















# Friends again

fter many months of trying to be everything to everyone, Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal finally took the plunge during Wednesday's politburo meeting to follow the pragmatic line espoused by his rival, Baburam Bhattarai.

Dahal had been expressing his commitment to work with the other parties for 'peace and constitution' with the international community, while simultaneously appeasing his hardline colleagues by backing the 'people's revolt' line. Dahal's about turn seems to have lifted his notorious reputation for making contradictory statements and being an unreliable partner. "It is a positive step and will help to forge a political consensus," Shyam Shrestha, leftist political analyst, told Nepali Times.

Although the Kiran faction is not happy, Dahal's move will be welcomed by most of the 19,000 restless combatants in camps across the country who are uncertain about their future.

"Integration and peace is a simultaneous process

and this proposal will expedite integration. There is a new hope for those living in the cantonments," PLA spokesperson Chandra Prakash Khanal (Baldey) said.

Dahal seems to have timed his announcement for the visit here by Indian External Affairs Minister, S M Krishna. The Maoists have blamed India for being the main obstacle to their rightful place in government, and Dahal probably hopes Krishna will take a positive message back to New Delhi that he can now be trusted.

Dahal aligning himself with

Baburam Bhattarai could pave the way for a consensus government, but analysts say it will take more than this to convince the NC to join in. "We will not join as long as this government set up with a secret 7-point agreement between Prachanda and Jhalnathji is in place," NC chief-whip Laxman Ghimire said.

## Editorial p2 Hydrocarbon, hydropower and carbohydrates

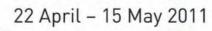
Time for our politicians to be less obsessed with power, and more with energy



SALE
UP TO 40% OFF









### HYDROCARBON, HYDROPOWER AND CARBOHYDRATES

here are three basic needs that the modern Nepali state has miserably failed to provide for: food, fuel and power. This is a result of shameless mismanagement, a shocking lack of accountability and a complete absence of guilt on the part of our rulers. There are other problems (impunity, breakdown of law and order, inflation, lack of jobs) but for proof of reckless malgovernance we need look no further than the chronic shortages of energy

The accepted measure of poverty is \$1.25 per day. But this doesn't mean anything for the average Nepali who would perhaps grasp that figure better if it was in riyals instead of in dollars. But a better indicator than income is intake: the average daily adult kilocalorie consumption has to be above the cutoff of 2,709. One



third of the population of Kaski has a caloric intake below that threshold, and this goes up to 65 per cent in Mugu, according to a World Food Programme study in 2006.

More than half the children in Nepal are stunted, wasted and underweight because they don't get enough to eat.

Food is fuel for the body. But

to fuel the nation's economy, we need energy from hydropower and petroleum. If Nepal was a human body, you could say it is on a starvation diet. Sixteen hours of power cuts and a severe shortage of petroleum supply means that this country is now even worse than conflict areas of the world like Iraq or Afghanistan. Nepal's rulers after 2006 don't have an autocratic monarchy or a war to blame anymore: it is a sign of incompetence and state paralysis of epic proportions.

Because of the rising number of vehicles and the rocketing demand for diesel for generators, our current fuel import bill of Rs 70 billion a year will soon rise to Rs 100 billion, provided world prices of crude remain constant. This is more than our total hard currency receipt from exports and tourism put together.

No need to be a genius to figure out that this is not sustainable. We are doomed if we continue with a fossil economy, our economic reliance on India will grow and will translate into political subordination. The answer always was hydropower, to spur domestic growth and for balance of payments equilibrium. But we are the laughing stock of the world for harnessing only 500 megawatts of our 50,000 megawatt generation potential.

Nepal is not poor, it is poorly governed. Things will only improve when the political class is less obsessed with power and more with energy. Only by generating hydropower to reduce our d ependence on hydrocarbons will there be enough carbohydrates for everyone.

#### ON THE WEB

#### **NO KIDDING**

I always find it astounding, and I know I am wrong in thinking this way but I can't help it, that journalists and politicians are creatures living in a parallel universe ('No war, no peace', Anurag Acharya, #549). Most people have never taken an interest in this type of political nonsense and you are deluding yourself if you think that life in Madhes has become 'qualitatively' or in any other way, better because of the 2007 agitation. The situation, not just in Madhes but everywhere in Nepal, has got so confusing that you can't make up your mind on what to talk, complain, have a view on, or worry about. Who is opposing whom, who is behind what atrocity, whom to trust? What do politicians want, what do the people want, how is it that all of this politics is driven by the dimmest characters, backed by the sharpest tongues, and what do they each want? Who is evil? Where are we, and how did we land here, and since we have landed here, which destination are we off to? I wonder where are the people who chased away families? Where are the people who decapitated that inspector in Biratnagar (or was it Janakpur)? I wonder if they had fun doing it, if they are laughing at their achievements now?

Sick and Tired

If there is anything positive that has come out of all the debates and writings and events, it is to reveal the hollowness of Nepal's intellectuals and politicians. Each likes to tell us what is wrong with "us". We have 'neglected nationalities', that's why there is violence. We have to work towards creating a 'social democratic' order. The business community must 'work on an image makeover by writing whitepapers'. Our society needs to change. And so on. My favorite being 'you are a feudalist' and all those who oppose me don't care about 'the people' which excludes, the business community, salaried workers who are already better off, the religious, the family oriented,



the bureaucrats, and all other 'people' who oppose me. Other than when I am writing in favor of bureaucrats, the salaried, and so on. The people who write and go on to have a political life (and are always from the privileged lot), want to fill space and garner votes by writing about anything and talking about everything other than the truth. Nepal is a lost case, no amount of arguing, intellectualising or what have you, will save this country.

Cynic

#### **CALL BYPASS**

"Isn't call bypass good for the customer if it is cheaper?" Right on. That's the question every Nepali is asking ('We are a soft target', Interview, #549). All this crackdown is just to protect the profits of these three telecom companies, and specially of NTC. It is plain moronic to block VOIP in today's world. Just wait till the next generation technologies arrive, and everybody will be using VOIP. Just look at all these calls to US via Gmail already. NTC is already saying that the number of calls to US via their system has dropped by 90 per cent. Open market and technologies always win, irrespective of some stupid laws.

**Biasre** 

 A quick check of call rates from advanced countries to Nepal and its

neighbours shows that it costs twice as much to call Nepal as it does Bangladesh, four times as much as to call Vietnam, seven times as much as to call India, and it is a staggering 20 times more expensive to call Nepal as it is to call China. On top of all of Nepal's other disadvantages as a destination for jobcreating and economy-boosting foreign direct investment (bandas, militant unions, power cuts, poor transport infrastructure, weak legal system etc), sky-high telecom rates are yet another reason for investors to avoid productive investments in Nepal.

#### **SLOW FOOD**

People in Karnali and Nepal could do without bhaate mentality and attitude ('Feeding Karnali', Rubeena Mahato, #549). This erroneous belief-system has caused not only diseases and deaths but hindered development as well. I fondly remember posters showing Bhaat Bahadur and Saag Bahadur in the villages many years ago (to encourage people to eat greens).

We could do with similar posters-Bhaat Bahadur and Cheeno/Kodo Bahadur.

R Rai

The Nepali business sector is controlled by a few family-run behemoths ('Vaidya's medicine', Ashutosh Tiwari, #549), The monopoly they enjoy should be scraped. All these large organization should be brought under NEPSE so that the general people can also invest in these companies. All big companies are under these big family run businesses and the state of the people working for them is miserable. Dear FNCCI executives, learn that people in your organisation are the asset of your company. Taking care of them is your first priority.

Bidhan Shrestha

#### MATCH ABANDONED

Nice definition of the terms of cricket from the Ass ('JN hits beamer off deep square leg', #549). I have taken the liberty of

adding a few more:

Run out: Com Reds inside one party trying to overthrow PM of their own party by hitting his wicket from the back.

Review: Bat(s)man who is given out by a run out as mentioned above sticking to the wicket for ages because three or two or one bat(s)men fight for 17th time and fails to decide who should be next

Maiden over: PM without ministers over a prolonged time period.

Third umpire: the guys sitting behind the scene who take ultimate decisions. It is not clear yet, if they are sitting in the South or the North side of the field

6 runs: ball hit over the fence thru

7 runs: under chair negotiation between two batsmen for their own benefit claimed by one party to be a sacrifice

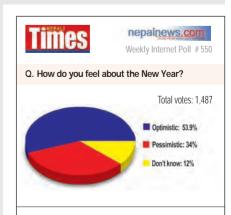
Bodyline: a decade old money making technique of getting runs from the spectators by hook or by crook. Often with bats and other similar but more dangerous modified bats with an edge or a hole.

Cover drive: Saying one thing one day and denying it the next day.

Caught behind: MaharaGate Hit Wicket: CutwallGate Run rate: is zero.

Match abandoned: Will be enforced by the spectators if the players keep on chasing the target away.

Bimalesh



Weekly Internet Poll # 551. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. How do you rate Jhala Nath Khanal's 80 days tenure as the Prime Minister?





## Unintelligent intelligence



ast weekend a Pakistani Embassy official was shot at by two gunmen in broad daylight on a Kathmandu street (right). The frequency with which such brazen assassination attempts are taking place in the capital has heightened public fears about security.

What is even more worrying is the ease and confidence with which such attacks are being carried out. Two gunmen simply strolled to the spot in their slippers, shot at the man in full public view and got away in his motorbike. These were no rookies. The hit job reminds us of the Jamim Shah murder last year. The police said the attacks on Shah and Asif were not just carried out by the same gunmen, they could also be linked to the murder of Shaukat Beg in Butwal last year, the Indian businessman Anjani Kumar Chachan last week and the attack on Yunus Ansari inside prison last month.

In a studio discussion on an Indian news channel last week, ex-intelligence and security experts openly discussed ways to eliminate anti-Indian activities in Nepal. "India can't just sit back and watch," was the general refrain. They went on to raise fears of "growing Chinese and ISI nexus" in Nepal that goes unchecked due to corrupt political leadership and instability in Nepal, and how this was giving New Delhi a major headache.

These statements from Indian ex-military top brass hints at a thriving world of espionage and covert operations of which our own intelligence agencies have no clue. A senior CIB official admitted to us this week: "Yes, we have failed in counter-intelligence, and everybody out there needs to know this. Only then will they begin asking why we have failed." That may be cryptic logic, but you can't expect intelligence to operate effectively in absence of resource and logistical support. Outsiders seem to have free movement in Nepal because we have not been intelligent enough to give intelligence due importance over the years. A guy riding an embassy vehicle and playing golf with you might be masterminding these covert operations. How do you find out?



### When there is no political will to control crime, there is no way

As usual, there are scapegoats. The chief of the metropolitan police, Pushkar Karki, was held responsible for "security lapses" and removed. But the shooting of the Pakistani official was not a failure of security, it was a failure of intelligence. There are 4,700 officers on duty policing the 4.5 million floating population of Kathmandu. The Valley has 28 entry points, only 7 have checkposts. The 1,690 km open border with India is largely unregulated, and there is no record of people

who cross over. Hotels, guests houses and immigration office do not keep databases of those who come and go. Militants in the Tarai terrorise people and find safe haven across the border. International criminals like Babloo Srivastav use high profile political connections to obtain Nepali passports to carry out criminal activities here. You can't expect the police to prevent crimes without addressing these security loopholes. Nepal Police might be tainted with criminalisation and

corruption, but it just reflects the general malaise at the top.

Intelligence and the resources and training to gather them are the key to enhance effective policing. For that the whole nature of policing has to change in this transition period blotted with the politicisation of crime and criminalisation of politics. We have seen how a few honest top cops can bring change if they want to, but they need political support from the highest levels. Rulers have to show the political will to let the police

carry on with their jobs and not interfere to set free crooks when they are nabbed. Nepal Police has capable people that could make our cities and villages much safer but for that to happen, the institution must be freed from political garbage it puts up

Murders of the dons of organised crime or diplomats in Kathmandu grab the headlines, but in the districts ordinary citizens suffer from an epidemic of murders, abductions, extortion and intimidation. Impunity and the breakdown in law and order have made Nepal an ideal breeding ground for international criminals and for rival foreign intelligence agencies to wage turf battles.

India is understandably worried about the fake currency and terror suspects slipping into its territory from Nepal. We do not have the intelligence capability to assuage their concerns, so they do their policing on our soil. We just don't have the counter-intelligence capacity to monitor and thwart their covert operations. The only solution lies in ensuring political stability and integrity of the security apparatus so that the political will translates into a clear commitment to address impunity and security. Only then will the state be able to fulfill its primary function of protecting its citizens from harm. 💟

anuraga@nepalitimes.com





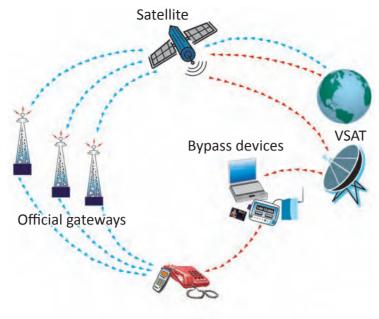
### Bypassing the information superhighway

#### **RUBEENA MAHATO**

elecom operators in the country are incurring losses of up to Rs160 million a month in revenue due to the bypassing of international calls through illegal connections via the internet, called VOIP.

The government is taking this seriously since it also affects tax revenue and income from Nepal Telecom. In the last few months alone, police have conducted a dozen raids, made several arrests and recently cracked down on Internet Service Providers (ISPs) for allegedly colluding with call bypass racketeers.

Experts say the call bypass thrives in Nepal because rates for international calls are one of the highest in South Asia, and every family is affected because one-fifth of the country's population lives and works abroad. The technology required to bypass calls is available over the counter and anyone with an internet connection can set up a



connection. Illegal operators in Nepal, many of those detained have been foreign nationals, evade the official gateway by using VOIP. And since there is no tax or service charge to be paid in this arrangement, the rates for end users are much cheaper.

"The most effective way to stop call bypass is to reduce long-distance telephone charges and render the call bypass rates non-competitive so the illegal operators go out of business," Binay Bohra chairperson of ISPAN says.

The controversy has pitted the ISPs against the mobile phone operators in the country, Nepal Telecom, Ncell, UTL and others. They say their investment in technology is much higher, and they can't go below a certain rate. And it is the hefty government tax on each call that makes the call rate expensive.

"Telecom operators will go out of business if they are forced to lower rates," Nepali customers are paying the highest rates for international calls in the region, but there is no consensus about how to lower rates

explains Pasi Koistinen, CEO of Ncell, "it is not possible to provide the same quality of service and still make profits if the rates are lowered."

Another solution might be to open up VOIP licenses for qualifying ISPs covering at least 25 districts and 13,000 VDC, a move which NTA is already considering. A proposal to this effect has already been accepted by the Ministry of Information and Communication. "VOIP technology is already so widespread that controlling it by denying the service would not be effective anymore," Bohra says.

If this happens, telecom companies would have to compete with ISPs for the market, the only thing being that ISPs can enter the business with much less investment. ISPs may run their services with their existing registrations without having to pay for expensive telecom registrations.

Naturally, this has led to some apprehension on part of telecom operators. "The government needs to understand that ISPs and telecom operators are run in different business models. We are a capital intensive business. It is unfair to put the two in the same league and to make them compete for the same market." Koistinen says.

He suggests measures like establishing direct connection between the operators so as to cut off bypassers and cooperating with the police to track down the suspect subscribers for curbing illegal VOIP services. During the raids, the police had found up to 10,000 SIM cards of telecom operators, promoting calls for a curb on bulk sales to suspect customers. Ncell, for its part, says it is already tightened procedures to buy SIMs, drastically reducing the number of illegally bypassed international calls.

While the government is worried about tax and the telecom operators are worried about revenue, Nepali customers are perfectly happy with whoever provides cheap call rates, even if it is illegal. Experts say that unless this demand is addressed by supply, it will be impossible to stop illegal connections. Indeed, both ISPs and telecom operators say it is impossible to completely stop the racket because it is big business and enjoys political protection.

Says Koistinen: "It is impossible to control 100 percent of illegal calls. However we have been helping the police, re-verifying our customers and have suspended several point of sales in the last few years."









### It's an expensive jam

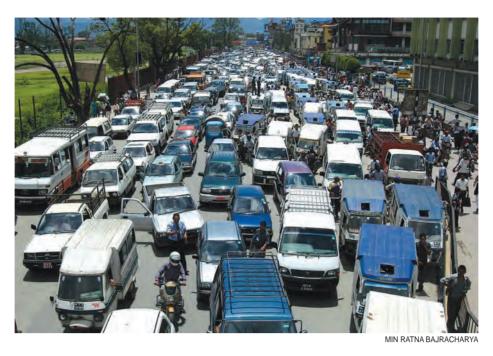


t is rush hour and vehicles struggle to move through a jam at Kalimati Lintersection. The congestion is made worse by two trails of vehicles on both lanes of the road, lining up for petrol and diesel. Petroleum imports from India have come down by nearly half because we owe Indian Oil nearly Rs 2 billion. But while we sit in our cars and complain about the fuel shortage and traffic, what we don't realise is that we are wasting much more than time while stuck in traffic.

During peak hours, a 20-minute journey can take up to an hour. Over 555,700 vehicles are registered in Bagmati zone, all crammed into about the same length of road as there was 15 years ago. Rallies on the main thoroughfares, accidents, and 'sawari' of VIPs, add on to the gridlock. Roundabouts that are meant to streamline vehicles instead become the centre of traffic congestion. A jam at a major intersection often has a spillover effect on secondary road networks and gallis. It is often question of life or death: patients have died in ambulances because they couldn't get to the hostpial in time.

The Indonesian Transportation Ministry recently released statistics stating that traffic jams in Jakarta cost the city at least US \$3 billion each year and 40 per cent of it is related to the fuel wasted by idling vehicle engines. While such a study for Kathmandu is missing, we can do some quick back-of-the-envelope calculations.

Most drivers choose to keep their



Time is not the only thing you waste when you are stuck in traffic

engines on during traffic halts, in anticipation that the vehicles will move forward. But keeping the engine on idle consumes more fuel than when the vehicle is on the move. A 1000cc car burns 2 litres of fuel if it is kept in idle for an hour, a heavier vehicle consumes double. A motorcycle engine consumes 0.25 litre per hour if it is just sitting in a jam. This means that if you own a 1000cc petrol hatchback and you are stuck in traffic for an hour a day you lose Rs 194 a day (@ Rs 97/litre), Rs 5,820 a month and Rs 69,840 a year. Multiply that by the total number of vehicles and you see that the current petroleum shortage is probably good for the country because at least we are wasting less fuel.

There are other costs: the fumes

from stationery vehicles adds to the already toxic air. Idling in traffic, frequent acceleration and braking also increases the wear and tear on vehicles, leading to more frequent repairs and replacements. Mismanaged traffic also results in stressed and frustrated drivers, hypertension and increases chances of road rage and accidents.

The most logical solution to manage traffic is to build roads and widen the existing ones. But while we wait for that to happen, let's be proactive to cut the costs of traffic jams. If you leave your house half an hour earlier than rush hour, you can skip traffic. Keep an eye for short cuts- the link roads beside the valley rivers are newer, shorter and often faster. Try the public transportation, Rs 20 can get you anywhere. And if the distance isn't too far, give your car a rest and walk or cycle, it's good for your health and your pocket. Start today, Fridays have been declared 'bike to work' days after all.

#### **BIZ BRIEFS**

Return gifts Kumari Bank marked its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary by gifting computers to Shree Janabikash Secondary School. The school is located in Balkhu.

Mega opening
Mega Bank formally inaugurated its 12 branches. The branches are located in Arghakhachi, Biratnagar, Birgunj, Butwal, Chautara, Hariwan, Jawalakhel, Kapan, Pokhara and Syaffrubesi. Baneshwor and New Road are the two locations in Kathmandu.

#### Spring collection

Springwood, a product of Surya Nepal, has launched its new summer t-shirts. Tourism and social networking are among the themes for the prints.

#### Lucky dices Him Electronics has introduced a new

scheme 'Himstar Roll Goti Roll' which offers a scratch card imprinted Himstar with two dices on purchase of Himstar TV, fridge

and deep freezer. If customers get stars in both dices they win a 26" LCD. A 5.1 Woofer, DVD, Induction Cooker and CFL bulbs are also be to won.

Colour play
AmarJyoti Foundation organised Teen Art Competition with 30 participants. Sagar Samal, Sonam Tamang and Anamika Gautam were declared first, second and third respectively. The paintings will be exhibited next Saturday at the foundation's premises.

#### Go Charlie

Charlie Gurung won the Ruslan Vodka New Year Golf 2068, taking home a two way ticket to Bangkok. Eightyfive golfers had participated in the tournament.







Today, Manang has developed into the popular tourist stop where trekkers outnumber locals during the peak season.

# "Not just taking pictures,

The field where the Bade festival was held in 1979...



...has been transformed into Manang's tourist quarter.







n the fall of 1979, when the Czech photographer Zdenek Thoma reached Manang, the valley had just been opened to tourism. Its stunning location on the north side of the Annapurnas and its hospitable inhabitants tempted Thoma to linger there to take pictures. He held many exhibitions in Prague and across

Europe.

Thirty years later, Thoma's son Michal travelled to Manang with his father and re-took pictures of the same places photographed in 1979. He met the people whose portraits his father had taken and documented the changes in the architecture and lives of the people of Manang.

#### Czech father and son photographers return to Manang with a before-andafter exhibition

Earlier this month, father and son returned to Manang once more for a before-and-after exhibition at the Manang Culture Museum. The opening ceremony on 4 April was attended by 100 locals and trekkers.

Visitors were excited to recognise themselves and compare pictures of their valley as it was in 1979 and see the changes. Although Manang has been transformed in the past 30 years, this is nothing compared to the changes that will come in the next few years as the Marsyangdi road reaches the once-pristine trans-Himalayan valley.

This young girl carrying her sibling in 1979 is now a woman but retains her familiar smile.



The Gangapurna Glacier lake didn't exist 60 years ago, but in 1979 it was already growing.

By 2008 the glacial lake had swelled with water from the melting glacier, which had retreated high up the mountain. The effects of climate change are dramatic in the Himalaya.



# but giving them back"



When Zdenek Thoma first came to Manang, there was only one house providing accommodation run by Tsering Dolma. Today, she is a prosperous tourism entrepreneur with several hotels. Dolma is happy about the changes, but adds: "I just wish people were a little less selfish." Today, everyone has mobile phones, the houses have electricity, and the sound of the internal-combustion engine has arrived in the valley with three motorcycles and tractors.

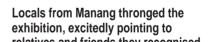
Locals are looking forward to the road, they think it will be better for trade. But not everyone is sure whether the road is good for tourism. Already, despite it being the peak trekking season, lodge-owners said there were many fewer tourists than before.

"Tourists want virgin places to visit, the road will be a negative unless you are smart about it," says Zdenek, who has seen how the road has affected trekking in Mustang, on the other side of Thorung La.

For Michal, the exhibition was a sort of homecoming because he grew up in Prague seeing his father's pictures from Manang. "I was six months old in 1979 when my father came here, and the images are so familiar to me that the exhibition took me back to my childhood," he says.

"Although people have taken many pictures of Manang and Manangis, nobody had yet brought the pictures back to them," says Michal, "we wanted to share our work by giving pictures, not just taking them."

nepalitimes.com Manang's memories, #460













www.npi-nepal.com

#### **EVENTS**



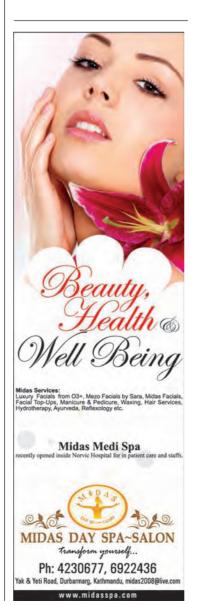
Inspirations from Nepal, oil, acrylic and water colour paintings by Mark D Vickers. 24 April to 6 May, 4pm on inauguration day, gallery hours: 10.30am to 6pm, Saturdays closed, Park Gallery, Pulchok, 5522307, parkgallery.wlink.com.np

Jewels of Newar Art, Pauba art by contemporary Nepali artists. 26 April to 15 May, 5.30pm on inauguration day, gallery hours: 11am to 5pm, Saturdays: 12pm to 4pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, 4218048

French Films Festival 2011, four representative French movies with English subtitles. Till 22 April, 7pm, Gardens of Alliance Francaise, Tripureshwor, 4241163, 4242832, www.alliancefrancaise.org.np www.planetnepal.org.np

Bookworm book fest, 2068, book fair cum literary festival. 21 April, 11am, Gyan Mandala, Moksh Restaurant, Jhamsikhel, 5546812

Rare Asian Textile, from the private collection of Barbara Adams and Female Substantive, paintings by lisa Brittain. Till 22 April, 5.30pm on inauguration day, gallery hours: 11am to 6pm, Saturday: 12pm to 4pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal, 4218048



Musical amusements, an array of Acrylic paintings based on musical instruments from east and west by artist Ramesh Bikal. Till 22 April, 10.30am to 6pm, Park Gallery, Pulchok, Saturdays closed

Garden Symphony, botanical art in water color and gouache by Canadian artist Emira Doric Muftic. Till 29 April, 5pm on opening day, gallery hours: 10.30am to 6pm, Park Gallery, Pulchok, Saturdays closed

Watercolour paintings of unique and exquisite orchids, by Hemlata Pradhan. Till 1 May, Serindia Gallery, O.P. Garden, Soi Charoenkrung 36, Charoenkrung Road, Bangkok, 02236410, serindiagallery @gmail. com

VrijMarkt Festival, join the Dutch at the Queen's day free market, handicraft, food, games,deals and more. 30 April, 12pm to 7pm, Summit Hotel, Lalitpur, free entrance

#### MUSIC

Universal Religion 2011, music festival bringing together performers from around the world. Till 24 April, 12 noon onwards, Fulbari Resort, Pokhara, kgarira @gmail.com, mountainmadnessnepal @gmail.com, 984138662/9851043398

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

#### DINING

**Lhasa Bar,** enjoy a beer or a splash of cocktail at this springboard for excellent young musicians starting out on the Thamel circuit. *Thamel* 

Pumpernickel 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* 

Bronco Billy, a new restaurant in town offering Tex-Mex and Indian dishes. They make their own corn tortillas, which gets a big thumbs-up. But really, we can't wait to try their Margaritas. Pulchok, opposite Namaste Supermarket

Krishnarpan, a specialty Nepali restaurant at The Dwarika's Hotel, 6 to 22 courses, an authentic Nepali meal. The Dwarika's Hotel, Battisputali, 4479488

Boudha Stupa Restaurant & Cafe, 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

Milk Coffee n Cocktail Cafe, coffee house during the day and a cozy lounge serving cocktails at night, try their yarchagumba and molecular cocktails along with the famous Starbucks. Woodland Complex, Durbar Marq



The Oriental Tearoom at Pipalbot, has rather complicated opening hours but a mouth-watering spring menu. Try sake-cured salmon for lunch and twice-cooked caramelised pork belly for dinner. Babar Mahal Revisited

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

**Mike's Breakfast,** huge breakfasts and a never-ending supply of c offee amidst a lush garden, popular among tourists and locals alike. *Naxal, 4424303* 

#### **GETAWAYS**

Charikot Panorama Resort, enjoy mountain views and local culture at the historic town of Charikot. Special packages on offer. Charikot, Dolakha, 5529463, thapamaag@gmail.com

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



#### Golf masters

The veteran golfers were left watching as 20-year-old Rashid Khan took home the Surya Nepal Masters 2011 trophy in his debut season. Khan submitted an error-free card of six-under 66 to finish the tournament at 20-under 268, seven shots clear of Sri Lankan Mithun Perera. Khan was awarded the winner's cheque of Rs 646,000 while Mithun received Rs 446,000. Nepal's best bet, Shiva Ram Shrestha finished third and took home the prize money of Rs 250,000. The 18th edition of Surya Nepal Masters was played at the course of Gokarna Forest Resort.



### Running with resonance

Joining the ranks of professional runners at the 31st annual Virgin London Marathon on 17 April was first-time runner, Philip Holmes, who completed the 34 km course in 4 hours and 50 minutes: all to raise money for The Esther Benjamins Trust Nepal which he helped set up.

The Trust works in Nepal to locate, rescue and rehabilitate children and young people who have been the victims of trafficking as well as other marginalised and at-risk groups including the hearing-impaired and street children. Holmes, who has lived in Nepal since 2005, was joined by a small group of dedicated runners from Nepal and they raised £25,000. The money will be used to help in the upkeep of the Trust's nearly 200 rescued children and to apprehend the traffickers and agents who continue to prey on Nepali children.

On 30 May Holmes will again lace up to compete in the BUPA 10 km run in another fundraising effort. This time he will be joined by Maya Lama Dong (pictured, left), a talented long-distance runner who was rescued by the Trust from circus slavery in 2004 and now resides in one of the

charity's two refuges at Godavari.

A group of 11 Western circus volunteers, three of whom are former Nepal volunteers, will also join the trio to raise money to support Sapana, Nepal's first contemporary circus.

"It's wonderful that Maya can don trainers and help us raise funds for other girls like herself and allow them to benefit from the opportunities The Esther Benjamins Trust provides in Nepal. This will be the race of a lifetime for Maya and one that could have no better purpose," says Holmes.

justgiving.com/maya10k

# Vesper Café



#### **SOMEPLACE ELSE**

'd never frequented Vesper Café, but had noted its slick interior, the pleasant garden, and the wonderful red building next to it. The cuisine, I assumed, was of a piece with Jhamel's many upmarket restobars, tilting towards continental offerings. So much so that I didn't even think I'd replicate earlier reviews of the place in other publications. But the other day I just happened to have lunch there, and came away with very distinct impressions.

Now, I have nothing at all to say about the main

courses offered in Vespers. For the three of us present, it was a salad-fest, at least on my part because of overindulgence towards the meaty side of the spectrum in days past. A Goat Cheese Salad, a Caesar Salad, and a Warm Chicken Salad. Light, substantial, tasty, right?

Wrong. After waiting longer than one might expect, slurping up bits of over-chopped mint through a straw and spitting them out discreetly, I eagerly looked at the approaching waiter to see a Tuna Nicoise take the place of my Caesar. "Bhai, yo ta Nicoise ho ni..."

The waiter stalled, retreated, and came back insisting that the Nicoise was what I had ordered. When I stared at him, he said a Caesar could be prepared, but that it would take 15-20 minutes, because the bacon would have to be cooked. I gave up, and reluctantly agreed to have canned tuna for lunch. And it was just as dull an experience as I expected, with nary an anchovy in sight.



BIKRAM RAI

What's worse, with the exception of the delicately grilled, flavoursome chicken, the rest of the ingredients in the other two salads were a disaster. While I praised another establishment recently for experimenting with a range of leaves in a salad, it seems everything just has to catch on in Nepal. Here we had parsley, fennel, green garlic, mint, some other unidentified shrubbery and,

oh there you are, lettuce. Believe it or not, there is such a thing as too much variety. And instead of nicely crumbled goat cheese Vespers opts for three slices of bread lathered with the stuff to top the salad itself.

As we left, disgruntled, the waiter came rushing up to inform me that they'd given us too much change back. It was the first thing they'd got right that day. 

Nepali Kukur

After New Orleans on the right side of Jhamel's Restaurant Lane.

Space	***
Bread 'n water	***
Service	***
Deal-icious	***
Rep-eat?	**1



### "Wellness"



The question below is commonly asked in medical examinations for qualified

Which one preventive intervention leads to the largest average increase in life expectancy in a target population:

- A regular exercise program
- Quitting smoking
- Mammogram (breast cancer prevention screening in women)
- Pap smear (cervical cancer prevention screening in women)
- Prostate gland cancer screening

The answer is b) quitting smoking. For a targeted population, more than all the other choices listed above, quitting smoking will add 3 to 5 years. A regular exercise program will add 1 to 2 years and the rest of the others will each add a couple of months. This question illustrates the importance of quitting smoking and exercising. Does this mean that c,d, and e options are not worth pursuing?

Predicted increases in life expectancy are average numbers that apply to populations and not individuals. For example, mammograms may increase life expectancy overall by only 2 to 3 months, but for the individual at risk of breast cancer (patients with a family history of breast cancer,



smoking etc), the screening may add many years by detecting the disease earlier. This same pattern holds true for cervical cancer and prostate cancer in the question above.

Many of us do not know if we are at risk for common diseases because this may not be obvious, like a family history. So, in carrying out recommended screening tests like the ones in the question above, it is important to assume that we are average Joes (or average Ram Bahadurs and Sita Devis) who may be at risk.

In a country like Nepal where day to day existence is so difficult for so many people, it may be hard to understand the concept of "wellness" which the above medical question evokes. But this idea of wellness is in our interest because prevention is better than cure. And crucially, cure is more expensive. Hence not only quitting smoking and exercise, but tests like breast and cervical cancer screening may help a great deal in promoting wellness. Raising awareness about the importance of screening tests in the community is a very good public health practice.



This satellite image radar composite taken on Thursday morning shows a huge high pressure system sitting over northern India. This is drawing in cooler air from the northwest, blowing away sand haze from the desert and keeping maximum temperatures two degrees below normal for this time of year. Expect glorious weather over the weekend, with some chances of afternoon buildup and isolated thundershowers and snow flurries at higher altitudes





SUN





STRONG GRIP: India's Minister of External Affairs, SM Krishna, meets President Ram Baran Yadav in the Office of the President in Shital Niwas on Wednesday.



DID YOU SEE THAT? Visitors at 'Trip-Game in 3D Light', an exhibition of paintings by Russian artist Olga Luzan at The Art Shop in Darbar Marg.



**SEARCH PARTY:** Devotees carry the chariot of Goddess Tudal Devi into Gahana pond in Hadigau, Kathmandu, on Tuesday, following the tradition to search for her ornaments in the pond.



MERCANTILE OFFICE SYSTEMS Hitti Pokhari , Durbar Marg , Kathmandu , Nepal Tel: 4440773, 4445920, Fax: 977-1-4437088 Email:market@mos.com.np

Butwal -071-542699 / Birat Infotech, Biratnagar-021-538729 / E-Net Solution, Chitwan-056-572096 / Advance Computer & General Suppliers, Banepa-9851081595 / Ugratara Trading House, Dhangadi-091-523601 / Dinesh Computers, Dhangadhi-091-521392 / Manakamana Hi Tech, Nepalgunj, 081-521473 / Smart Link, Dang-082-561022 / Ugratara Technical Goods & Suppliers, Mahendra Nager-099-523872 / Gagan Enterprises, Birgunj-9855022388 / 9725141388 / Mega Tech, Biratnagar-021-521794 / Quality Computer, Birtamod-023-540150, 9852672548 / Dinesh Kathmandu Dealers: Star Office Automation, Putalisadak-4266820 / Max international, Putalisadak-4415786 / Interactive Computer System, New Road-4227854 / The Waves Group, Lazimpat-4410423 / Click Solution Center, Lalitpur-5536649 / Virgin Mobile, New Road-4260173 / Flash International, New Road-4222384



### The real dui sabda



The idea of a presentation in less than 10 minutes is no doubt an appealing one, particularly for Nepali audiences accustomed to the blather of self-important personages with no respect for their time. Having ranted concisely on this point not so long ago, I was intrigued to hear of but disappointed to miss out on the first edition of Pecha Kucha Kathmandu in Attic Bar. I was happy therefore to be invited to contribute to photo.circle's presentation for the second edition last Saturday.

The format of Pecha Kucha, which is Japanese for 'chit-chat', is 20x20. This means that each presenter - and there are about a dozen per session – gets 20 seconds each for 20 slides, making for precisely 6 minutes 40 seconds. No politely gesturing hosts are needed to discourage over-running, as the presenter has no control over the slides he or she is presenting. The fear of being caught mid-presentation as



#### Pecha Kucha began in 2003 in Japan and has now spread to over 260 cities

your 'Thank You' slide beams out to the audience appears to be deterrent enough.

Pecha Kucha began in 2003 in Japan and has now spread to over 260 cities. Kathmandu's second edition took on an 'Inspire Japan' theme and included an incredible range of suitably inspirational stories from artists, journalists, photographers, writers and filmmakers. It was further

enlivened by an auction of organiser Sujan Chitrakar and Chirag Bangdel's artworks, the proceeds from which joined with door takes to help fund the building of a school in Japan.

Of course, there are always good presentations and bad presentations. There is the risk of Death by Powerpoint, and inattentive audiences. And the format has unique challenges. It

took some doing to squeeze the seven slides I was allotted on the book 'Hamra Hajurama' into photo. circle's presentation – in so many words, to distill my grandmother's three billion seconds of personal history into 140. And then you had American photographer Brian Sokol, who chose to sit in near-total silence as his brooding images of urban Japan cast light and shade on us. "Who'd have thought 20 seconds would be so long," he quipped.

But the inspiration was as much for the Nepalis present as for Japan. While those meant to be doing the most for Nepal stoop ever lower in their bungling, self-absorbed cretinism, to hear someone passionately describing a project that she has poured her creativity and intellect into is to hear the sound of hope. It goes without saying that there are many more Nepalis across the country equally deserving of such a platform to present their ideas to their peers. Pecha Kucha Pokhara's a shoo-in.

pecha-kucha.org/night/ kathmandu





### **Career Opportunity**

connected with

Professionalism

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation is a leading international organisation that specialises in capacity development support to government, non-government and private sector organisations. SNV is committed to reduction of poverty that is consistent with nationally defined poverty reduction strategies and the global MDG agenda. In Asia, SNV provides advisory services in Agriculture, Water, Sanitation & Hygiene and Renewable Energy/Climate Change.

Our work in Asia is led by a regional management team, made up of the Regional Director, Country Directors and Regional Unit Managers.PR/Communication for Asia is organised in two clusters: South Asia (Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia) and South East Asia.

SNV is looking for suitably qualified dynamic professional for the position of

#### Regional PR/Communication Officer South Asia (RPCO)

vacancy code 2011-08

The RPCO will be responsible for SNV South Asia regional PR/Communication strategy, especially linked to business development efforts, knowledge dissemination, quality control and support for reporting and proposals. The RPRCO will oversee and coordinate the PR/Communication activities for the South Asia sub-region and is in charge of communication for SNV Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan, together with Communication Officers at country level.

#### Requirements

- Masters Degree in communication or marketing related field
- Well seasoned communication professional with knowledge of Communication, PR and knowledge management instruments, regional implications and the core processes
- Strong background in managing and delivering marketing and communication strategies
- Verifiable experience in design, translation and backstopping the implementation of regional communication plans.
- Strong market orientation with ability to track trends in development communication
- Excellent verbal and written professional communication skills
- Previous experience working in the international development context and in Asia is preferred.

The position is based in SNV Country office, Kathmandu, Nepal and would require extensive visits to programme areas throughout South Asia Region. Detailed ToR is available upon email request to nepal@snvworld.org

Your applications should include i) motivation letter mentioning vacancy code, and ii) and detailed C.V. (preferably web links to your work).

Female candidates and candidates from marginalised castes and ethnic groups are encouraged to apply.

Your applications need to be received at address mentioned below before 1700

www.snvworld.org

hours, 3rd May 2011.



**SNV** Netherlands Development Organisation Nepal Bakhundole, Lalitpur P.O.Box 1966, Kathmandu, Nepal nepal@snvworld.org

# Might is not right



h, so finally, there are signs that two principal architects of the peace process in Nepal, the Maoists and the NC are trying to strike a deal on peace and the new constitution. To all those who have been advocating this idea (including yours truly who first broached this subject last year) this comes as a relief. Influential leaders in the two parties are talking in near unison about the need for Maoist-NC partnership.

The important part is that they are not just talking between themselves but also making it public. This in itself serves to convey an important message to a wary and frustrated people who have nearly lost faith in the leaders' willingness and ability to deliver on peace constitution-writing that all

The cooperation between the Maoists and the NC need not be about government formation at all. Nothing can stop these two from forming a coalition government should they want it since, together, they command a majority in the legislature-parliament and they can have a comfortable cushion of Madhesi parties' support as well. The UML, which has never stayed out of government since 2004, irrespective of who were its coalition partners (except during Gyanendra Shah's absolute rule) can be expected to come on board. But it would only give credence to the suspicion that parties forge alliance only to form a government for personal interests by toppling an



An NC-Maoist deal on peace and constitution is not far-fetched, it is necessary

The Maoist-UML seven-point deal is the latest example.

Moreover, a rule by majority is neither an answer nor an objective. The existing government and the one preceding it are examples of how a majority government alone cannot deliver during post-conflict transition. There has to be consensus between the parties that have the capacity to move the agenda of peace and constitution forward.

With just over a month left for the extended term of the Constituent Assembly to expire, the Maoist party and the NC need to recreate an understanding, like the one in November 2005 which resulted in the famous 12-point agreement which, in turn, led to abolition of monarchy, formal end of Maoist insurgency and an elected Constituent Assembly to draft the constitution. That understanding, according to Maoist ideologue Baburam Bhattarai and NC CWC member Shekhar Koirala who had been very closely involved in negotiations that led to the 12-point agreement is an absolute must.

Skeptics, radicals and extreme leftists and rightists will oppose and may even work against a NC-Maoists consensus. Well, they never owned up to the changes that have occurred since 2005. The parties need to focus on the vast majority of people who are waiting for them to deliver. And what better time than now to do so as we are about to celebrate the momentous changes we ushered in exactly five years ago, on 24 April, 2006.

There are people who want peace and constitution by 28 May, but others oppose another extension of the assembly. After all, the parties have wasted 11 months of the extended period on power games. What guarantee is there that they won't waste another extended period in a similar fashion? Valid concerns, which the parties need to address.

But if the term of the assembly is not extended through consensus between the NC, the Maoists party and the Madhesi parties, especially the first two, we will face a 'might is right' scenario. No prizes for guessing who will get the backing of the majority of the people at home as well as neighbours and powerful members of the international community.

'Might is right' or consensus? We have a choice to make and much before 28 May arrives.

damakant@gmail.com



GLAD TO BE BACK: Dwar Chand Rai and Netra Thakuri (above) escaped from Libya in the nick of time, and Main Ram Rai (below) doesn't think he will be going back to Fukushima anytime soon.

# No place like home

DAMBAR KRISHNA SHRESTHA

Then Mani Ram Rai left Nepal two years ago in search of a better life in Japan, he never imagined what he would have to go through in a country he thought was the safest and most prosperous country in the world.

The triple diaster- earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown that hit Japan on 11 March killed at least 25,000 and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. Maniram lived in Fukushima and fled to Tokyo with six of his friends. Initially, he was happy to have survived the quake, tsunami and radioactive leak, as living became difficult and expensive in Tokyo. Maniram decided to head back home, Although he will return to Japan to complete his studies. "Life is hard in Nepal, but at least it is home," he says.

On the other side of the world at the same time, Dwar Chand Rai of Khotang and Netra Thakuri of Kavre were fleeing a different kind of disaster: the unrest that led to war in Libya. It is a story of hardships, struggle and survival while traveling out of Libya's Darna province to Egypt. Netra and Dwar Chand were among hundreds of Nepali migrant workers rescued from Libya by our embassy in Egypt. They have decided not to go back to Libya.

Dwar Chand recalls the fearful nights he spent while waiting uncertainly for the relief transport that he wasn't sure would come. He dreamt of his family in Khotang and longed to see them again. After witnessing bloodshed in Libya, both Rai and Thakuri are thankful that at least their own country is not at war. Nearly 1,000 Nepali migrant workers go abroad, mainly to India, the Gulf, Malaysia and further afield in search of income. The remittance they send back has sustained Nepal's economy. But the reports



of exploitation, abuse and deaths of migrant workers in foreign countries has exposed the ugly side of this business. With growing unrest, uncertainty and recession abroad, many Nepalis feel it is better to make a modest and honest living in Nepal than to risk being cheated or mistreated in a foreign land.

"We will work hard in our own country now," says Thakuri, "there is no place like home."



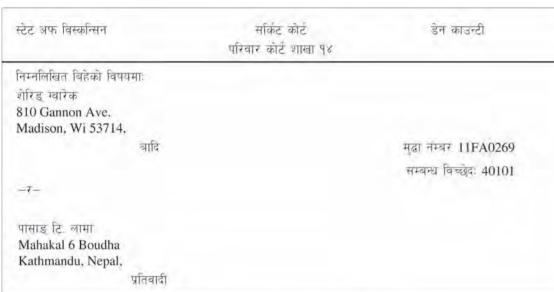


#### **Anti-poverty salary**

Rajdhani, 15 April

The vice president of the Poverty Alleviation Fund Bidhyadhar Mallik earns Rs 175,000 a month. This is five times the salary of the prime minister, who is also the Fund's president. Similarly, the executive director of the Fund, Rajbabu Shrestha, earns Rs 153,000 and assistant level employees earn salary of Rs 30,161. This is more than the salary of a minister and the chief secretary. There are 116 employees in the Fund, including 5 division heads, 8 regional coordinators and 59 officers level employees. Due to high salary and perks, a large portion of the fund provided by the World Bank for poverty alleviation is spent on administration. Ex-Vice President of the Fund Mohanman Saiju says that such exorbitant salaries are not appropriate in Nepal and there should be a code of conduct.





प्रकाशनदारा सम्मनहरू (Summous by publication)

#### दि स्टेट अफ विस्कन्सिन

माथि उल्लेखित प्रतिवादीको लागि:-

यसमार्फत तॅपाइंलाइ सचना दिइन्छ कि माथि उल्लेखित वादीले तॅपाई विरुद्ध सम्बन्ध विच्छेदको महा दर्ता गर्न भएको छ । तँपाईले मिति २२ अप्रील २०११ को दिनदेखि ४० दिन भित्र फिरत पत्रको प्रतिलिपिको लागि लिखित रूपमा माग गर्नु पर्नेछ ।

सी निवेदन (मागपत्र) यस अदालतको निम्न उल्लेखित ठेगानामा पठाउन पर्ने छ जसको ठेगाना यस प्रकार छ: Clerk of Circuit Court, Dane County Courthouse, 215 S. Hamilton Street, Madison, WI U.S.A. 53703, 7 सी निवेदन (मागपत्र) फिराद कर्ताको कानून व्यवसायी विलियम इसोको निम्न ठेगानामा पनि पठाउन पर्दछ, जसको ठेगाना यसप्रकार छ: 7130 Valhalla Trail Madison, WI U.S.A. 53719.

तॅपाईले महत अथवा प्रतिनिधित्वको लागि विकल पाउन सक्नहन्छ ।

तुँपाईले ४० दिन भित्र यस फिराद पत्रको प्रतिलिपि नमागेमा अदालतले तुँपाई विरूद्ध निर्णय गर्न सक्नेछ जसको परिणाम तपाई विरुद्ध जरीवाना वा फिराद पत्रमा माग गरिएको अरू कुनै कानुनी कारवाही गर्न सिकनेछ र तपाईले फिराद पत्रमा उल्लेखीत कुनै पनि मागदावीको प्रतिरक्षा गनेअधिकार गुमाउन सक्नहुने छ । अदालतको निर्णय कानुन बमोजीम लाग् गरिनेछ । जरीवाना वा कुनै रकम तिर्न पर्ने गरी अदालतबाट निर्णय भएमा तपाईको जस्तो सुकै निवर्तमान वा भविष्यको सम्पत्तिमाथि दावी बन्न सक्छ र जवरजस्ती मासिक भत्ता तिराउन सिकन्छ वा सम्पति जफत हन सक्छ ।

साथै तपाइँलाई यसमार्फत सूचना दिइन्छ कि परिवारकोर्ट कमिश्नरको अफिसबाट Wis. Stat. § 767. 105 मा तोकिएको जानकारी उपलब्ध छ ।

मितिः ११ फेब्रुअरी २०११

विलियम इसो फिराद कर्ताको विकल

7130 Valhalla Trail Madison, WI 53719 फोन नम्बर: 01-608-277-0853 द्वारा /s/ Willim Dusso स्टेट बार संख्याः १०१३२१८ (1013218)

### Healthy mums

Sita Niraula in Himal Khabarpatrika, 14-28 April

हिमाल



Januka Biwakarma of Taplejung is preparing for her second baby. The first time she was pregnant, she had not even entered a hospital because she was too shy. But this time she has already

had seven check-ups at the local hospital. There is a sense of awareness among women about maternity health care in the villages. "My daughter-in-law gave birth to her child at home, but now the women are conscious of their health and run to the hospital," says Pabitra Majhi of Pachthar.

This change has come about because of the government's program to decrease maternal mortality. The country was even awarded for its exemplary work with a MDG award in September. Nepal is now near achieving the target of decreasing the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by three quarters (134/100,000) by 2015. In 1991, this number was at 517 in Nepal, had increased to 539 in 1996 but was brought down to 281 in 2006.

It is hoped that the programs and campaigns running at present will continue to have a positive impact. In pre and post natal care, a pregnant woman is supposed to get health check-ups in her fourth, eighth and ninth month and receive two TT vaccines. Fourth month onwards, she needs to take iron tablets and de-worming medicines. If a woman comes to a health centre for delivery with proof of having received all of this, she receives an allowance of Rs 400. Government hospitals, primary health care centres and health care centres offer free checkups to pregnant women and also give allowances: Rs 1500 in mountainous districts, Rs 1000 in hilly districts and Rs 500 in Tarai districts.

### Dahal's roadmap

Sudheer Sharma in Kantipur, 20 April

कान्तिपुर

Girija Prasad Koirala and Pushpa Kamal Dahal were the key persons who jointly initiated the peace process. With Koirala gone, Dahal should play a major role in taking the peace process to a conclusion. The current political uncertainty is the result of the Maoists' contradictory standpoints of 'peace' and 'revolt'. It is time for Dahal to decide the party's ideal.

If Dahal is for peace and constitution, as understood lately, it should be reflected in the politburo document, eliminating the speculations about Palungtar plenum's decision of 'revolt'. People always reserve the right to revolt but this is not a time for destruction. It is time for peace and constitution through which Nepal's prosperity is possible. There is no insurmountable obstacle to overcome but eliminating the Maoists' strategic dilemma is the first thing to be done in proceeding the process.

There is risk of party split if Dahal takes decision in favour of peace and constitution. A true leader has guts to take risk in making a historical decision. Dahal should make efforts to convince the hardliners who term the CA 'rightist quicksand' and want it to be dissolved. It is not responsible leadership to allow someone holding a radical view to drag the party and the entire country into bloodshed. Going back to revolt will be a betrayal to the CPA, the 12-point agreement and commitment to the people.

It is time for Dahal to take a bold decision. He should not just wait for favourable environment within his party to take the decisive step in favour of peace, constitution and prosperity of this country. The historical changes like the CA and republic were possible when the Maoists quit a never ending battle and joined the mainstream politics. They emerged as the biggest party. They need to protect and institutionalise past achievements because while regressive forces are united, progressive ones are divided. The priority should be nationalisation and integration of the Maoist combatants, promulgation of a democratic constitution and formation of a stable government through a new election.

There is no better time than it is now as the government, the Maoist, NC and the people are positive towards the NA's proposal for PLA integration. What we need is the Maoist's willingness for the Special Committee to finalise the modality of integration.

### Inconvenient truths

Provocative new book argues for pluralism, and against populism



'anak Mani Dixit is not a diplomat. His language is blunt and straight-forward. He dares, and even relishes, to speak truth to power and populism. For some of us--scholars, intellectuals and diplomats included--who are trained to be politically correct, sit on the fence and play it safe, his new book, Peace Politics of Nepal, makes uncomfortable reading. This book may as well have been titled Inconvenient Truths of Current Nepali Politics.

Dixit is often portrayed as a part of the Kathmandu elite, an upper-class, upper-caste Bahun, strongly anti-Maoist, perhaps a little right-wing and a status quoist. What you see often depends on where you stand. That caricature of Dixit may be accurate if you see Nepal in simple, black and white terms: as being sharply divided between feudal, conservative, counter-revolutionary stooges of imperialist, capitalist, foreign-agents dominated by the upper-class Bahun-Chhetris who purposely and deliberately dominate, oppress and conspire to perpetuate a deeply unjust, unfair, discriminatory and

oppressive system against the poor, the marginalised, the deprived and you can only change it through revolutionary violence and radical restructuring of the

A logical corollary therefore would be, as King Mahendra said in justifying the Panchayat regime, that Westernstyle liberal democracy is unsuitable to solve Nepal's problems. Dixit, however, argues that it was precisely the open society, political freedoms, respect for pluralism of views that multi-party democracy of the 1990s allowed and encouraged that enabled us to bring to prominence the issues of the deeply entrenched disparities and discrimination, inequalities and injustices. It even allowed the freedom for a radical Maoist movement to rise in Nepal, at a time when Communism was collapsing all over the world. Democracy takes time to evolve and correct its own shortcomings. Dixit argues that the infant and imperfect democracy of the 1990s was not given enough time.

The populist thesis in vogue in Nepal right now, and one that seems to be subscribed even by some diplomats and donors of Western democracies, is that Nepal's experience with democracy in the 1990s



Peace Politics in Nepal: An Opinion from Within by Kanak Mani Dixit **Himal Books** 300 pages Rs 480

was an utter failure. Dixit asks us to look at some of the successes of the 1990s before the Maoist insurgency derailed them. Dixit is unapologetic and biased in favour of non-violence, liberal democracy and pluralism. He has a gripe against many members of the international community who subscribe too easily to the populist characterisation of Nepal as so deeply divided by entrenched caste, class and ethnic divisions that to solve such problems, Nepalis should be prepared to accept, at least temporarily, some radical, less than fully nonviolent and undemocratic solutions which they would not accept in their own countries.

He sees diplomats, donors and consultants of many Western countries, even some UN officials as having a rather romantic view of the Maoist agenda for social change. He faults the analysis contained in reports of organisations like the International Crisis Group (ICG) as showing a subtle bias that castigates the NC and UML as status quoist, and the Maoists as the true agents of progressive change.

The chapter that made me sad was the one dealing with the UN Mission to Nepal (UNMIN), which Dixit rather unkindly titles "Uncivil Mission". As someone with a long association with the UN, my natural instinct was to disagree with Dixit's harsh judgment of UNMIN. But, it must be said, UNMIN was not as conducive to pressuring the Maoists to give up violence and intimidation, to convince the other parties that it could be counted on to firmly stand on the side of democracy, and that its reporting would provide the most objective basis for the Secretary-General and Security Council to understand Nepal.

In the chapter on federalism, Dixit dares to address an issue which most sophisticated Bahun-Chhetri intellectuals consider taboo for fear that it will draw the wrath of the advocates of ethnicity-based federalism. While fully

supportive of economically viable federal structure that ensures greater inclusiveness and better representation of marginalised groups, Dixit questions the rationale for setting up ethnic Bantustans.

The book argues that Nepal's peace process cannot be considered complete so long as the thousands of victims of conflict do not get justice. There is a real fear, he argues, that both the Maoists and the Nepal Army would rather that we "forgive and forget" the terrible atrocities committed during the conflict.

Dixit also worries about some continuing, undemocratic revolutionary romanticism. He insists that the new constitution must be an advance from the 1990 Constitution, and not a further regression. Reading the Maoist draft of the constitution that doesn't accept pluralism, there is a chance that we might end up with a constitution that is even less democratic than the 1990 one.

I hope this book will inspire us to strive for and insist on, a model of New Nepal that seeks both socioeconomic justice and political freedoms, in a non-North Korean style and substance.

Kul Chandra Gautam is a former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and this review is adapted from his presentation at the launch of the book, Peace Politics in Nepal, on 19 April.

nepalitimes.com







For Trade Inquiries:



Mango Tree International Pvt. Ltd. ph: +977 1 2297723 info@mngtree.com

www.nepalitimes.com

22 - 28 APRIL 2011 #550



### Horseshit raises stink at Supreme Court

**T**hose of you who know Assdom well will not need to be reminded what we think of our snooty equine cousins, the horses. Although we do, on occasion, horse around with horses to produce offspring known as mules, we don't take the relationship any deeper than that. For the rest of the time, the male ass and the female horse observe decorum and remain strictly at arm's length. Which is why I don't blame the honourable justices of the Supreme Court for raising a stink over the smell of fermented horse guano emanating from the Cavalry Brigade of the Nepal Army at Bubber Mahal.

The esteemed justices of the constitutional organ are fine with the aroma wafting up to the chambers from the Bagmati, but they draw the line at having to smell horseshit all day. So the high court wants the cavalry



relocated to some remote district, and the horses snort back: "This is our ancestral home and we ain't goin' nowhere." Of all the crises that the government now has to deal with, add an imminent declaration of hostilities between the Nepal Army and the Supreme Court.

It's déjà vu all over again as PKD, after hee-hawing and flirting with hardliners for two years, finally comes around to Baburam Path and postpones his planned people's revolt. Some say all the rafting in the Bhote Kosi and the retreats in Kavre seems to

have mellowed the Chairman, but others point to the sudden air-dash he made to Singapore recently for the about turn. Whatever the reason, Comrade Lotus Flower seems to have figured out which side of his toast is buttered. He will now try to dump JNK, but the only way to replace him as PM is by giving in to all demands on air marshals, a treaty on extraordinary rendition, disbanding the YCL and demobilising the PLA. Word

the dotted line. The trouble is, can anyone trust Comrade Ferocious?

മാരു

Beset by crises, Jhol Gnat needs all the advice he can get to turn challenges into opportunities. After a serious brainstorming in the shower just now, the Ass has come up with the following solutions to his problems:

**Problem:** There is no money to pay the Indians for petroleum imports, and Nepal has become the main transit route for the smuggling of fake Indian currency.

Solution: Print counterfeit IC to pay IOC.

Problem: Daily 16-hour

**Problem:** JNK's cabinet is in trouble even before it is complete. Of the ministers he appointed, one is shot, another refuses to take the oath and Dr Lharkyal Lama turns out to be a Chinese double agent pretending to be a Free Tibet activist with Indian and Nepali passports.

Solution: Replace Radha Gyawali with Anuja Baniya, switch Gokarna Bista from hydro to home, appoint Lama ambassador to Beijing.

**Problem:** Two sitting CA members are accused of renting out their red passports.

**Solution:** Make Biswonath Yadav Foreign Minister and give Irrigation to Gayatri



