Consensus talks this week didn’t get anywhere, so Pushpa Kamal Dabah (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.
We discuss our politics endlessly, in living rooms, on teashops, 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, Manoj Kishore Thapa, Narayan Wagle, and Sujeev Shakya were invited to several panels, including ‘Practicable 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 spiky.

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’, the talk being 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, there had 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 radical 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 hadn’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 lifting 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 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.
The politics of the economy

A cross 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 a 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 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.
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 changing 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.

Missionary zeal

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

M I C H A E L C O X

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 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 chairman 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 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 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 they are 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.

PAHS is a keen desire to work in remote areas,” says Karki, a 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 disparity 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.”

A default state

The far-west isn’t “far”, it is being denied resources

GUEST COLUMN

Bibhav Acharya

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.

“Let us put pressure on those with resources to improve road conditions, respond to landslides and lessen 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 Bayapati Hospital in Achham in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Population.

http://www.nyayahealth.org/
The slap that shook Nepal

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 tusslers.

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 blogsphere and Facebook comment spaces lit up with emotions of approval. Many commentators hailed Regmi as a hero. Some argued 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: jankay-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, the 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-fed, 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 to 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.

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, Tripureshwor. The bank 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.

Be OK for the future

EDITORIAL: With the New Year come new opportunities. Welcome the challenges with a positive attitude and let your determination lead you to success.

BANK OF KATHMANDU LTD. \nWe make your life easier

Free check-up

Beauty, Health & Well Being

Midas Boutique

Midas Boutique, a division of Kailasha Enterprises, offers fine gold and diamond jewels. Visit us at Kailasha Mall, Patan Durbar Square, Patan.

Midas Medi Spa

Midas Medi Spa offers innovative beauty therapies designed for the skin, body and soul.

Midas Day Spa-Salon

Midas Day Spa-Salon has been designed to eliminate all stress and worries.

Free check-up

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

W ill 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 prestige Thursday noon, the roadblocks from the NC and UML remain. The Maoists have finally delivered on their commitment to bring their army under a government-led Special Committee. The risks of the party led government 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 the 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. And 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). The risks of the party led Special Committee. 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 the 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. And 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).

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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. If it crowds crush is an inconvenience at sessions with marquee authors such as Orhan Pamuk, Vikram Seth, Martin Amis, Kran 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: “Pros is written to be read. Poetry is written to be heard.”

The passion for both forms is what ties the diverse Jaipur audiences together. Shabda brahma 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 accent, 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.

“Really like your—”
“Yeah. Yes. Next question!”

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 minorities. With 220 ethnic groups making up a population of 40 million – an anthropologist’s delight, and a general’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 Amol Chatterjee 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 tone, the South African achieved the same effect on the Front Lawns of the festival venue. Layers upon layers, in unblinking, simple prose; you could not ask for more of a novelist.

And what of philosophy, believed 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’o2 stuck 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 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 tongues’. “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 as you master it.” A tonic for those who suffer the guilt of writing in a language as you master it.” A tonic for those who suffer the guilt of writing in a language as you master it.”

Layers upon layers, in unblinking, limpid prose: “Layers upon layers, in unblinking, limpid prose:”

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 Sujeet 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 for the soul of the left’. Readings from both illustrated the role the insurgency has played for the soul of the left’. Readings from both illustrated the role the insurgency has played for the soul of the left’. Readings from both illustrated the role the insurgency has played for the soul of the left’. Readings from both illustrated the role the insurgency has played for the soul of the left’. 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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

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

29 January, 2.30pm, open to the public

Ned Kelly
110 min
Drama 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.

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

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

**DINING**

- **Grahana:** an eclipse, exhibition of paintings by Sagar Marahattar, 21 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

- **Shipton:** an exhibition of rare photographs. 4 February to 6 February, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babor Mahal Revisited, 4218048 / 4438979

- **Royal Nepal 1939:** Through the lens of Richard Gordon Matzene, book launch and exhibition of rare photographs, 4 February to 6 February, Siddhartha Art Gallery, RN Joshi Center for Fine Art, Park Street, 4218048 / 4438979

- **Presentation on ‘Forbidden Kingdom of Upper Mustang’** by John Sunday, 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 Gallery and Café, Jhamsikhel

- **Discussion on the movie La vita e 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 Kasiko 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 1939:** Through the lens of Richard Gordon Matzene, book launch and exhibition of rare photographs, 4 February to 6 February, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babor Mahal Revisited, 4218048 / 4438979

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**MUSIC**

- **Shantil Utsav:** celebration of young talents, organized by Yes! Club World Nepal and Nepal’s Children Organization, 31 January, 11am to 6pm, Art Of Living, New Baneshwor Centre, 980309750

- **Tal 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 Thursday 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, info@gokarna.net, Rs. 1500 plus taxes

- **The Cafe:** an evening of good music and live shows and mix media works by artist Chirag Bangdel. Till 6 February, Chai Gallery and Café, Jhamsikhel

**GETAWAYS**

- **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 Cafe every Friday from 6.30pm at Hyatt Regency, Boudha, 4491234, 4498362

- **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, Boudha, 2130681

- **BBC Asia:** a live band every Monday from 6.30pm onwards, Absolute live music, 5521408, 5549504, abar@wlink.com.np

- **Band every Wednesday Absolute Live Music,** 5521408, 5549504, abar@wlink.com.np

- **Every Friday, 7.30pm onwards, Fusion Bar, Dwarika’s Hotel, Bhatkalpuri.**

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

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

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

- **CAN Info Tech, latest products, technologies and software solutions.** 1 February to 6 February, Exhibition hall, Bikhu International Centre, Ekantakuna, 98088 91048 / 9841224368, info@gokarna.net, www.fpme-fbmc.org

- **Ball Utsav,** celebration of young talents, organized by Yes! Club World Nepal and Nepal’s Children Organization, 31 January, 11am to 6pm, Art Of Living, New Baneshwor Centre, 980309750

- **Tal 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 Thursday 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, info@gokarna.net, Rs. 1500 plus taxes

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

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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 realising the dream of the 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 sacred guide.

We see 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 1982, 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 45% of these elected representatives are women. This is by far the largest number of elected representatives ever in a history, 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 India's economy has been 8.8% and for the entire year it is expected to be around 8.5%. From next year, the growth rate is expected to average between 8 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 State/Governments from 24 countries including 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, cultural and fraternal relationship with India.

India remains steadfast in its commitment to extend assistance to 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

Rai Bashist

Indian Diplomacy: Expanding Horizons

"Thanks to the reform process begun by Dr. Manmohan Singh in 1990s, the Indian state has been successful and its power has been felt around the world. India exists in the world because it is not a weak power that a responsible power as well. India provides significant support to Afghanistan which we welcome, and your progress in Nepal and Bangladesh can add value.

— Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Prime Minister of India"

"The total participation of the G20 and the UN Security Council for the 2010/2011 conference 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 the bellwether state of the 20th-century Security Council. It's critical that Indian should take part in all the world's great debates. That's the reason why Pakistan is asking for India to join the Security Council as a permanent member. It's inevitable that a billion Indians should not be represented permanently on the Security Council.

— Sushil Koirala, President of Nepal"

"India and Nepal have a special relationship, it's not a figure of speech, it's a mutual experience. Our support for India as a dynamic and strong candidate for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council is not just a decision for its expansion.

— Pranab Mukherjee, President of India"

"We in Nepal highly admire the significant progress that India has achieved in the past two decades after the independence. India's sustained and resilient economic growth over the years has been formidable. As Nepal's economy is closely linked to India, we are committed to support development benefits from our economic complementarities.

— Dr. Bimal Bose, Prime Minister of Nepal"

"The Indian experience and India's support can be an inspiration for the people of Nepal in the field of democratic governance.

— Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, President of Nepal"

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

— Ven Kataria, Chief Minister 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 investor-friendly environment through a liberalized policy framework spurring the white economy
- Indian economy to register the second fastest growth between now and 2030 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 quarterly basis, India’s 14.2% GDP growth rate October 2010, according to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).
- India has surpassed one of the world’s top ten countries in industrial production as per UNIDO’s new report titled ‘Yearbook of Industrial Statistics 2011’.
- Organized retail in India is expected to increase from 7 per cent of the total market in 2008 to 11 per cent of the total market in 2015, according to a McKinsey & Company report titled ‘The Great Indian Buster: Organized Retail Capital of Asia is 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 Indian Consumer Market’.
- The Indian pharmaceuticals market is expected to touch USD 55 billion in 2008 from USD 12.6 billion in 2009, according to a report ‘India Pharma 2020: Propelling access and acceptance, realizing 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. 5,800 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 SDP, Government of India (GOI) has built schools, Multiple Campuses, Specialized Training Institutes, Libraries, Primary Health Posts, Miniature Centres, Hospitals, Road/Urban Roads and Bridges, Canals, Drinking Water Projects, Gold Storage, Eye Care Centres 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
- billion 302 ambulances and 58 boats in different organizations in Nepal over the last 15 years
- Since 1973, GOI has been providing assistance to the GoN in the field of important projects which have helped reduce the corruption level from 44% of the population in 1985 to 6.4% by 2007.
- Since 2001, GOI has worked with Nepal’s Nota Jyoti Academy providing free orthopaedic medical check-ups to 4-25 lakh Nepalis and undertaken 75000 income and career opportunities for visually impaired and provided spectacles and visual aid to over 10,000 school children.

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:
  - Janakpur in India to Budhigadhi in Nepal (68 km),
  - Jaypur (India) to Janakpur (Nepal),
  - Midnapur (Nepal) to Nepalgunj (India)
- Estimated cost of the first phase including the Jaypur-Budhigadhi rail link and Jaypur-Himmatnagar rail link is more than NRs. 1600 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:
  - Rasaul (India) - Birgunj (Nepal)
  - Sunauli (India) - Bhairahawa (Nepal),
  - Janakpur (India) - Janakpur (Nepal),
  - Nepalgunj (Nepal) to Nepalgunj (India)
- Total cost is estimated at NRs. 302 crores.
- Construction works have started in Rasaul and Janakpur on the Indian side and Birgunj on the Nepalese side.

Road Infrastructure in Terai
- The project envisages the construction of 39 roads in Phase I, including 405 km at a cost of NRs. 1100 crores.
- Phase II will be followed by Phase III covering 285 km.
- Cost for the roads has been acquired and the tendering process completed.
- 80 lakh people are expected to benefit from the emerging networks.

India-Nepal Maitri Emergency & Trauma Centre in Kathmandu
- 8-storey structure with 200 bed facility being built with an estimated cost of NRs. 144 crores to be handed over to GoN in 2011.
- 8 staff are of the state medical equipment, Emergency, Intensive Care Unit, 5-Operative Theatres, Laboratory, Diagnostic Arm, Blood Bank, Trustee Ward, Seminar Room, College, Academic Hall, Power Sub-stations, Backup DG Sets, Water Treatment Plant, Fire Fighting System etc.

Dekshinakhel-Kalekhadi Road Link
- 26 km long road built forms a part of the 62 kms long Kathmandu-Himmatnagar road connecting the Kathmandu valley and the Teri region.
- Cost of the project is NRs. 85 crores
- Work is expected to be completed by October 2011

Other upcoming projects:
- Sabha Ghati at Birgunj at an estimated cost of NRs. 40 crores
- Mahadevasthan-Tahaspur road link with an estimated cost of NRs. 40 crores
- Majhitarak at Krishna at an estimated cost of NRs. 40 crores
- Science Learning Centre at Kathmandu, Kathmandu at an estimated cost of NRs. 16 crores
- Eye Hospital at Kupinath at an estimated cost of NRs. 45 crores

Scholarships for Nepali students
- GOI provides nearly 1800 scholarships to Nepali students annually.
- 1100 scholarships are for students studying in India
- Others are for studies by Indians covering a range of disciplines from medicine, engineering, management, agricultural sciences, music and fine arts, cyber law, etc.
- More than 30000 students benefited out of these schemes since 2001

Welfare of ex-servicemen
- Presently about 40,000 Gurkha soldiers are serving in the Indian Army and paramilitary forces.
- Since January 1, 2002, 3,000 Indian ex-servicemen get pensions in excess of NRs. 1100 crores annually.
- Annual expenditure for various welfare schemes for Pensions is about 5.75 crores
- More than 300 scholarships provided to children of ex-servicemen annually
- Around 1.24 lakhs worth NRs. 1.52 lakhs medical kits are distributed to all ex-servicemen annually
- 47 solar electrification projects worth NRs. 33.39 crores have been implemented.
- 1617 drinking water projects worth NRs. 18 crores have been implemented for the villages of ex-servicemen.
Sick porters

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.

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 and diverse medical problems among the 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.

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,” said 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 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. 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 addition to Kathmandu’s roads. With a price tag of Rs 1.65 million the Safa Bus may be an idea for Kathmandu’s choked roads. Neil Dixit
The myth of authoritarian growth

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 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 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.
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

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 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.

“Women are no longer just tea-pickers,” says Lochan Gyawali, who started Jun Chiyabari 10 years 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. She and Rai have been with Jun Chiyabari since it started. Nearly 80 per cent of the 236-strong workforce 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
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 Shikut in 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 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 perilous one. But the time is ripe 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 all people. If we all come together and combine our resources there is no reason why we can't make this happen.

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 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 of the security force through 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 U.N., 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.

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

We know we can do it

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 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 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 Constitution of Nepal.
I t was just past 1 pm on 16 January 2002. Mukti Nath Adhikari was teaching science to Grade 9 students at the Pansali Sanskrit Secondary School in Duralanda 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 a tree in which he was severely tortured. 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 Mukti Nath 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 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 Mukti Nath Adhikari, but no one dares to come forward to lodge a complaint.

At the ceremony, Mukti Nath Sir’s friend, Thakur Prasad Tiwari got up to speak, but couldn’t and wept. Mukti Nath Adhikari’s wife, Indira, wiped away tears with her shawl. Muktinath Adhikari’s friend, Muktinath Sir’s son, Sunan, 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 Mukti Nath 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 civilians.

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.

Message

On the happy occasion of the commemoration of Fifty-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, heartfelt congratulation to the people and the Government of India and for their peace, harmony and prosperity in the days to come.

Nepal and India have been recording multifaceted relations marked by cordiality, mutual understanding, goodwill and cooperation since time immemorial. These relations are further reinforced by our long history, common culture, shared nature and traditions. These relations transcended political boundaries and have been deepened and widened at the people-to-people level. Frequent interaction and exchange of visits at senior levels have taken our relations to a new height.

We are happy to note that India has achieved remarkable progress in socio-economic sectors. The advancement is more impressive in the fields of science and technology. Enriched with vast natural resources and ingenuity and manpower perfectly blended with the outstanding 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 to 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 endeavors.

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

January 26, 2011

Madhav Kumar Nepal

[Signature]
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.

2. 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 shaped our freedom struggle. It laid the foundation of the structure of governance and committed to serve for all citizens – justice, liberty and equality as well as dignity. The Constitution, since its adoption, has been our abiding guide.

3. 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 in different political parties and groups according to the wishes of the people. Following the Constitutional Amendments in 1990, 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.

4. 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 9.4% and for the entire year it is expected to be around 8.8%. 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 India and India will be one of the driving forces.

5. India had been a long journey for Indian diplomacy. We had the honour of hosting Heads of State/Governments from 24 countries in the annual talks with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. The world expects India to play a more important role in the management of global policy and economy. Our contributions towards the G23 or to 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 realization 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.

6. Growth in India can be the engine of growth for this region. India’s booming economy, world class institutions and an 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.

7. 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 Indian-Nepal cooperation is further diversified in coming years for mutual benefit. We will do all of you success in your efforts to build a stable, peaceful, democratic and prosperous Nepal.

Anil Madhavapatra
President

January 26, 2011

Asian Paints (Nepal) Pvt. Ltd.

Berger

DABUR NEPAL PVT. LTD.

Hydro Solutions

ICTC Pvt.Ltd.

Jyoti Group

Lumbini Sugar Industries Pvt. Ltd.

Relevance Spinning Mills Ltd.

Salt Trading Corporation Ltd.

Shree Airlines Pvt. Ltd.

Shree Investment & Finance Co. Ltd.

The Oriental Insurance Company Limited

Unilover Nepal Ltd.

United Telecom Ltd. (ULT)

Varun Beverages Nepal Pvt. Ltd.
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 Shoothrower 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, Ramabha 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 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 affecting 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 smartphone 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.

Mr Clean for prime minister