministers to represent the party in the UML-led government, thus paralysing itself from day one. Apart from this, the NC stood behind Madhav Kumar Nepal as prime minister through thick and thin even when his own party chairman, Jhala Nath Khanal, did not support

him. The Maoists and their apologists tried everything in their arsenal, blowing the trumpet of civilian supremacy over its failed attempt to dismiss the army chief, characterising the government as a bunch of losers (without mentioning Maoist choice for president,

It also called the Maoists' bluff on another extension for UNMIN despite pressure from some European embassies. The NC also refused to withdraw the candidacy of Ram Chandra Poudel unless the Maoists relented.

And now when the Maoists have delivered, in part, their side of the deal, the NC is unwilling to play its part. UML chief Khanal will do and say anything to prevent any government which does not have him as prime minister. But why does the NC have to compete with

him in obduracy?

During the discussions at the Gokarna Resort on Tuesday, the Maoists objected to the NC and the UML trying to link government formation with the peace process, insisting

the two are separate. They are not. The whole idea behind having a new, consensus, government is to complete the remaining tasks of the peace process and finalising the constitution. That was the argument of Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Khanal when they worked together to force PM Nepal's resignation as prime minister. Nepal commanded a majority in the parliament and still does. He had resigned to break the deadlock.

The deadline for consensus government is over, but its possibility has not ended. The NC and the UML can, and should, choose not to field any candidate in the election for prime minister in the parliament. Let Dahal lead the government, with important ministries like defence, finance and home going to non-Maoist parties, including Madhes-based ones.

Not making the maximum use of the latest Maoist step (coupled with the ex-combatants' desire to leave the cantonments to integrate into security forces or rehabilitate into society) will be a huge loss. And the NC will have to shoulder the most of the blame.

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The deadline for a consensus government is over, but its possibility has not ended.

Ram Raja Prasad Singh and UML leader Bam Dev Gautam's election status), a disastrous five-day nationwide strike, and disruptions of parliamentary proceedings including the passage of the annual government budget.

THIS WEEK

Revised rules

The Parliament on Tuesday adopted new regulations on the election of prime ministers, which was just as well because talks to form a consensus government broke down and the legislature may have to conduct elections again for the country's top job.

As per the new rules, the entire election process will terminate after the third round in case of no result. A candidate must secure 301 votes in case of a single contestant for the post but in case of two or more nominations, and if all candidates fail to win majority, everyone becomes eligible for the second round and the lawmakers can only vote 'for' the candidates. If the second round yields no result, the final round will be conducted between the top two candidates.

Otherwise, the process automatically terminates to allow the House to go for a fresh election through the same or new procedures as no lawmaker can abstain from voting or avoid the House session. The rules still have loopholes, but they are an improvement.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Tiger via satellite

While dignitaries were attending the handover ceremony at Shaktikhor, in another part of Chitwan national park officials were fitting a trial satellite tracking device on a tiger that was found wounded in a resort a year ago. The tiger was then translocated 400 km away to Bardia National Park. The special collar carrying a GPS tracking system will allow scientists to monitor its activities in a new place. Bardia is an ideal home for the animal because of its vast size and plentiful prey. The government said the initiative, carried out with the help of experts from WWF, would also help to improve understanding of how the endangered animals behave in the wild.

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NEPALI KUKUR

Day 1

Jaipur seems bigger and more anonymous every time I return. The Jaipur Literature Festival, too, is growing by the year, with over 100 sessions spread over four venues and five days in the sprawling grounds of the Diggi Palace Hotel. But if crowd crush is an inconvenience at sessions with marquee authors such as Orhan Pamuk, Vikram Seth, Martin Amis, Kiran Desai and Junot Diaz – with tens of thousands swarming the fest on the weekend – the essence of such a gathering remains, to quote opening speaker Karan Singh:

“Prose is written to be read
Poetry is written to be heard”

The passion for both forms is what ties the diverse Jaipur audiences together. Shabdabrahma awaits you, quoth Singh, and we were ready to be beguiled by the divine word.

An early highlight was Orhan Pamuk, expounding on the themes of cultural change in the context of Turkey. His accented, rather mechanical sounding English belied an acid, self-deprecating humour, and a very clear sense of his mission as an author. But the patience one would imagine necessary to recreating the milieu of medieval Ottoman miniaturists, as in ‘My name is red’, wasn’t much in evidence come question time.

“I really like your—
“Yes, yes. Next question!”



NEPALI KUKUR

Jaipur diary

This year's literature festival was bigger than ever, and even made space for Nepal

Day 2

‘Strangers in the Mist’, a discussion on the Indian Northeast’s gloomier prospects, triggered reflections on the pitfalls inherent in a state’s dealings with ethnic communities. With 220 ethnic groups making up a population of 40 million – “an anthropologist’s delight, and an administrator’s nightmare” – according to panelist Sanjoy Hazarika, the Northeast is an example of how not to ‘do’ federal Nepal. The tragedy here is not only in the truth of massacres, rapes and disappearances, but also in the fact the young novelists like Assam’s Aruni Kashyap can only write about violence, because they have “never known what it is like not to live under the shadow of a gun”. The success of Indian democracy, he concluded, “is that it has managed to create apathy amongst urban populations towards the plight of those in rural areas.”

Day 3

JM Coetzee’s reading was probably the most anticipated event of the festival. A spare, upright, white haired man of 70, he could not have seemed more different from last year’s Nobel Laureate, Nigerian author Wole Soyinka. But for forty-five minutes, reading from ‘Elizabeth Costello’ in his precise, measured tones, the South African achieved the same

effect on the Front Lawns of the festival venue. Layers upon layers, in unblinking, limpid prose: you could not ask for more of a novelist.

And what of philosophy, beloved and daunting? Following Coetzee’s meditative reading, AC Grayling’s ‘secular sermon’ sought to dispel the fear of seeking answers to ‘what is’ and ‘what matters’. This quest, for Grayling, is a responsibility if we are to live better lives, and make use of the third of the 1000-odd months that are available to us for serious living, learning, and loving. Further, if we are to be able to have “the degree of latitude with which to seek the ethical”, we need individual autonomy and freedom of expression. Authoritarians across the world well fear the Graylings of our age, because the sword has no chance against pens wielded with such passionate, articulate intelligence.

Day 4

Whether to write in one’s mother tongue or an ‘imperial’ one is a debate that has been going on for as long as postcolonial literatures have existed. Nigeria’s Chinua Achebe and Kenya’s Ngugi wa Thiong’o slugged it out decades ago, the latter ultimately forsaking English for his mother tongue, Gikuyu. Nigeria’s Chimamanda Adichie, author of ‘Half a yellow sun’, faced the same question in Jaipur, as did authors in a

later session on ‘Imperial English’.

JM Coetzee, in typically sparing fashion, defined the dilemma facing those with ‘dual lives’. The mother tongue is the private sphere; the imperial is the public sphere of school and work. Unsentimentally, Coetzee dismissed the idea that there was anything special about mother tongues: “You claim ownership of a language as you master it.” A tonic for those who suffer the guilt of writing in a language defined as ‘imperial’ or at best, ‘foreign’.

What then to make of Roberto Calasso, the Italian who has made Sanskrit his own? In a repeat performance of last year, Calasso held his audience in thrall as he spoke of how the Vedas describe the ascent of man. How the first seed of the mind appeared, how man transformed himself from prey to predator, how he begins to reflect on the self, and actualises meaning through rituals. For Calasso, ‘the knowledge that transforms the knower’ is a particularity of Vedic knowledge that has been lost to the moderns.

Day 5

A generalised mental exhaustion was apparent on the fifth day. Four days of browsing some of the best minds of our time; four nights of dousing our own minds with alcohol. Still we soldiered on.

One of the few Chinese writers at Jaipur, Hong Ying, partnered with the ever-articulate Isabel Hilton for an illuminating session on our giant northern neighbour. Saviour or desecrator? “Everything you say about China is both true and untrue,” said Hilton, noting that China knows its power, but also fears that there may not be enough space for it to pursue its developmental agendas. Therein the bluster, but also the foresight to recognise and plan for the environmental limits of the planet.

The build-up for the Nepali contingent, of course, was towards the session titled ‘Nepal...in search of a song’. Despite an unfortunate clash with separate sessions starring Vikram Seth and Irvine Welsh, the decent-sized audience that turned out to see Manjushree Thapa, Narayan Wagle and Sujeev Shakya wasn’t just Nepali. With Shakya moderating, Thapa and Wagle spoke of the difficult transition of the past two decades, which Thapa characterised as ‘a struggle for the soul of the left’. Readings from both illustrated the role the insurgency has played in the cultural and political psyche of Nepal. Ultimately, it was Wagle who struck a balance between the ‘ultra-optimism’ of Shakya and the frustration expressed by Thapa. If the politics is sorted out, he suggested, “the people will take the process forward.”

If all weeks were like Jaipur’s last, we’d be a long way up the road.



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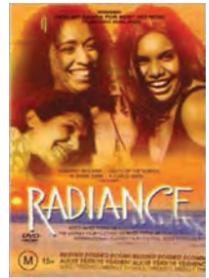
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The ozzie character in film

"Australia is a relatively small country and we've recently become known in Hollywood; at the same time we have retained our Australian character. I think Nepalis will appreciate the eccentricity and friendship portrayed in these films. Hopefully it will give the audience a good taste of Australian cinema."

Australian Ambassador, Susan Grace



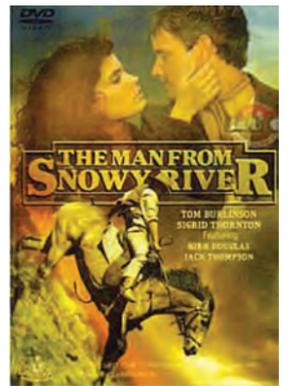
Directed by Rachel Perkins, this film confronts themes of unfinished business and family secrets.

30 January, 5pm, open to the public

The man from Snowy River

102 min
Drama and Romance
Directed by George Miller starring Kirk Douglas and based on the Banjo Patterson poem. This Australian film is a legendary part of film history that depicts the horsemanship of Australian bushman.

31 January 2.30pm, open to the public



Six pack from down under

The Australian film festival that kicks off Friday has six movies that touch on almost every genre. The festival is set to portray the Australian character at its best with unconventional themes. All screenings are at the Russian Cultural Centre, Kamal Pokhari.

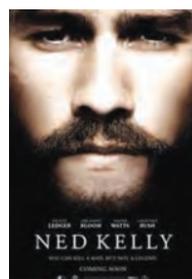
Mary and Max

92 min
Animation and Comedy
A Melanie Coombs produced, animated feature film is about a young girl Mary, living in the suburbs of Melbourne, and Max, a 44-year-old Jewish obese man living in New York. Their pen-friendship survives many ups and downs in this eccentric and funny film.

28 January, 6pm by invitation only and 31 January, 5pm open to the public

British protagonist is a soldier, poet and convicted war criminal.

29 January, 2.30pm, open to the public



Ned Kelly

110 min
Crime and History
This film based on a true story that stars Australia's Heath Ledger

who tragically died in 2008. The film is about Ned Kelly, an Australian outlaw, who carried out a series of robberies with a gang between the years 1878-1880. The outlaw is known for his bizarre use of body armor while he was on the run from police.

29 January, 5pm, open to the public

Lantana

120 min
Thriller
Lantana is a physiological thriller that portrays themes of love, deceit, sex and death.

Produced by Jan Chapman, a woman disappears and four marriages are drawn into a tangled web of love.

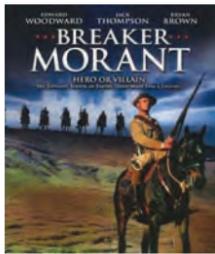
30 January 2.30pm, open to the public



Radiance

81 min
Family

Three sisters are able to put to rest the ghosts of their pasts and the ashes of their mother's body.



Breaker Morant

104 min
Drama

One of Australia's most famous war films based on the Boer War in South Africa is based on the court material of Harry 'Breaker' Morant and his skill with horses that gave him the nickname 'Breaker.' The

Tickets are available from the Australian Embassy gate and from the Russian Cultural Centre, once the festival commences.
01-4371678 (Ext 114)

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EVENTS

Grahan: an eclipse, exhibition of paintings by Sagar Manandhar. 23 January to 6 February, Gallery Hours: 10.30am to 5.30pm, Saturdays closed, Park Gallery, RN Joshi Center for Fine Art, Pulchok

The Australian Film Roadshow, six award-winning movies from Australia. 28 to 31 January, Russian Cultural Centre, Kamalpokhari, free passes at Australian Embassy, 4371678, more on opposite page



Discussion on the movie La vita é bella. 29 January, 3pm to 4.30pm, British Council, Lazimpat. himalayanbookclub@gmail.com, 9849100300 for confirmation

Book launch of 'Bhaktapur- Courage to walk new paths' and 'Whose City Is This? Yo Sahar Kasko Ho?' featuring experiences of 27 Nepali poets and closing of paintings exhibition "Let's Talk about Art Baby!" by Sujan Chitrakar. 30 January, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, 4218048 / 4438979

Royal Nepal 1930: Through the lens of Richard Gordon Matzene, book launch and exhibition of rare photographs. 4 February to 18 February, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, 4218048 / 4438979

Presentation on 'Forbidden Kindgom of Upper Mustang' by John Sanday, annual membership event of the Cultural Studies Group, Nepal. 4 February, 10am, Shankar Hotel, Lazimpat, membership fee for 2011: Rs 1500

Mystic muse, exhibition of paintings and mixed media works by artist Chirag Bangdel. Till 6 February, Chai Chai Gallery and Café, Jhamsikhel

CAN Info Tech, latest products, technologies and software solutions. 1 February to 6 February, Exhibition hall, Bhrikuti Mandap

Bal Utsav, celebration of young talents, organized by Yes! Club World Nepal and Nepal's Children Organization. Till 31 January, 11am to 4pm, Art Of Living, New Baneshwor Centre, 9803039750

Tai Chi 3 month course, 13-form Yang style with Gold medalist Ang Babu Lama. Starts 22 January, 9am to 10.30 am, 1 week course, starting every Monday, Yoga: Monday and Thursdays 7 to 8.15 am, Sunday 8 to 9.15 am, Meditation class: Mon 6 to 7 pm, Thursday 7 to 8 pm, Himalayan Buddhist Meditation Centre, Ekantakuna, 98088 91048 / 9841224368, hbmc.programs@gmail.com, www.fpmt-hbmc.org

MUSIC

Shanti Utsav, music for peace. 28 January, 3.30pm to 6.30pm, Aksheswor Mahavihar, Pulchok

Absolute Live Music, by Rashmi & Kitcha Band every Friday and performances by Shabnam & Cannabiz Band every Wednesday. 7.30pm onwards, Absolute bar, Hotel Narayani Complex, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, 5521408, 5549504, abar@wlink.com.np

Sunday Jazz Brunch, enjoy a relaxing Sunday in The Terrace at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu with barbeque and live jazz music by Inner Groove. 12pm to 3.30pm, Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4491234/4489362 Live music by Dinesh Rai and the Sound Minds. Every Friday, 7.30pm onwards, Fusion Bar, Dwarika's Hotel, Battispatali

Baja Gaja playing live. Every Tuesday, 7.30pm onwards, Moksh, Pulchok, 5526212

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

Lhakpa Chulo, try the tender steaks and Thai-style salads. Jhamsikhel, open for lunch and dinner daily except Wednesdays

Pumpnickel Bakery, get an early breakfast or brunch with interesting choices of bread and sandwiches. Experiment with their goat cheese or yak cheese sandwiches, or have a sip of coffee in the classy indoor dining area. Thamel, 7.30am to 7pm, 4259185

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

Newari Saanjh at Hotel Himalaya, local flavours to warm you up this winter. Every Friday, 6.30pm onwards, Rs 1100 Nett per person, Hotel Himalaya, Kopundole

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



Waffles promotion at The Lounge from 12.30pm to 4.00pm every day, **Vegetarian Buffet at The Café** every Tuesday from 6.30pm, and **Arabian Nights at The Café** every Friday from 6.30pm at Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4491234, 4489362

The Kaiser Cafe Restaurant & Bar, enjoy a pleasant BBQ lunch in the ambient settings of The Garden of Dreams. Every Sunday, 12pm to 3pm, Kaiser Mahal, Thamel, Rs 1200 per person, 4425341

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

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

GETAWAYS



Park Village Resort, Saturdays and Sundays combo package with swimming, lunch and a bottle of beer.

Budhanilkantha, Rs 990 for adults and Rs 800 for children, call 4375280 for reservations

The Dwarika's Himalayan Shangri-La Village Resort, overnight package with accommodation, dinner and breakfast. Dhulikhel, Rs 3500 (single), Rs 5000 (double), 10 percent service charge extra, call 4479488 for reservations

Club Himalaya, for amazing mountain views and refreshing weekend escapades, special package available for Nepalis and expatriates. Nagarkot, 4410432

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भारतीय राजदूत, काठमाण्डू
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA
KATHMANDU



On the auspicious occasion of the 62nd Republic Day of India, I extend warm greetings to all Indians and our friends in Nepal.

The formation of the Republic on 26th January 1950 was the first milestone in our march towards realizing the dreams of our people after Independence. The new Constitution gave expression to the goals, ideals and values that had guided our freedom struggle. It laid the foundations of the structure of governance and committed to secure for all citizens – justice, liberty and equality as well as dignity. The Constitution, since its adoption, has been our astute guide.

We are the largest democracy in the world and one of the most stable. We have held 15 general elections to Parliament, in which power has been transferred to different political parties and groups according to the mandate of the people. Following the Constitutional Amendments in 1992, we introduced democracy at the grassroots level. Presently there are 3.4 million representatives who have been elected to representative bodies in villages, towns and cities. We are also proud of the fact that more than 40% of these elected representatives are women. This is by far the largest number of elected representatives ever in history, or anywhere in the contemporary world.

Despite the uncertain global economic scenario, India's economy is growing at unprecedented rates and we are confident that we will be able to achieve the targets we have set for ourselves. In the last two quarters, the growth rate of Indian economy has been 8.9% and for the entire year it is expected to be around 8.5%. From next year, the growth rate is expected to average between 9 and 10%. The impressive strides of the Indian economy have resulted in the emergence of India as a powerful player in the global economy. This century will belong to Asia and India will be one of the main driving forces.

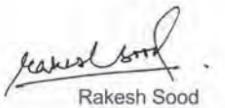
2010 had been a busy year for Indian diplomacy. We had the honour of receiving Heads of States/Governments from 24 countries including from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The world expects India to play a more important role in the management of global polity and economy. Our contributions whether in the G 20 or in the Climate Change conference held recently in Cancun were noteworthy and derived from our unique experience of tackling developmental challenges, with our emphasis on values and our tradition of building consensus among different sections and interests. We have this year become a member of the United Nations Security Council for a two-year term. We will play our due and commensurate role in the international bodies.

Growth in India can be the engine of growth for this region. India's booming economy, world class institutions and its expanding market are an opportunity for the people of South Asia. It especially offers tremendous prospects to the friendly people of Nepal who share a special, civilizational and fraternal relationship with India.

India remains steadfast in its commitment to extend assistance for Nepal's economic development and institutionalization of multi-party democracy. India's support continues to be in accordance with the wishes and priorities of the people and Government of Nepal. It is our wish that India-Nepal cooperation is further diversified in coming years for mutual benefit. We wish all of you success in your efforts to build a stable, peaceful, democratic and prosperous Nepal.

Jai Hind.

26 January 2011


Rakesh Sood

INDIAN DIPLOMACY: EXPANDING HORIZONS



"Thanks to the reform process begun by Dr. Manmohan Singh in the 1990s, the Indian tiger has been uncaged and its power can be felt around the world...India matters to the world because it is not only a rising power but a responsible power as well. You provide significant support to Afghanistan which we welcome, and your programmes in Nepal and Bhutan are vital."

- David Cameron, Prime Minister of UK



"For in Asia and around the world, India is not simply emerging; India has already emerged...I look forward to a reformed UN Security Council that includes India as a permanent member."

- Barack Obama, President of USA



"India's dual participation in the G20 and the Security Council for the 2010/2011 timeframe present a historic opportunity to step up joint work in these two bodies...It's of the utmost importance for the 21st-century world that India should remain this example of freedom, peace and progress; part of the world's future is played out here. It's crucial that India should take part in all the world's great debates. That's the reason why France is asking for India to join the Security Council as a permanent member. It's inconceivable that a billion Indians should not be represented permanently on the Security Council."

- Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France



"China and India are partners for cooperation, not rivals in competition. There is enough space in the world for the development of both China and India."

- Wen Jiabao, Chinese Premier

"India and Russia have a special relationship; it is not a figure of speech, but a matter of fact...Russia supports India as a deserving and strong candidate for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council as and when a decision for its expansion is taken."

- Dmitry Medvedev, President of Russia



"We in Nepal highly admire the significant progress that India has achieved in the past six decades of her independence. India's sustained and resilient economic growth over the years has been remarkable...As Nepal's economy is closely linked to India, we are positioned to reap maximum benefits from vast economic complementarities between our two countries."

- Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, President of Nepal



- In 2010 India hosted 24 Heads of States/ Governments and 30 Foreign Minister level visitors.
- In the second half of 2010, India hosted Heads of State/ Government of all the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.
- India won a rotating non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council with a record 187 votes out of 190 valid votes.

INDIAN PUBLIC DAY OF INDIA



INDIAN ECONOMY

- Fourth largest economy of the world on the basis of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)
- One of the most attractive destinations for business and investment due to huge manpower base, diversified natural resources and strong macro-economic fundamentals
- Economic reforms initiated since 1991 has been providing an investor-friendly environment through a liberalized policy framework spanning the whole economy
- Indian economy to register the second fastest growth between now and 2050 and emerge as the second biggest economy in the world by the middle of this century, according to a forecast released on January 7, 2011 by PriceWaterhouseCoopers
- India ranks second in terms of manufacturing competence as per the 2010 Global Manufacturing Competitiveness Index.
- On a cumulative basis, the FDI equity inflows received by India stood at US\$ 12.40 billion during April-October 2010, according to Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).
- India has emerged as one of the world's top ten countries in industrial production as per UNIDO's new report titled 'Yearbook of Industrial Statistics 2010'.
- Organized retail in India is expected to increase from 5 per cent of the total market in 2008 to 14 - 18 per cent of the total retail market and reach US\$ 450 billion by 2015, according to a McKinsey & Company report titled 'The Great Indian Bazaar: Organized Retail Comes of Age in India'.
- India, along with China, will become the world leaders in manufacturing competitiveness by 2015, according to a recently published 2010 Global Manufacturing Competitiveness Index.
- The total consumption in India is likely to quadruple making India the fifth largest consumer market by 2025, according to a McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) study titled 'Bird of Gold: The Rise of India's Consumer Market'.
- The Indian pharmaceuticals market is expected to reach US\$ 55 billion in 2020 from US\$ 12.6 billion in 2009, according to a report 'India Pharma 2020: Propelling access and acceptance, realising true potential' by McKinsey & Company.
- With more than 270 million connections, India's telecommunication network is the third largest in the world and the second largest among the emerging economies of Asia.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GROWING INDIA-NEPAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

Total Outlay: Over NRs. 5800 crores • 403 projects completed or currently being implemented • Covering all 75 districts of Nepal
More than NRs. 1700 crores pensions disbursed annually to Indian ex-servicemen • Around 1800 scholarships provided to Nepali students annually

SMALL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (SDPs):

- Under SDPs, Government of India (GoI) has built schools, Multiple Campuses, Specialized Training Institutes, Libraries, Primary Health Posts, Maternity Centers, Hospitals, Rural/Urban Roads and Bridges, Canals, Drinking Water Projects, Cold Storages, Eye Care Camps and have conducted river training projects and training of senior Government of Nepal (GoN) officials.
- Over 12 million beneficiaries
- 189 school projects ongoing or completed
- Gifted 302 ambulances and 58 buses to different organizations in Nepal over the last 15 years
- Since 1973, GoI has been providing assistance to the Goitre Control Programme which has helped bring down Goitre disorders from 44% of the population in 1985 to as low as 0.4% by 2007.
- Since 2001, GoI has worked with Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh providing free ophthalmic medical check-up to 4.25 lakh Nepalis and undertaken 75000 trachoma and cataract surgeries for visually impaired and provided spectacles and visual aids to over 18,000 school children.



Road Infrastructure in Terai

- The project envisages the construction of 19 roads in Phase I equalling 605 kms at a cost of NRs. 1100 crores. Phase I will be followed by Phase II covering 845 kms.
- Land for the roads has been acquired and the tendering process completed.
- 88 lakh people are expected to benefit from the emerging network.

India-Nepal Maitri Emergency & Trauma Centre in Kathmandu

- 8-floor structure with 200 beds facility being built with an estimated cost of NRs. 154 crores to be handed over to GoN in 2011
- It has state-of-the-art medical equipment, Emergency, Intensive Care Unit, 5 Operation Theatres, Laboratory, Diagnosis Area, Blood Bank, Treatment Wards, Seminar Room, Cafeteria, AC Plant, Power Sub-station, Backup DG Sets, Water Treatment Plant, Fire Fighting System etc.



Dakshinkali-Kulekhani Road link

- 26 km long road that forms a part of the 62 kms long Kathmandu-Hetauda road connecting the Kathmandu valley and the Terai region
- Cost of the project is NRs. 8.5 crores.
- Work is expected to be completed by October 2011.

Other upcoming projects

- Sabha Griha at Birgunj at an estimated cost of NRs. 40 crores
- Mahendranagar-Tanakpur road link with an estimated cost NRs. of 40 crores
- Polytechnic at Hetauda at an estimated cost of NRs. 36 crores
- Science Learning Centre at Khumaltar, Kathmandu at an estimated cost of NRs. 16 crores
- Eye Hospital at Kapilavastu at an estimated cost of NRs. 45 crores

MAJOR ONGOING PROJECTS: Development of Railway Infrastructure at 5 Border points along India-Nepal Border

- Cross border railway links at five locations on the India-Nepal border are being established- i) Jaynagar in India to Bardibas in Nepal (68 km); ii) Jogbani in India to Biratnagar in Nepal (17.65 km); iii) Nautanwa in India to Bhairahawa in Nepal (15.30 km); iv) Rupaidiha in India to Nepalgunj in Nepal (12.11 km); and v) New Jalpaiguri in India to Kakarbhitta in Nepal (39.92 km)
- Estimated cost of the first phase including the Jaynagar-Bardibas rail link and Jogbani-Biratnagar rail link is more than NRs. 1040 crores.

Development of Infrastructure at Four Border Check Posts along India-Nepal Border

- Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) are proposed at 4 points at India-Nepal border namely: Raxaul (India)-Birgunj (Nepal), Sunauli (India)-Bhairahawa (Nepal), Jogbani (India)-Biratnagar (Nepal) and Nepalgunj Road (India)-Nepalgunj (Nepal)
- Total cost is estimated at NRs. 392 crores.
- Construction work has started in Raxaul and Jogbani, on the Indian side and Birgunj on the Nepalese side.



Scholarships for Nepali students

- GoI provides nearly 1800 scholarships to Nepali students annually.
- 1100 scholarships are for students studying in Nepal.
- Others are for studies in India covering a range of disciplines from medicine, engineering, management, agricultural sciences, music and fine arts, cyber law, etc.
- More than 10,000 students benefited out of these schemes since 2005



Welfare of ex-servicemen

- Presently about 40,000 Gorkha soldiers are serving in the Indian Army and paramilitary forces.
- More than 1, 23, 000 Indian ex-servicemen get pensions in excess of NRs. 1700 crores annually.
- Annual expenditure for various welfare schemes for Pensioners is about NRs. 20 crores.
- More than 300 scholarships provided to children of ex-servicemen annually
- Around 1.24 lakhs worth NRs. 1.82 lakhs medical kits are distributed to all ex-servicemen annually.
- 17 solar electrification projects worth NRs. 33.25 crores have been implemented.
- 1017 drinking water projects worth NRs. 18 crores have been implemented for the villages of ex-servicemen.

Sick porters



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Travel in remote areas of the world requires pre-departure planning to augment limited or absent health services. Adequate preparation depends upon knowledge of commonly encountered local medical problems.

Travel medicine literature abounds in discussions of medical problems in tourists and trekkers although it is primarily limited to altitude and gastrointestinal problems.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Trekkers and climbers journey into remote areas in Nepal. Many employ local porters, but there is very scant literature on medical problems of porters.

To rectify this lack of knowledge, I carried out a study in the Manaslu region a decade ago where the elevation ranged from 480m to 5,100m. The trek started from Gorkha Bazaar and went to Arughat and followed the Budi Gandaki up to its origins near the treacherous Larkya Pass. Then down to Bhimthang and a little beyond past some Gurung villages

where the trail finally merges with the trekkers along the Marsyangdi River. The path ascends from here to Bahun Danda and finally to Beshisahar in Lamjung. In the late nineties when we did this trek there were no motorable roads till Beshisahar.

I studied a total of 132 Nepali porters during three trips (each trip lasted 22 days) around the Manaslu region. The porters were carrying loads of about 30 kg. In this study we did not include the Sherpa trekking staff as porters as the division of labour was clearly distinct. Persistent, bothersome high altitude cough followed by altitude sickness and gastroenteritis (diarrhoea) were the most common problems encountered amongst the porters. Other problems in this porter cohort included skin infections, fever, scabies, alcohol intoxication, snow blindness, conjunctivitis, and even anxiety attacks. Orthopaedic problems were conspicuously absent. Many people think that Nepali porters are immune to altitude sickness, and perhaps other illnesses, because they are natives. However this study showed that lowland porters are just as susceptible to high altitude illnesses as westerners and most Nepali ethnic groups. There is some evidence to suggest that Sherpas may be genetically protected from altitude sickness, but this is not yet a "done deal". This study clearly illustrates that expedition medical providers and trip leaders need to be observant and prepared to treat the frequent and diverse medical problems among the porter staff on the trek. 

GREEN SCENE

Now, the Safa Bus

There are now 800 electric-powered three wheel public transports in Kathmandu Valley. Few remember what a big leap forward it was in the mid-1990s to replace the polluting diesel tempos with electric ones.

Now, NEVI Tradelink which was involved in the Safa Tempo campaign, is taking green transportation initiative further by importing 100 per cent electric, ready-made buses from China. These 16-seater "Safa Buses" will be an ideal replacement for the three-wheelers which are too small for the Valley's commuting population. NEVI



plans to also import an "open-air" model of the bus and an electric four-door sedan.

"It was designed for the Beijing Olympics but we think it could be suitable for schools in Kathmandu too," says NEVI's Kiran Raj Joshi.

The bus is powered by a 67 volt, 6.3-kilowatt electric motor with a maximum range of 100 km and takes up to 8 hours for a full charge. It hums along Kathmandu's roads practically silently and with zero emission. With an exterior design that makes it look like a sleek caterpillar, it draws stares as we go on

a test drive through the city. The narrow chassis and large windows mean that occupants enjoy a feeling of being in a goldfish bowl on wheels. A basic list of features further justifies the vehicle's practicality: a 4-speed manual gearbox, drum brakes, no power steering and a leaf-spring suspension.

All of these features add up to a vehicle that is all work and no play, a quintessential people mover, and perhaps a perfect environment-friendly addition to Kathmandu's roads. With a price tag of Rs 1.65 million the Safa Bus may be an idea whose time has come for Kathmandu's choked roads.

Neil Dixit



DAMBER KRISHNA SHRESTHA

LAL SALAAM NO MORE: A Maoist ex-fighter smartly salutes Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal during the handover ceremony at Shaktikhor Camp in Chitwan on Saturday.



DAMBER KRISHNA SHRESTHA

PICTURE PERFECT: Two Maoist ex-guerrillas seemed more interested in taking pictures than on the speeches.



DAMBER KRISHNA SHRESTHA

FUTURE FAMILY: These women ex-combatants appear to have fully made the transition from war to peace.



MICHAEL COX

FLAG OF OUR FATHERS: The Maoist army flag that was supposed to be lowered and handed over to the prime minister. Pushpa Kamal Dahal told the prime minister he couldn't go through with that part of the program.

WEEKEND WEATHER

by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

This week's westerlies all fizzled out by the time they reached Kathmandu, but they also changed direction which brought in frigid air from the Tibetan plateau on Wednesday. Hence the snow along the northern belt and the brief drizzle on Wednesday morning as well as the mercury plummeting to 0 on Thursday morning in the Valley. The high pressure will be in command into the weekend, the sun will be brighter though because of the clearer air, with a 20 degree variation in daily temperature. Some cloud cover again on Sunday, but nothing to write home about.



FRI	SAT	SUN
		
19-0	20-1	17-3

The myth of authoritarian growth



FREE FOR ALL
Dani Rodrik

The relationship between a nation's politics and its economic prospects is one of the most fundamental, and most studied, subjects in all of social science. Which is better for economic growth: a strong guiding hand that is free from the pressure of political competition, or a plurality of competing interests that fosters openness to new ideas and new political players?

East Asian examples (South Korea, Taiwan, China) seem to suggest the former. But how, then, can one explain the fact that almost all wealthy countries (except those that owe their riches to natural resources alone) are democratic? Should political openness precede, rather than follow, economic growth?

When we look at systematic historical evidence, instead of individual cases, we find that authoritarianism buys little in terms of economic growth. For every authoritarian country that has managed to grow rapidly, there are several that have floundered. For every Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, there are many like Mobutu Sese Seko of the Congo.

Democracies not only out-perform dictatorships when it comes to long-term economic growth, but also outdo them in several other important respects. They provide much greater economic stability, measured by the ups and downs of the business cycle. They are better at adjusting to external economic shocks (such as terms-of-trade declines or sudden stops in capital inflows). They generate more investment in human capital, health and education. And they produce more equitable societies.

Authoritarian regimes, by contrast, ultimately produce economies that are as fragile as their political systems. Their economic potency, when it exists, rests on the strength of individual leaders, or on favorable but temporary circumstances. They cannot aspire to continued economic innovation or to global economic leadership.

At first sight, China seems to be an exception. Since the late 1970's, following the end of Mao's disastrous experiments, China has done extremely well, experiencing unparalleled rates of economic growth. Even though it has democratized some of its local decision-making, the Chinese Communist Party maintains a tight grip on national politics and the human-rights picture is marred by frequent abuses.

But China also remains a



The Arab Spring in North Africa proves that you can't repress all the people all the time

comparatively poor country. Its future economic progress depends in no small part on whether it manages to open its political system to competition, in much the same way that it has opened up its economy. Without this transformation, the lack of institutionalized mechanisms for voicing and organising dissent will eventually produce conflicts that will overwhelm the capacity of the regime to suppress. Political stability and

economic growth will both suffer.

Still, Russia and China are both large and powerful economies. Their example can sway leaders elsewhere to think that they can aspire to economic ascendancy while tightening the screws on domestic political opposition.

For the true up-and-coming economic superpowers, we should turn instead to countries like Brazil, India, and South Africa, which have already accomplished their democratic transitions and are unlikely to regress. None of these countries is without problems, of course. Brazil has yet to recover fully its economic dynamism and find a path to rapid growth. India's democracy can be maddening in its resistance to economic change. And South Africa suffers from a shockingly high level of unemployment.

Yet these challenges are nothing compared to the momentous tasks of institutional transformation that await authoritarian countries. Don't be surprised if Brazil leaves Turkey in the dust, South Africa eventually surpasses Russia, and India outdoes China. 🇺🇦

Dani Rodrik is professor of political economy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and author of One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalisation, Institutions, and Economic Growth



HIMAL KHABARPATRIKA
15-29 January

EARTHQUAKE SPECIAL

Kathmandu will be like Hiroshima
Interviews with US Ambassador Scott DeLisi and UN Resident Coordinator, Robert Piper
Those who lived through 1934
What to do in an earthquake
Be prepared!

Editorial

Post-UNMIN opportunity

Opinion

Saurav: Religion and the flag
Purshottam Dahal: Message from Delhi
Rabindra Mishra: Philanthropic future
Balkrishna Mahubang: The Ethiopian autonomy model

Reports

Three alternatives for prime minister
Good cops
Department of Transportation in gridlock
Labour exploitation by Labour Ministry



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District Road Support Programme

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.

Partners:

RAAIKA Tours & Travels

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.

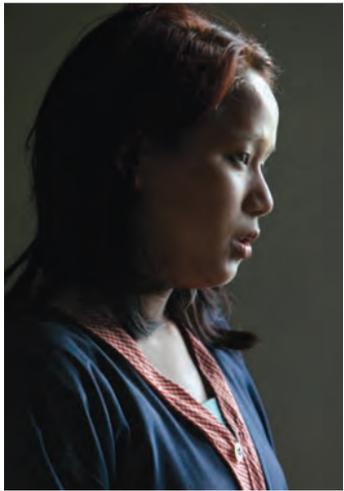
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NEPAL TOURISM YEAR 2011

Everyone's cup



Earlier stereotyped only as tea pickers, women like Kalpana Rai (above) are rising up the ranks in Nepal's tea industry.



of tea



JANA ASENBRENEROVA in DHANKUTA



Kalpana Rai prepares tea cups for tasting at the Jun Chiyabari Tea Estate in Hile. Outside, the mist rolls up hillsides draped with lush tea gardens. The steam rises as Rai pours hot water into a cup, takes a sip, and smiles. “I like this one,” Rai tells her boss. Supervisor Morris Orchard nods in agreement as he rolls the brew around in his mouth.

Earlier stereotyped only as tea-pickers, women like Kalpana Rai are rising up the

Nepal tea company empowers women to get ahead in the tea business

ranks in Nepal’s tea industry. Jun Chiyabari and other tea estates in eastern Nepal are at the forefront of those offering new opportunities for women.

“We went one step ahead and appointed women workers into supervisory levels, not only in the field but also at the factory,” explains Lochan Gyawali (seen above, tasting tea with his brother, Bachan) whose family started Jun Chiyabari

10 year ago. The tea factory now has several women in supervisory roles.

Kalpana Rai is modest young woman, and an undergraduate in business management. She shrugs off the attention. “There aren’t many options for us in Hile,” she says, “I feel I’m lucky.”

But it’s more than luck that has allowed women to get ahead, says Archana Karki of Empowering Women of Nepal (EWN). “Nepal is still a conservative patriarchal society,” Karki explains, “there are many rules that constrain women to stay in the home and work in the family house and fields.”

Rai, who studied at Mahendra Multiple Campus in Dharan, works as the company’s record keeper while studying for her masters degree. Rai’s colleagues express the same optimism about their jobs, how it has meant they haven’t had to migrate for work to support their families.

“I enjoy my job and the people I work with here,” says Renuka Thakuri, 40, who supervises the tea sorting section of the factory and has been with Jun Chiyabari since it started.

Nearly 80 per cent of

the 236-strong work force at Jun Chiyabari is made up of women. A dozen women in scarves sit together on a wooden floor in a circle, examining leaves that are just about ready for packaging. Some laugh, others chat while working. They are sifting through thousands of leaves to find and remove any that are damaged or flawed (see above, left). The process needs deft fingers and concentration.

Jun Chiyabari’s owners say they consider women critical to the operations, and have equalised earnings for men and women. Says Gyawali: “Just because you have XY chromosome doesn’t mean you should have a different wage level.”

By sunset, the leaves collected by the women are delivered to the factory’s attic and spread out on drying plates to sit overnight and develop a rich aroma. The finished tea is packaged and sent to customers around the world as organic Himalayan tea, plucked and perfected by the women of Nepal. 

www.junchiabari.com

See also:
Ilam tea goes green, #399
Promoting Nepali tea through tourism, #302
A new leaf, #261

“There is a lot still left to do”

The abridged version of the Prime Minister's address given in Shaktikhor at the program to handover the combatants to the Special Committee

Today we have reached a historic juncture in the peace process and I would like to remember all those who fought for democracy at this moment. Our peace process has always been an example to the world. Even in the midst of a severe conflict, we managed to come together for peace and democracy. We held meetings from Silliguri to Lucknow before drafting the historic 12 point agreement. With our joint effort, we were successful in thwarting the 240 year old autocratic royal regime in the country. Combatant friends, you too have contributed in bringing about this change. Till this day, you were the workers of the UCPN (Maoist), but from today you have come under the Special Committee under the provisions of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007. With this development, your role has changed too. Those of you who will be rehabilitated are free to join politics, but those who will be integrated to different security agencies cannot be members of any political party. You will be a committed member of the non-political, professional and non-partisan security agency. I am confident that till the time you are in these camps, you will cooperate and follow the guidelines for combatant management and the directions given by the committee.

I would like to reiterate that the integration and rehabilitation of the combatants is not just the state's or a party's responsibility, it is the collective responsibility of all. I would also like to assure you that the state would do its best to rehabilitate the combatants according to their interests and abilities. We should try to forget our past differences and bring the peace process to its logical end at the earliest, congruent with the people's aspirations. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the body for finding the whereabouts of the missing people have not been set up yet. The wounds of war have not healed and there is a lot left to do. But the recent agreement with Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and the decisions of the special committee will hopefully steer the peace process to its conclusion and I would like to thank Mr Dahal and all the leaders of the UCPN Maoist for making this possible.

We still have a long way to go. The road we travelled has been a precarious one and we would never want to go back that path. Our nation and its people can no longer endure violence of any kind. We want this country to be peaceful again. We want our country to prosper with stability and social justice for its people. If we all come together and combine our resources there is no reason why we can't make this happen.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal's speech at the Shaktikhor handover.

Today, our country is going through a critical transition. Nepali people, who believe in change, actively participated in a ten-year people's war and a 19-day-long people's movement in the hope of a new Nepal. As a result of their sacrifice

and discipline, you have been carrying out your responsibilities during the revolution and since the peace process began.

Our country is now in the final stage of political transition. There will be two armies until they are integrated as provisioned in the Comprehensive Peace Accord and the Interim

created some doubts and problems.

Despite all this, our party is committed to take the peace process to a logical end, and that is why we reached a new agreement with the government.

People are doubtful about whether the peace process, the strengthening of national security and the integration process and the writing of a new constitution will ever be completed. But we have confidence that we can meet these challenges if all Nepali people, true patriots and pro-republican forces come together.

Committed to the Articles 146 and 147 of the Interim Constitution and the CPA and the Agreement on Monitoring of the Management of Arms and Armies, we always wanted to bring the PLA under the Special Committee, which was announced by the first elected government of republican Nepal. In a changed situation, we are gathered here to implement it. There is a lot that remains to be done. I have no doubt that it is possible through consolidated efforts of all Nepali political parties, general public, PLA, Nepal Army and other security organisations.

I would also like to thank political parties, organisation, the UN, UNMIN and friends of Nepal who helped the process of peace and constitution writing process. May our aspirations for peace, constitution and a prosperous new Nepal be fulfilled.

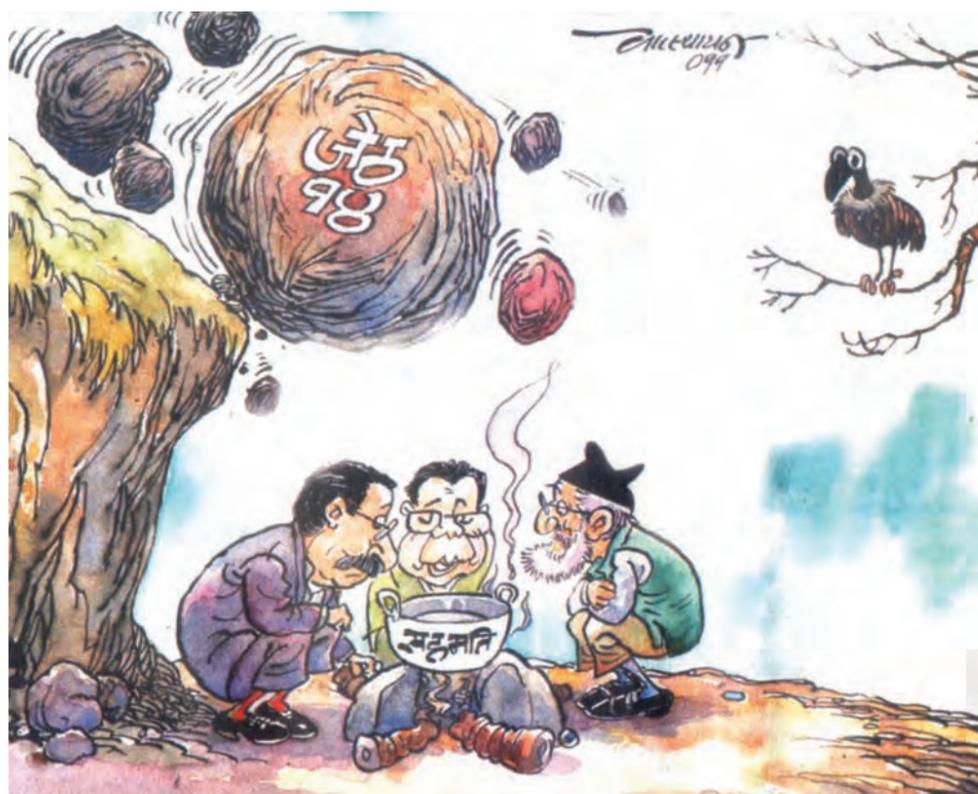


DAMBER KRISHNA SHRESTHA

and dedication, the republic was declared after 240 years of monarchy. I take this opportunity to remember those who sacrificed their lives and those who disappeared during the movement.

You have made a great contribution towards the liberating the people from an autocratic monarchy. With patience, courage

Constitution. We want to build a robust national security force through integration and rehabilitation. This is a historical necessity. We wrote a five-point joint letter to the UN requesting for UN mission to facilitate and take the peace process to a meaningful conclusion. A few days ago, the mission returned without completing the task. This definitely



Boulder: May 28
Pot: Consensus

कान्तिपुर Batsyayan in Kantipur, 24 January



DAMBER KRISHNA SHRESTHA

Prachanda trial by fire

Editorial in *Dristi*, 25 January

दृष्टि

It will be some time before we find out whether Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, whose only aim is to grab power, actually sacrificed the PLA for the sake of democracy, peace and constitution building or for the post of prime minister. If he has taken the step for the country, he will be remembered in history as a great statesman. Otherwise he will be branded as a traitor in the history of communist movement.

It is up to him how he wants to be remembered as, a hero or a traitor. There are those who say that what Madhav Kumar Nepal did in Shaktikhor was just making up for the mistakes of Girija Prasad Koirala. If the peace process and constitution building does take off in the right way the events that took place in Shaktikhor may be termed as great steps. But there is also a grave danger that those events would only accelerate the so called people's revolt. After all, revolt was what the plenum in Palungtar had decided upon. There is a huge difference between what the Maoists say and do. If the other parties that are engrossed in power play are not sensitive to this reality, Shaktikhor's 'great events' will only end up pushing the country further down the cliff.

The Himalas as witness



Kanak Mani Dixit in
Nagarik, 22 January

नागरिक

It was just past 1pm on 16 January 2002. Muktinath Adhikari was teaching science to Grade 9 students at the Pandini Sanskrit Secondary School in Duradanda of Lamjung district.

Members of the Maoist Lamjung District Committee forcibly took Adhikari away despite protests from his students. They dragged him half an hour up the slope, and villagers who went up in the evening found his body tied to an uttis tree. He was shot behind his right ear and the exit wound blew away most of his skull at the back. The villagers lit a fire and kept an all-night vigil.

Muktinath Sir's son, Suman, retraced his father's last journey last week. We stood in a semi-circle to pay silent tribute to the man who has come to represent all innocent Nepalis who were murdered during the war. The snow-capped mountains of central Nepal stood like sentries all around. On one side were Manaslu, Himalchuli and the mountain that Dr Harka Gurung named Ngadi Chuli. Across were Lamjung Himal, Machapuchre and the Annapurnas, all standing witness to murders still no one wants to talk about because of terror and confusion. But the mountains won't let us forget what happened.

The war was at its peak in 2002, there were targeted



killings, beheadings, torture. Horrific photographs of maimed victims and mutilated corpses were passed around, but they were too gory to be printed in the media. The photograph of Muktinath Adhikari's body tied to a tree in which he is seemingly asleep was printed on the cover of Himal Khabarpatrika two weeks after his death. Even though there is no blood visible, the photograph shocked the nation and exposed the Maoist policy of executing



BLOOD SOAKED TERRACE: The cover of Himal Khabarpatrika in 2002 showing Muktinath Adhikari's body, and the same spot last week. Adhikari's portrait at a ninth anniversary tribute on 16 January in the school where he taught in Lamjung.

civilians.

Nine years later, there is still fear in these mountains of central Nepal. In the absence of transitional justice, the fragility of the peace process and the apathy of the intellectuals in the capital, the villagers don't dare speak out. Everyone knows who killed Muktinath Adhikari, but no one dares to come forward to lodge a complaint.

At the ceremony, Muktinath Sir's friend, Thakur Prasad Tiwari got up to speak, but couldn't and wept. Muktinath Adhikari's wife, Indira, wiped away tears with her shawl. A few months before he was killed, Muktinath Sir had refused to pay a part of his Dasain bonus to the Maoists, saying: "I won't give you money to

buy bullets." This expression of defiance and independence was unacceptable to the local commissar. Throughout Lamjung there were similar executions of teachers, social workers and ordinary citizens: Kedar Ghimire was killed just three days after Muktinath, Arjun Ghimire had nails hammered into his ankle and was told to walk. When he couldn't, he was killed. The Maoist unit that murdered Muktinath Sir were involved. Others were bludgeoned to death, or had their limbs crushed.

At a meeting with senior editors in Shanker Hotel in 2006, Pushpa Kamal Dahal said he laid down the rule against torture and that executions should be done "with a bullet to the temple".

After viewing a photo exhibition in Gorkha in 2008 that contained the picture of Muktinath Adhikari, Baburam Bhattarai wrote in the guest book: 'Violence has a political and class character. To forget this and to analyse violence from an apolitical or non-class standpoint is not useful.'

The Maoist victims of state violence will also not get justice if the process required to bring Muktinath Sir's murders to the court is not pursued.

It is unlikely that the Maoists will allow a genuine Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be put in place, hence the importance of keeping the door of the courts open for the legal investigative procedures. Unfortunately, recent Supreme Court decision seems to have locked for legal recourse for the victims of state and Maoist violence, including the cases of Maina Sunar, Bardiya, Bhairabnath, Kajol Khatun, Diramba, Arjuna Lama and Maadi. 🇳🇵

The politics of memory



COMMENT

Ram Kumar Bhandari

My mother, Laxmi Bhandari, still remembers that day well. On 31 December, 2001 my father Tej Bahadur Bhandari, was taken away by state security from our home in Lamjung never to be seen again.

Nearly five years after the end of the war, there are thousands of families like ours across Nepal who wait for word about whether their loved ones are dead or alive. But the truth has become tangled in the politics of memory in Nepal's transition.

The major political parties and the state are distracted by their power struggle, and consider the war over and done with. Yet, for the relatives the war never ended. Each day is a painful reminder of the loss, and the silence of the state prolongs their hurt.

The question of amnesty and reconciliation has taken precedence over truth and justice. The political parties have succeeded in instrumentalising the victims'

agenda and putting them to use politically. On both sides of the political divide, there is a tendency not to rock the boat and not rake up the past.

A key problem in effectively meeting the needs of relatives of the victims is Nepal's deep rooted culture of impunity, and the absence of political will to pursue the truth. The perpetrators of war crimes, although named in public, are at large. The courts have instructed the government to move forward on investigations into several conflict-related cases, but few steps have been taken. Reparation has been provided to some conflict victims, but no steps have been taken to hold anyone accountable for summary executions, torture in detention and forced disappearances.

Those involved in my father's case are known: CDO Shiva Nepal, DSP Pitamber Adhikari and Major Santosh Singh Thakuri. They continue to serve and face no consequences. Sustainable peace will not be possible without justice being delivered. Families of the

victims have had their call for truth and justice undermined and ignored.

Hundreds of wives of the disappeared like my mother suffer not just the loss of the family's breadwinners but also the social stigma of widowhood. Without knowing the truth, they are deprived of many rights and rituals in the community. We should create a conducive environment for the wives and mothers of the disappeared to remember their loss and make their history known through public memory and writing.

Women relatives of the disappeared need special attention, only then will we be able to rebuild families, communities and the nation and contribute to a broader, more effective transformation. The mothers and wives of the victims are the most vulnerable, but they are also the most effective family members to take the healing process forward.

Publicly remembering the disappearance of a relative is also a symbolic resistance to the apathy of the state. Our pain resonates in the

wider community, stoking public memory which can advocate and strengthen solidarity. Many families suffer from the loss of their main salary earner, leading to psychological trauma, economic hardship and poverty. Families in rural areas, especially women, lack effective tools to pursue justice and get financial support from the state. They have become victims themselves in searching for the truth.

The state, the political parties, human rights groups and donors need to re-think their peace strategy by putting victims first and address their needs in practice. Only then will the long wait for truth and justice for women like my mother be finally over and the nation have the chance to heal itself. 🇳🇵

Ram Kumar Bhandari, whose father was disappeared in 2001, is a human rights activist and chair of the National Network of Families of Disappeared and Missing (NEFAD)

See also:
Stolen lives, # 517
The long, long wait, #409
How can we forget? #389

On the 15th anniversary of the start of the war, relatives of the disappeared still wait for answers



Republic Day

As the dove symbolizes innocence, gentleness, faith, peace and constancy, let's make the 62nd Republic Day of India a celebration of unity, peace and harmony. We have seen India's progress as she has emerged fast on the road of development during the last 62 years. We wish India for strength to face her challenges and success in every endeavour.



Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry

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The Prime Minister



Message

On the happy occasion of the commemoration of Sixty-second Republic Day of India on 26 January 2011, I would like to extend, on behalf of the Government of Nepal, the Nepalese people and on my own, heartiest congratulation to the people and the Government of India and wish for their peace, harmony and prosperity in the days to come.

Nepal and India have been treasuring multifaceted relations marked by cordiality, mutual understanding, good will and cooperation since time immemorial. These relations are further fostered by our long history, common culture, shared values and traditions. These relations transcend the physical boundary and have been deepened and widened at the people-to-people level. Frequent interactions and exchange of visits at various levels have taken our relations to a new height.

We are happy to note that India has achieved remarkable progress in socio-economic sector. The advancement is more impressive in the fields of science and technology. Endowed with vast natural resources and ingenious manpower perfectly blended with the escalating evolution of science and technology, India has huge potentials to march ahead for the rapid and steady progress. We commend these achievements of the friendly people of India and extend our best wishes for their continued progress and prosperity.

We highly appreciate India for her valuable cooperation extended to Nepal for the social and economic development. Such cooperation over the years has complemented our development endeavours.

On the occasion of this special day, I would like to appreciate the efforts of the Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry for promoting bilateral trade and investment and wish them all success.

January 26, 2011

(Madhav Kumar Nepal)

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LET'S SHARE AND CELEBRATE THE LEGACY OF FREEDOM



The Ambassador
of India

Message



On the auspicious occasion of the 62nd Republic Day of India, I extend warm greetings to all Indians and our friends in Nepal.

- The formation of the Republic on 26th January 1950 was the first milestone in our march towards realizing the dreams of our people after Independence. The new Constitution gave expression to the goals, ideals, and values that had guided our freedom struggle. It laid the foundations of the structure of governance and committed to secure for all citizens – justice, liberty and equality as well as dignity. The Constitution, since its adoption, has been our astute guide.
- We are the largest democracy in the world and one of the most stable. We have held 15 general elections to Parliament, in which power has been transferred to different political parties and groups according to the mandate of the people. Following the Constitutional Amendments in 1992, we introduced democracy at the grassroots level. Presently there are 3.4 million representatives who have been elected to representative bodies in villages, towns and cities. We are also proud of the fact that more than 40% of these elected representatives are women. This is by far the largest number of elected representative ever in history, or anywhere in the contemporary world.
- Despite the uncertain global economic scenario, India's economy is growing at unprecedented rates and we are confident that we will be able to achieve the targets we have set for ourselves. In the last two quarters, the growth rate of Indian economy has been 8.9% and for the entire year it is expected to be around 8.5%. From next year, the growth rate is expected to average between 9 and 10%. The impressive strides of the Indian economy have resulted in the emergence of India as a powerful player in the global economy. This century will belong to Asia and India will be one of the main driving forces.
- 2010 had been a busy year for Indian diplomacy. We had the honour of receiving Heads of States/Governments from 24 countries including from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The world expects India to play a more important role in the management of global polity and economy. Our contributions whether in the G20 or in the Climate Change conference held recently in Cancun were noteworthy and derived from our unique experience of tackling developmental challenges, with our emphasis on values and our tradition of building consensus among different sections and interests. We have this year become a member of the United Nations Security Council for a two-year term. We will play our due and commensurate role in the international bodies.
- Growth in India can be the engine of growth for this region. India's booming economy, world class institutions and its expanding market are an opportunity for the people of South Asia. It especially offers tremendous prospects to the friendly people of Nepal who share a special, civilizational and fraternal relationship with India.
- India remains steadfast in its commitment to extend assistance for Nepal's economic development and institutionalization of multi-party democracy. India's support continues to be in accordance with the wishes and priorities of the people and Government of Nepal. It is our wish that India-Nepal cooperation is further diversified in coming years for mutual benefit. We wish all of you success in your efforts to build a stable, peaceful, democratic and prosperous Nepal.

Jai Hind.

January 26, 2011

(Rakesh Sood)



नेपाल-भारत उद्योग वाणिज्य संघ
Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce & Industry



Message

The 62nd Republic Day of India heralds a turning point in the country's economic history. Post crisis fiscal reforms and trade & investment fast tracks has opened up interesting opportunities in the Bilateral commerce and economic relations. On behalf of NICCI, I extend my best wishes to the country and all the drivers of its economic engine.

There is no gainsaying the fact, that an India that opens avenues of business expansion and economic growth is a neighbour to take pride in. NICCI wishes both, India & Nepal, to rise to the best within them for the benefit of both its people.

India contributes substantially to various aspects of the socio-economic scene in Nepal. Be it investments, trade facilitation or economic co-operation, India touches every sector that matters to the growth and well being of Nepal.

As a contender for a place on the Security Council of United Nations, India sees its role in the region as of particular significance and should continue its magnanimous work towards the agenda of Regional Development. As NICCI, we would like to see a greater seeding and mentoring of economic opportunities for Nepal. Selecting projects of national relevance, creating employment opportunities, training the right workforce and engaging in wealth creation for the larger good, should be given a greater focus by the people and institutions invested with such a responsibility. NICCI would be happy to participate in the appropriate processes to bring about a whole new dimension of economic partnering between the two countries.

January 26, 2011

Arun Chaudhary
President

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Mr Clean for prime minister

January's Man of the Month is none other than Devi Prasad Regmi, who spent five days in the cooler for slapping Comrade JN. The Ass' snap poll results have just come in and they show an overwhelming number of Nepalis want Regmi to be the country's next prime minister. **Jhallu** has lost a great opportunity to have turned the incident to his advantage: he should have just offered the other cheek. If Mr Regmi turns down the job, then how about Mr Clean for prime minister?

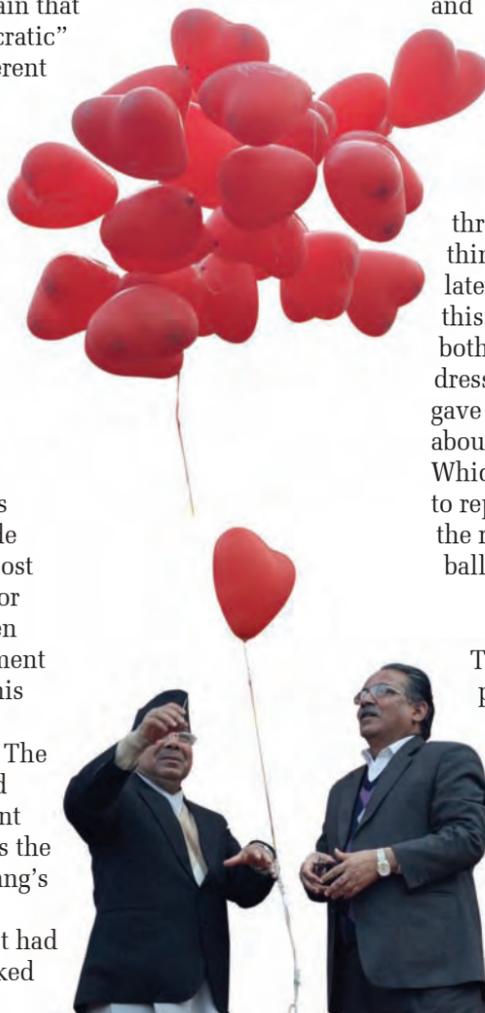
✂

The gloves came off last week at the Baddie Cent Com when Chairman Awesome rounded up all his loyalists to gang up on his nemesis, BRB. Ugly Sapkota called him an "agent of Indian expansionism", and Shoethrower Kirati said he was "anti-Janjati". BRB retaliated first by raking up detractors like Comrade Haribold over the coals for past sexcapades. Then he did a Lenin and sacked the editor of **Iskra** (later reinstated) for deigning to edit his interview. When he was prevented from delivering his 11-page

complaint, Rambabu cited Vladimir Illyich at the Moscow Plenum and dashed off a note of dissent for not being allowed to present a note of dissent. But it was all a bit rich for Com Red Flag to complain that his party was "undemocratic" and "not tolerating different viewpoints". Since when was his party known for tolerance and democracy? More than most, it is BRB who should remember dispatching people off to the **Great Gulag in the Sky** for simply for having a different opinion.

✂

The talk of the town this week is not that Comrade Ian is in town, but the post mortem of the Shaktikhor handover tamasha. Given the great event management talent that we have in this land, the program only started three hours late. The ex-fighters got so carried away with the excitement that they surged towards the stage, ignoring Gen Pasang's orders from the stage to remain in position. Most had raised families, and looked



happy enough to have earned their **Eagle Scout** badges in the last four years. The ex-guerrillas performed karate chops and mass gymnastics to entertain the VIPs but Makunay and Ferocious looked distracted and tense. The reason: they'd had a pow-wow on the phone that morning when PKD changed his mind about the agreement to lower the PLA flag and hand it over to the PM and threatened to call the whole thing off. Lots of speculation later about who put PKD up to this: the Danes or Samrat, or both. Or maybe it was the severe dressing down the commanders gave The Supremo that morning about having let them down. Which explains why PKD had to replace the flag-lowering with the raising of red Valentine's Day balloons.

✂

The difficulty in making phone calls is also afflicting the prime minister who just can't get through to PKD and when he does, the connection keeps getting cut off. A lot of the distrust among senior political leaders these days seems to stem from the fact that they think the other guy

is hanging up on them when it is just our ultra-primitive mobile phone system. Makunay has now got himself a smart phone so he can type SMSs and receive pushmail. But PKD doesn't have the patience to type on a phone, so he is not texting back. Maybe someone should get him a devnagari dictation software.

✂

Back at Shaktikhor, no sooner had Makunay finished his lengthy speech than the ambassadors all got up to go. The puzzled Nepalis looked at each other because the ceremony wasn't over yet. Then it became clear they got up because Com Samrat got up, and he owned the helicopter.

✂

At the yummy buffet that included five types of meat, Fearsomeness ran into **Shutterbug Sood** and quipped: "Aap kis media se?" Back came the retort: "Hum retire ke baad, shayad journalist hounga."





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