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BIKRAM RAI

## Anti-climax

With one week to go for the deadline, the country is headed for another constitutional anti-climax.

The four main parties have intensified back-room negotiations on the two main stumbling blocks: decommissioning of Maoist fighters and justifying another extension to a seriously disillusioned country. The fact that senior leaders could not be reached for soundbites all day Thursday is probably a good sign:

Maoist leader Ram Karki says, "The current constitution writing and peace process has been in

limbo as we were dealing with constitution writing, power sharing and peace process separately. Today's meeting will address these points together to forward the peace process, even if this means changing the government or amending the interim constitution." In spite of its strong rhetorics in the media, Congress too has little choice but to agree to extension. "We have cautioned the Maoists that NC will sit for talks to avert untoward situation but it will not compromise on fundamentals of democracy. It is up to the Maoists whether they want a politics of consensus

or confrontation." Congress central committee member Deep Kumar Upadhyia told *Nepali Times*.

There are positive signs that even the parties that were against CA extension or bargaining hard to try to get into government in return for acceptance have now come on board. Right across the political spectrum, leaders seem to have seen the writing on the wall from last week's Himalmedia poll and all agree that a national unity government is the only way forward. However, the trust deficit between the NC and the Maoists is still so great that it is unlikely to be cleared in the few days that are left. ■

### Editorial p2

#### Avoid a void

However much we may want to wish away politicians, politics and parliament, there is no other way to do this.

### ANI p6-7

Ani Choying Drolma, a most unlikely of rock stars, has shared Buddhism's sacred chants with a growing number of fans worldwide. But she found this path almost by accident.



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# Avoid A Void

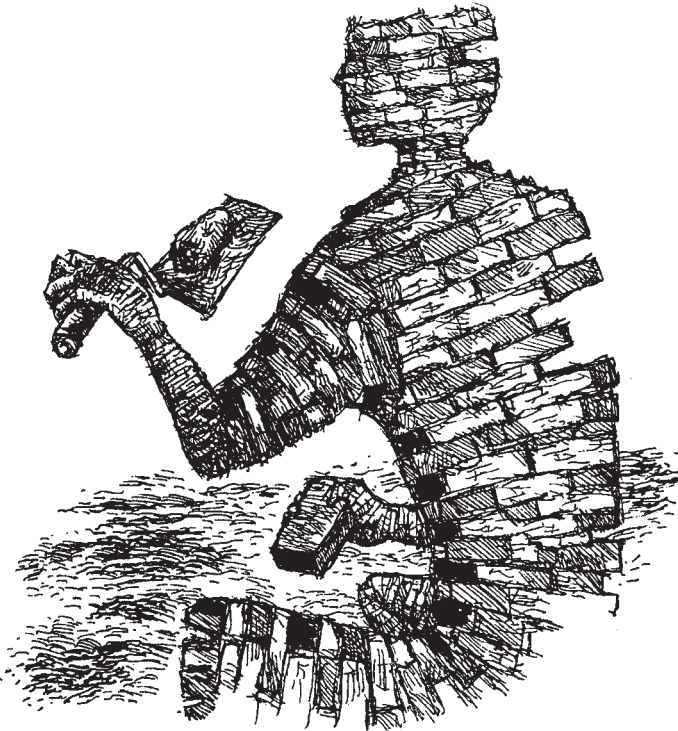
As the country heads into another constitutional failure next week, it is tempting to join the chorus of outrage. The best thing said these days about the CA members is that they are lazy; otherwise, the epithets are much more derisive.

The anger manifests in the vitriol by political leaders of all parties on radio phone-in programs. It can be measured by public opinion polls, like the one conducted by Himalmedia last week. And it can be seen in street sit-ins and the spread of cyber activism on social networking sites. The response from politicians is more of the same lame excuses, tired rhetoric and empty slogans.

The majority of Nepalis seem to have given up on the constitution ever being drafted, or the peace process concluded. Their concerns are more mundane: they are fed up with the coalition governments since 2006 for having failed them miserably. There has been abject failure in the state's primary responsibility to protect its citizens and provide basic services. What rankles the people is not so much the political power struggle (they have come to regard that as a given) it is the never-ending shortages of power, fuel, water, jobs, passports, food.

It is tempting to write off governments, political parties and elected legislators. But what is the alternative? When the rhetoric gets so dismissive about the political process, there is a danger of throwing the baby out with the bathwater and of it all degenerating into a self-fulfilling prophecy of doom. Naturally, there is much to complain and be cynical about, but look at it this way, at least there isn't a war going on. Our collective memory is short. We have forgotten that until five years ago, 300 Nepalis were being killed every month at the hands of fellow Nepalis.

The euphoria of the ceasefire and the people's movement



has long worn off, however, to be replaced by terrible disillusionment. It may still be worthwhile to also reflect that we were perhaps being too ambitious that things would settle down so quickly, that the constitution would be a breeze, that the Maoists would be disarmed and demobilised, that we would have a national unity government, which would promptly and efficiently deliver the peace dividend.

As we are swept along by a public mood of resignation and despair, we should also ponder that however much we may want to wish away politicians, politics and parliament, there is no other way to do this. The only way is for civil society and media to keep them on their toes, and never let them forget the guiding values of democracy, pluralism and free press.

The CA has made progress on many elements of the constitution. Some of the more radical demands on state restructuring and federalism have been thrashed out in the chambers, and it may just as well that we need more time to let the extreme rhetoric cool down.

What is holding things up is the power struggle at the leadership level. As the largest party, as the only party with its own fighting force, and as the party that is forever saying one thing and doing another, the onus is on the Maoists to go the extra mile to earn the trust of the others.

On the other hand, the NC should not take the word "opposition" to mean they have to oppose everything coming from the coalition. There is no alternative to consensus, but there can be no compromise on non-violent democratic politics.

In the coming week, the leaders across the political spectrum must apologise to the people for having let them down. They must present a draft of the constitution to prove that they have not been flaking off, and set a concrete timetable for its completion. They must offer the public a work plan and timeline on the demobilisation of Maoist army. Then, and only then, can they earn the right to extend the CA by six months.

It is now too late to be debating whether to extend the CA mandate or not. Politics abhors a vacuum, and we should avoid a void on 29 May.

*KD*

## ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

### POWER TO THE PEOPLE

I shall agree with the author that the foreign investment in hydropower projects solely for the purpose of export would give Nepal less benefit ('Hydrocratic dreams' by Ratna Sansar Shrestha, #553). We should also not daydream about exporting power any time soon when the country is reeling through load shedding. However, we shouldn't let NEA export power. This will be same as the monopoly we have now that is to be blamed for the present power crisis. Even a non Nobel-laureate energy expert would be able to understand that the boom in the energy sector around the globe is because of the free energy market. Generation and distribution of electricity are privatised almost everywhere. There is no reason why this should not happen in Nepal. The author's argument of selling energy for less and buying it for more is valid. But this should be checked by policy not by monopoly.

Bimalesh

- The ridiculously low rate quoted for export of peak power from West Seti to India presumably reflects corrupt agreements. Storage hydro is the only practical means of storing electricity to meet peaks and should ONLY be sold at peak rates which are naturally much higher than baseload rates. Because any pricing that is not corrupt will cost much more for peak storage hydro than for any baseload generation it is quite natural to export the expensive peak load power even while importing cheaper baseload power (and only using a smaller part of the storage hydro for local peak load power, but not for baseload power).

Arthur

- Ratna Sansar Shrestha should do us a favour and tell us how many times he has been in official capacity to influence the policy making related to hydropower in Nepal: in the NEA, the ministry, in cahoots with ministers. We will probably have a better chance of getting electricity in our country if you went away. You just oppose everything, as you have done all your life.

Chandra Gurung

- Ratna Sansar Shrestha is right in saying that the export of hydroelectricity is not going to solve Nepal's trade and balance of payment deficit. However, where the writer goes astray is when he contends that the only means of financing hydropower projects is through foreign direct investment, ignoring the important historical role that multilateral and bilateral foreign aid and grants have played in the development of this sector in Nepal.

ASP

- Export of hydropower seems a wishful thinking at present from the point of view of the massive shortfall of power in the country. Have we cared that the diesel consumption has doubled in the last two years? Forty per cent of all diesel sales fuel diesel gensets. We are spending NR16 billion for imports of diesel. If we go by NOC's claims of its losing money more than Rs 20 per liter, NOC or the government is subsidising the rich households, industries and the commercial buildings Rs 4 billion a year. We will require peak power of 1,500 MW by 2015 and 9,000 MW by 2030.

This country's focus and energy policy should be in meeting domestic demand first, and then only it should think about exporting surplus power to neighboring countries.

Amrit Nakarmi

### CONSTITUTION

There is something wrong with the picture accompanying Ashutosh Tiwari's column ('A costly constitution', #353). Isn't Sunil Babu Pant a CA member? Who is he protesting to? Has he not taken salary and all the perks from GoN? And he is wearing a t-shirt that says "Jyala purai liyau, aba sambidhan deu!" He should be in the other side. What a farce.

Darcy

- CA members were elected to formulate the constitution of the country and not rule the country. Now the main objective has been to become a minister in the cabinet and misuse the resources and earn money. It's a disgrace.

Shyam

### GIVE AND TAKE

All three Maoist factions need to be able to declare victory of some sort to satisfy their faithful, many of whom shed blood for the goal of a people's republic ('Give and take', by Damakant Jayshi, #553). And all three factions believe that holding on to the leverage that the PLA and YCL provide is essential to get a constitution that's "good enough," even if it falls short of a complete revolution. That's the basic deadlock.

John

### BANGLADESH

It will take years for Nepal to go the way

Bangladesh transformed itself ('From basket case to bread basket', by Kunda Dixit, #553). Bangladesh has greater social engineering in its development paradigm: from a dictatorial regime to a governance through grassroots mobilization and decision making. Nepal saw the derailment of democracy through the Maoist armed conflict, which nearly crippled the industrial and social networking system built after 1990. They created havoc in social transition from a working democracy to a dictatorial local development where the Maoists were the decision makers at every stage. Their drive for power through extortion, violence, and coercion has shaken our social fabric so much that in many areas they were replaced by other similar groups. Local participation has been reduced to zero.

Kamal Kishor

- If high-rises were a sign of development then what do you have to say about North Korea or the Soviet Union? A booming city centre is a sign but not a very crucial one.

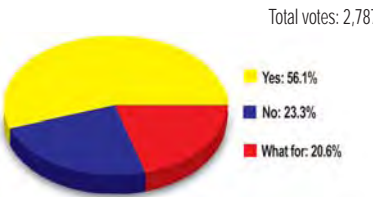
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Q. Should the Jhala Nath Khanal government be replaced?



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Q. Will the peace proposal of Nepali Congress help resolve the deadlock?





# Left to themselves

## Lessons Nepal's left can learn from the defeat of communists in India



BY THE WAY  
Anurag Acharya

The end of the 34-year rule of the Communist Party of India Marxist CPI(M) in West Bengal and the defeat of the left coalition in Kerala in state elections this week have once again stirred a debate on the future of the left movement in the region. Liberals see the defeat as a result of people's disillusionment with the populist programs of the left while socialists blame corruption and ideological bankruptcy in the CPI(M) for the defeat.

The countdown to the rout of the communists in West Bengal had begun in 2007, after the Buddhadeb Bhattacharya government unleashed a brutal crackdown against farmers in Nandigram protesting government's forced acquisition of land to set up a chemical plant. In

2008, the CPI (M) government once again used the colonial-era Land Acquisition Act of 1894 to displace thousands of peasants from fertile farms to set up a TATA Nano car factory in Singur district. The party lost its credibility and was trounced in local elections in 2008.

In spite of being a socialist government, the CPI(M) regime was accused of compromising on fundamentals of social justice. The party's dual policy of flaunting a democratic face in the national politics while suppressing democratic dissent within the state maligned the image of the left. A party, which took a moral position on issues like farmers' suicides and faked police encounters in the country, exposed this duplicity. You don't need to do much more to lose elections.

The defeat of the CPI(M) in West Bengal will not have tangible impact on Nepali politics because

after midwifing the 12-point agreement in Delhi in 2005 and steering the early phase of the peace process, the party has mostly stayed out of Nepali politics. But the Maoists will certainly be worried by their weakened influence in New Delhi.

The Bengal verdict should be a lesson for Nepali comrades that they cannot and should not undermine fundamental political freedoms if they want to be in the good books of the people. They may have progressive socio-economic agendas, but will have to compete with contending agendas of other parties democratically in order to convince the people.

The Maoists must understand that they cannot take for granted the support people have shown for them and think that they can bully their way through the peace process. Yes, the people feel that Maoists have more to contribute to building a new Nepal than any other political force. But, no, we do not want the changes shoved



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

down our throats. Look what happened to Buddhadeb who wanted to kick start an "industrial revolution" in the West Bengal by creating TATA jobs.

A successful revolutionary movement is not only persistent and relentless, but also dynamic in gauging the aspirations of the people on whose behalf it struggles. The Maoists have taken a step in this direction by abandoning the line of revolt. But only by denouncing the power of the gun will they prove that they believe in people power. Why does a party that claims to have people by its side, and won an election need a gun anymore, anyway?

Given the hostile international attitude towards them, communists movements have resorted to

armed rebellion as the only alternative to emancipation. But the success of the 2006 people's movement in Nepal after a bloody decade of war has opened the possibility of peaceful revolutions in the 21st century.

Dictatorial regimes in the Arab world are falling apart, communist regimes are under pressure to democratise in Latin America and the crisis of capitalism has sparked unrest in Europe. No ideology or institution can hold people hostage to authoritarian ambitions. People are neither going to tolerate political captivity nor are they willing to live in economic bondage. The fall of the three decades of majoritarian dictatorship in West Bengal is the latest expression of the people's verdict, and Nepal's left movement must take note. 🇳🇵

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# Learning to bank

William Westgate, a former senior VP of HSBC Bank and current director of Studies at London College of Management and Leadership, will be conducting training for mid and senior level bank managers in Nepal in August. Westgate was on a prep trip to Kathmandu and spoke with Nepali Times the about program.

**Nepali Times: Why do you feel the need to conduct this training in Nepal?**

**William Westgate:** I have travelled to this part of the world several times and have seen the growth here. You see, banking is not just an industry; it is like the

lifeblood of an economy and a healthy functioning banking industry. With this training we would like to bring good practices of western banking to Nepal. I understand we work in different environments and so we pick out the techniques that are appropriate for the socio-economic scenario, here.

**What will this training constitute?**

We will conduct three-day separate trainings for the mid and senior managers from the banks. Besides me, David Knapp, former executive director at CIBC world markets, and Darren Windsor, MBA lecturer at

Monash University will be conducting the training. We will prepare for three months for the training. It is important to take a holistic approach. Our focus will be on management techniques, financial tools and effective sales methods. We want the participants to be able to use what they learn in our training so we will use practical methods, examples and visuals that will simplify the theories. Participants can also join a fourth day training that will give them a Chartered Management Institute Assessment certificate.

**What is your impression about the banking sector after meeting several Nepali bankers?**

The meetings have been fruitful and I've met some very capable bankers. There is tremendous competition within the Nepali banks, and while some may think things are moving too fast, this growth is essential in anticipation of the growth of other industries in the future. The loan demand exceeds deposits here so the banks have to invest in financial literacy to pool in money that is yet to enter the formal system. Financial literacy is also important to abolish the traditional system of hundi. The CEOs that I talked to were also eager to discuss issues of mergers and acquisitions and managing a bank's brand.



## Linking out

Worldlink Technologies, one of Nepal's leading software solutions providers, established in 2001, has been acquired by an Atlanta based technology services and financial solutions organisation, Software Paradigms International Group (SPI). The company boasts global locations across Europe, Asia, North America, and Australia—now set to include Nepal.

"SPI has experienced tremendous growth in the past several years. It grew by 66 per cent last year," says Sid Mookerji (*top, right*), CEO of SPI. "In order to sustain our growth, we have been looking out for highly talented human resource." After a six-month venture with Worldlink Technologies, SPI was impressed by the quality of Worldlink products that they felt inclined to induct.

Worldlink Technologies will now be known as SPI Nepal. In addition to serving its existing Nepal-based customers in government, banking and other sectors, SPI Nepal will be SPI's third ODC, serving its customers worldwide. SPI Nepal will work hand in hand with the international company to develop and manage applications and systems, and provide IT solutions and consultations.

"This is a win-win situation for both the companies," says Yajurendra Shrestha (*top, left*), CEO of WorldLink Technologies. "While this gives our products an access to a worldwide market and the valuable brand name of SPI, SPI gains in terms of a new talented team at a relatively less development cost."

SPI will develop the infrastructure of its new investment by enhancing its power supply. The company will also conduct intensive trainings for its Nepal-based human resource, with an aim to increase the workforce of SPI Nepal from the present 100 to 500 in the next two years. SPI has earned key industry certifications including SEI CMMi Level 5, Six Sigma and ISO 9001:2000, and plans for SPI Nepal to be the first company to gain SEI CMMi Level 5 certification.

"This acquisition puts Nepal on the outsourcing map," explains Mookerji. "Hopefully, other companies will see this as a stepping stone and Nepal can tap into its potential to develop as an IT hub."



BIKRAM RAI



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MY TWO PAISA  
Paavan Mathema

If a company plans to hide scholarship coupons in its products for few lucky students to find it, and label it CSR initiative, stop. That was never what corporate social responsibility was supposed to be about.

CSR has been misused and abused so much that it is perhaps time to drop the acronym altogether. So-called CSR activities appear to be aimed less at serving the society and more at servicing a company's sales and image. Maintaining a roundabout just so that you can put up your signage on the busiest part of the road is a laudable PPP effort, but don't call it CSR. The very fact that companies hire marketing agencies to design their CSR demonstrates that we have got it all backwards.

CSR is not charity either. Companies give handouts, free blankets to old age homes, free health camps,

# Calculated Social Respect

CSR has been misused so much it is time to drop the acronym altogether



donations to schools and call it CSR. While every little donation counts, sorry, philanthropy isn't social responsibility.

CSR is a long-term approach for an organisation to be socially responsible in all level of its operations. It can do so by ensuring the rights and benefits of its workers, by being eco-friendly, by implementing

sustainable practices in business and also by being financially accountable. CSR is not only for multinationals and large conglomerates, even small companies can have a social conscience.

In fact, CSR should be renamed Sustainable Entrepreneurship, a company culture that doesn't waste resources, promotes workers' welfare and protects the

environment. In Nepal we need social entrepreneurs, businessmen who look beyond the immediate profit-motive to the larger good of the country and community in their everyday dealings.

The idea is to balance the interests of all the stakeholders, internal as well as external. CSR needs to start within the company. Providing a healthy and indiscriminate working environment and taking care

of the workers' health and education increases their motivation, which then has a positive impact on the company's productivity. Similarly, a company can find ways to decrease and recycle its waste products and make more efficient use of its resources, instead of just conducting an annual tree plantation program. Contrary to what most business men think, CSR is not a cost area but a value-adding tool to the business.

Dabur Nepal, for example, offers employment to local farmers to cultivate endangered plants. It is rightly called a CSR project because it fits strategically with the company's business, and at the same time conserves the herbs and helps the local economy. Ace Bank's support for its mascot rhino's conservation is also a novel approach to CSR.

However, ensuring that companies abide by ethical practices and implement socially responsible practices can be difficult in Nepal where neither the government nor the civil society keeps a check on them. But standards such as Fair Trade Group Nepal and Good Weave (Rugmark) can help implement CSR. These certifications of CSR also provide a better market to the products internationally.

## BIZ BRIEFS

### Godrej in Nepal

EOL, an enterprise of Chaudhary Group, has joined hands with Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Company to launch Godrej's refrigerator, washing machine and microwave oven in Nepal.

### Be OK

Bank of Kathmandu distributed educational materials and basic supplies to women and children from Nepal Women's Foundation as part of its CSR initiative.

### New cells

Neoteric Nepal has launched Nokia C5-03 and Nokia C2-01. Nokia C5-03 comes with a 3.2-inch wide touch screen and 5 mega pixel camera and Nokia C2-01 with a 2-inch QVGA TFT display and 3.2 mega pixel camera.

### Branching on

Himalayan Bank inaugurated its 34th Branch in Barahabise, Sindhupalchowk. In addition to regular services, the branch will provide Himel Saving Account and Himel Remit Savings Account with zero-minimum balance.

### Tuscani Singles

Pizza Hut has added Tuscani Singles, an Italian inspired range of pizzas, in its menu offerings. These are hand stretched thin crust pizzas and prices start at Rs 299.

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A school for apprentice nuns helps Ani Choying spread her compassion

# Ani's school

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## Songs of peace,

### MANGAL VANI

Ani Choying Drolma's 11th studio album *Mangal Vani* takes her devotional music to another level of spiritual ecstasy: both for the singer and the listener.

Like her previous albums, *Mangal Vani* (Auspicious Sounds) takes its inspiration from the chants and mantras of Nepal's unique syncretic amalgam of Buddhism and Hinduism. Ani Choying has extended her collaboration with Nhyoo Bajracharya and poet Durga Lal Shrestha. The lyrics of all the seven songs on the album are translated from Shree Acharya Satyanarayan Goenka's philosophy of Vipassana by poet Durga Lal Shrestha. Ani's enchanting voice makes the seven slokas mesmerising, the perfect music to relax the body and cleanse the mind.

The album was released on 6 May at a glittering ceremony in the Garden of Dreams. "I want to make it possible for people to enjoy the teachings of the Buddha through music," Ani Choying said at the launch. Songs like 'Kalo Raat Gayo Ta' and 'Yehi Dharma Kritana' do just that. Ani Choying's sublime voice, accompanied by soothing flute and singing bowl blend beautifully with a background guitar in all the numbers.

The album is pricey, at Rs 3,000, but proceeds will go to Ani Choying's plan to build a kidney hospital in Kathmandu. The nun says it is in memory of her mother, and her battle with kidney failure.



**Nepal's singing nun, who wows the world with her music, recalls how it all began**

MEGAN MELINE

For more than a decade, Ani Choying Drolma, a most unlikely of rock stars, has shared Buddhism's sacred chants with a growing number of fans worldwide. But she found this path almost by accident.

Ani Choying can't remember when she started singing, but she does know that her formal training began at 13 when she joined the Nagi Gompa monastery north of Kathmandu where the Rinpoche recognised her talent and started teaching her sacred chants (see picture, right).

"They often made me sing on whatever occasion took place," she says. "I used to be the entertainer for everyone,

my teacher and his wife were really, really enthusiastic about my singing. They knew it, what my future was."

Ani Choying has recorded 10 albums, including her latest, *Inner Peace II*. Some monks have made it big with their chanting, but few, if any, nuns have. Her music combines Tibetan melodies and Nepali lyrics by poet Durga Lal Shrestha with traditional and contemporary instruments, like singing bowls and synthesisers.

Her voice may sound like a mountain stream, but underneath, her passions are like a storm. Her vocal power comes from a complicated mixture of devotion, confidence and anger. She confesses that she didn't become a nun out of faith, but rather to escape from her father, who beat her almost everyday.

"At the very beginning of my stay at the monastery, I was still very wild, with a lot of negativity in my heart, in my mind," she recalls, "I was always ready to protect myself. That means to be angry or to fight. But that slowly, slowly transformed."

Ani Choying's journey to the world stage started in





PICS: ANI KONCHOK



For Ani Choying Drolma, it is a life-long dream fulfilled. The Arya Tara School for nuns on a hilltop in Pharping is an imposing five-story structure with a gilded Tibetan-style roof and elegant silhouette. Inside, the earthquake-resistant building has a library, computer lab, classrooms, a meditation hall and dorms.

There is a sense of achievement in Ani Choying's voice as she shows visitors around the school. The nun's school started from a humble rented flat in Maharajgunj 11 years ago and has 70 students enrolled. "You can say this is a free boarding school for nuns," says Ani Choying, who runs

the school from money raised during her concert tours and album sales. "Like women in general, nuns are also deprived of education. It is common to find monks with higher education but few nuns."

Ani Choying set up the Nuns Welfare Foundation, which runs the school and other welfare activities. Arya Tara School is different from other nunneries as it provides a secular education. But there are additional subjects like Tibetan language and Buddha dharma.

The nuns, aged seven to 25, are mostly from Nepal's remotest and poorest regions with two students from Tibet and Ladakh. Because it

is a mix of monastic and secular education, the school has not been able to register with the district education office. The nuns therefore, have to attend a regular school to sit for their SLC.

Nepal's famous singing nun wants her students to go out into the world and empower communities. In a sense, Ani Choying is creating lots of Anis in her own image. Ani Choying beams with pride when she talks about her students' accomplishments. She says, "The general attitude

towards women's education isn't positive. Women are always deemed inferior to men, even in monastic life. This is just a small step towards ensuring that nuns get an equal opportunity at education like monks. I am overjoyed when I see the progress in my students."

The feeling seems to be mutual. As she walks through her school, Ani Choying is greeted by her students and staff with reverence and affection. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com  
Songs of blessing, #146

# harmony and devotion



1994 when musician Steve Tibbetts first heard her sing. Amazed by her voice, he taped her and sent the recording to legendary music producer Joe Boyd. Boyd gave her a thumbs up, and Tibbetts returned to Kathmandu in 1997 to record the album Cho with her. A year later, he brought Ani Choying and two other nuns to tour in the US.

Today, Ani Choying Drolma tours six months a year in countries like Brazil, China, Singapore, Russia and France. Doris Grimm, who organises her summer tours in Germany, says: "It makes me really calm, I slow down.

I feel the happiness in the music, the joy. I relax and my heart gets open, especially when she sings the mantras."

But it wasn't always a love fest. When she began singing these songs publicly, other Buddhists criticised her. She turned to her teacher, the meditation master Tulku Urgyen, for advice.

"I asked him with the motive that if he says it's not good to do it, then I wouldn't have done it," she says. "But then he was so positive, and he said, 'Well, these are all great powerful mantras it doesn't matter whoever, whether they are believers or nonbelievers, whoever gets to hear it will be benefited.'"

When Ani Choying was a teenager, foreigners would often visit the simple Nagi Gompa monastery to study with her famous teacher. They gave her the nickname "Ani Chewing Gum", taught her English and introduced her to the blues.

"Long ago, I only could buy Hindi songs or Nepali songs," she says. "So, I asked a Western disciple of my teacher to help me get Western music, and that person gave me a Bonnie

Raitt cassette."

Years later, after performing in San Francisco, Ani Choying saw a red-headed woman approach her and say: "Hi, my name is Bonnie Raitt and I am one of your greatest fans." Ani Choying replied: "Are you kidding? Actually, I am your fan."

In Kathmandu, everyone knows Ani Choying. She supports more than a dozen charities through her Nun's Welfare Foundation, and is building Nepal's first kidney hospital. In 2000, she founded the The Arya Tara school, the first school in Nepal to offer both Western and traditional Tibetan studies to nuns.

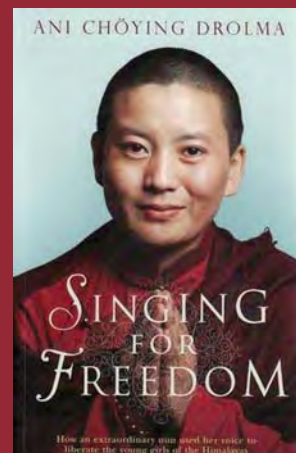
Ani Choying says she believes anyone can benefit from listening to her music. You don't have to follow the words, she says, it is a universal language. 🇳🇵 Adapted from NPR

Ani Choying's chants  
choying.com



npr.org/2011/03/13/134455191/  
buddhist-nun-shares-the-sound-  
of-music

## Singing for Freedom in Nepali



Singing for Freedom (English)  
Paperback: 256 pages  
Publisher: Pier 9  
ISBN-10: 1741965934  
ISBN-13: 978-1741965933

Ani Choying Drolma's inspirational autobiography was first publishing in French in 2008, by Oh! Edition. Since then, it has been translated into a dozen languages, including English, and Nepalaya has bought the rights for the Nepali edition and it will be published later this year. Ani Choying has read the draft of the translation and has approved the story of her life so far: how as a young girl living in Boudha she escaped her violent home for a monastery. One day, an American jazz guitarist heard the young nun sing and was so enthralled by her voice that he recorded an album with her. The pay cheque enabled Ani Choying to open the Arya Tara School, just outside Kathmandu, offering shelter and education to disadvantaged girls. Ani Choying now tours the world giving concerts.





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EVENTS

**Comedy night with Russell**, an evening of laughter with screening of stand-up comedian Russell Peters. *May 20, 6pm to 9pm, Sattya Collective Space, Jawalakhel*

**Giving and Getting in Newar Buddhism**, a talk show hosted by the Fulbright Forum on Understanding Dipanker Buddha in Nepal. *May 20, 5pm, Fulbright Commission Auditorium, Gyaneshwar*

**Workshop on Microphone techniques and technology**, by Mr Coleton Paskert, a renowned audio engineer and producer from Chicago. *May 23, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, 5pm onwards, info@katjazz.com.np, 5013554*

**weekdays: 11am to 7pm, Saturdays: 12pm to 4pm, Fusion Studio, Mandala Street, Thamel, 4700562**

**Book Sale**, sale of used books organised by Alliance Francaise. *28 May, 10am to 5pm, Gardens of Alliance Francaise, Tripureshwar*

**The Government Inspector**, a play by Nikolai Gogol performed by Shailee Theatre Group. *Every Thursdays till 1st week of June, 4.30pm, Russian Cultural Centre, Kamalpokhari*



**Bagalima Kala Saanjh** (Art in my pocket), an evening filled with theatre, music and art organised by Saathi in collaboration with L'Art en Poche asbl. *May 23, 5.30pm to 9pm, Gurukul, Old Baneshwor, Entry fee Rs 500*

**AFK Music Contest**, an open music contest to young musicians below 25. *Interested ones can download the forms at www.alliancefrancaise.org.np and submit it at Alliance Francaise, Tripureshwar, Last date for submission: June 10*

**6th Solo Arupan Painting Exhibition**, by senior artist Ramesh Khanal. *Till 27 May, 5pm on the inaugural day, weekdays 10.30am to 6pm, Park Gallery, Pulchok, 5522307*

**African Film Festival**, organised by College of Journalism and Mass Communication. *23 to 25 May, 12pm to 3.30pm, Russian Cultural Centre, Kamalpokhari*

**Discussion on Karnali Blues**, with author Buddhi Sagar organised by Himalayan readers' book club. *May 28, 3pm to 8pm, Conference Hall, British Council, Entry: Rs 50, 9851076996/ 9849100300*

**The Revival**, re-exhibition of paintings by K.G.Ranjit. *Till 26 May,*

**Culturally Enlightened**, a cultural festival organized by Om Mahakal Film Production. *2 to 5 June, 11am to 6pm, Tundikhel Ground*

**Documentary Filmmaking**, an intensive six day course on documentary film making organised by Sattya Media Arts Collective. *5 to 10 June, 10am to 5pm, Sattya Media Arts Collective, Application can be downloaded from the website www.sattya.org and sent to collective@sattya.org by 28 May, Cost Rs.3000*

MUSIC

**International Music Week Concerts**, an unique outdoor concert organised by Alliance Francaise in Kathmandu along with Service Civil International featuring students of AFK, Kathmandu University School of Music and Manandhar Cultural Group. *June 21, 3pm, Dattatrya Square, Bhaktapur*

**Betty Argo** in Kathmandu, Popular French band Betty Argo live in concert. *June 26, 6pm, Nepal Academy Hall, invitation only*

**Rap:Rock:Reggae**, a house of music festival. *May 21, 6pm onwards, Patan Museum, Entry: Rs 300, 98419041005*

**Music on the move**, performance by Gandharva Musicians. *21 May, 6pm to 8pm, Dattatrya Square, Bhaktapur, 9803673551*



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# A feathered frenzy

MARCUS BENIGNO

Studio 7’s latest offering, *The Conference of the Birds*, directed by Sabine Lehmann, presents a fitting allegory of Nepal’s current political quagmire. The play is based on the 12th-century Sufi poem by Farid ud-Din Attar, and describes a flock’s quest for the Simorgh, a mythical bird-king who would once and for all bring peace and unity to the assembly’s constituents. Guided by the Hoopoe and his inspiring Scheherazade-like parables, the seven representative birds cross the seven valleys to enlightenment, encountering



MARCUS BENIGNO

dangers, fools, and djins along the way. Arriving at their destination, they surrender their individual vices and realise the oneness of their existence.

A good adaptation of classical poetry onto the modern stage strikes a balance between preserving the lyrical form and entertaining a contemporary

audience. At times, the ensemble cast, who exhibited a varied range of caliber, sounded forced in their delivery, placing too much emphasis on their rhymes and leaving the audience disengaged. A natural cadence would have been more euphonic and much more intelligible. And with no intermission, the actors looked exhausted through the final scenes. The production was visually and aurally stimulating living up to the standards Studio 7 has set over the last three decades at Hotel Vajra. Vibrant costumes, reminiscent of the *Arabian Nights*, were set against a muted backdrop accented by turquoise

teardrops, perching ladders, and an arcade of pointed arches. Given the space limitations of the Naga Theatre and with at least eight actors in every scene, the choreography was crowded. The flight sequences were captivating and served as necessary breaks from the poetry and aphoristic vignettes, while the twirls into whirling dervishes alluded to the poem’s Sufi spirit. The musical arrangement, consisting of flutes, harmonium and percussion, was the richest element in the production. And the incorporation of Bollywood ballads added a *desi* touch. 🇳🇵

*The Conference of the Birds* plays till 29 May at 7:15 pm every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at Naga Theatre, Hotel Vajra.



SOMEPLACE ELSE

Much like some of our students, entrepreneurs would love to get first dibs at the questions diners ask of their establishments. Too often they flounder about, tinkering with the ‘de’s and ‘du’s of their names and mimicking the decor, cutlery, menus, and ultimately the prices of their more upmarket counterparts. But there is a simple formula that often works with the Nepali out and about in the Kathmandu night: elevate the local. Your average Nepali youth likes his meat and drink, preferably together. But he may want to partake of the staples of the *bhatti* (and home) in slightly more convivial surroundings. Overwhelm him with

continental interpretations, and he’ll plump for the momos. Drown him in beer, and he’ll wish for something more substantial. Bhumi, with its earthy decor, welcoming open spaces and long tables customised for large parties (with obligatory beer garden), serves up excellent Newari cuisine backed by Indian mains. It seems to have the got balance just right. Bhumi takes its Newari seriously, unlike so many specialty restaurants that have so little faith in their mains that they toss in sukuti, momos and chicken chilli as the afterthought that will keep their business alive. With lungs, bone marrow as well as great sekuwa and chwoela on offer, Bhumi

goes the whole buff. For the less carnivorous, there’s good samay baji sets and I’d recommend the crunchy, peppery Aloo Timur too. Food is served in attractive brass bowls and plates, with the inevitable effect of, yes, elevating the local. The bara and chatamari variations will ground your

drinking where the meat does not. But if you fancy a full meal after an array of snacks, peruse the variety of North Indian mains available, including decent Tandoori chicken. Order early to get there before the rest of the weekend crowd, and on Valentine’s Day, don’t even bother. 🇳🇵

# Bhumi Resto-Lounge



Coming up Lazimpat, pass Bluebird department store on your right and look out for the signboard indicating the short lane leading into Bhumi.

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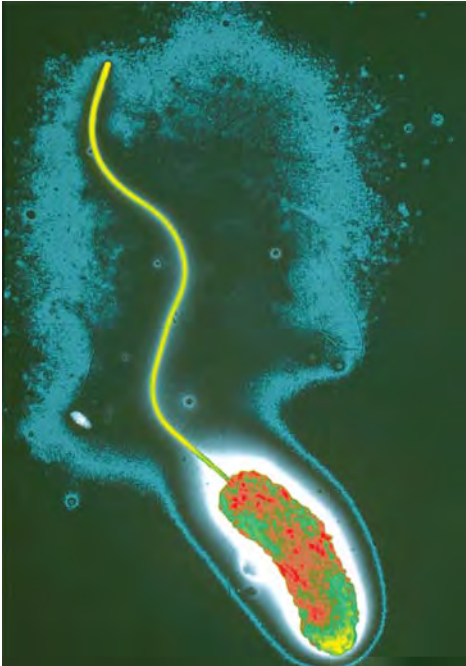
# Cholera controversy



DHANVANTARI  
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Cholera like typhoid is spread by fecal oral transmission and is endemic in Nepal. The bacteria, *vibrio cholerae*, produces a potent toxin which may lead to severe dehydrating diarrhoea and death within 12 hours. Clinically, however, a cholera- bug infected person may span a spectrum from being an asymptomatic carrier to a severely debilitated patient. Even in the medical profession, many do not know that a cholera carrier (just like a healthy typhoid carrier) existed until the Haiti outbreak. Cholera, although a localised phenomenon in South Asia for centuries, has demonstrated the ability to spread internationally. Ten months after the devastating earthquake of 12 January, 2010 in Haiti, cholera resurfaced there for the first time in a century. The outbreak afflicted 300,000 people and claimed 4,500 lives and continues to be an ongoing problem. The source of this cholera has been a topic of serious debate. There are three theories. The first suggests that subsequent to the earthquake,

ocean currents from the Gulf of Mexico arrived with the pathogen to the shores of Haiti. The second hypothesis holds that a local non-pathogenic strain endemic in Haiti naturally mutated into a virulent pathogen. The third, and controversial, theory attributes the spread of cholera in Haiti to an infected human (possibly a carrier)



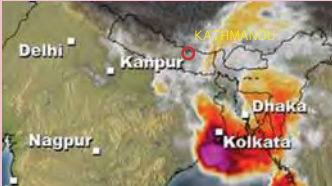
from an endemic country outside of the Americas. The controversy about the origin of the pathogen was important enough to trigger the formation of an independent panel (comprising

of four experts) by the United Nations. The recently-published final report from this panel implicates no individual or country. However, it unambiguously notes that the cholera bacteria was in all likelihood introduced into Haiti with a pathogenic strain of the current South Asian variety, thus supporting the third hypothesis above. The report makes important recommendations for all United Nations personnel and emergency responders travelling from cholera endemic countries which includes India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. Crucially it recommends that these personnel receive a dose of appropriate antibiotics before departure or be screened with a sensitive method to confirm absence of asymptomatic carriage. Because most of these countries may not have a sensitive method of screening, a clear option would be to check with a knowledgeable physician and have administered a one-day prophylactic, effective antibiotic course (of either azithromycin or doxycycline ) before departure. This indeed may be an option to strongly consider before the “s\*\*\* hits the fan” again. 🇳🇵



WEEKEND WEATHER  
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

This year's pre-monsoon is unusually wet, already exceeding the monthly quota of rainfall for two consecutive months (April and May). Indian forecasters measuring the inter-tropical convergence zone predict the monsoon will be on schedule. But they said that last year too and it was nearly a month late. Let's hope these copious pre-monsoons don't delay the real thing. This satellite image taken on Thursday shows a firmly positioned low pressure system over the eastern Himalaya. Expect more precipitation over central and eastern regions with sunny intervals through the weekend.



FRI	SAT	SUN
29-18	30-17	31-19



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**FLOOD!** The Bishnumati water level rises after thunder showers last week.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**SUCCESSFUL ASCENT:** Hassan Sadpara (centre), a Pakistani mountaineer who successfully climbed Mount Everest last week, with Mingma Sherpa and his team at a program organised by the Pakistani Embassy on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

**COLOURFUL MEMORIES:** Students at the Amar Art Competition organised at the Dattu Residential School on Tuesday, in memory of artist Amar Chitrakar. A hundred and forty-seven students participated in the event.

## Vacancy Announcement

The Embassy of Denmark is preparing a program to be launched in 2013 to promote growth and employment in Nepal. The Embassy hereby invites applications from qualified and experienced Nepali professionals for the position of Program Assistant or Programme Officer (depending on qualifications) to join the Growth and Employment team at the Embassy. The incumbent will, among others, assist in the preparation and implementation of the programme.

### Programme Assistant/Officer Growth and Employment

#### Duties and Responsibilities:

- Assist in the preparation of the growth and employment program.
- Communicate with relevant authorities and development partners on programme issues.
- Undertake administrative tasks related to programme management, including budgeting, financial oversight and upkeep of project databases.
- Assist in the implementation of other relevant private sector activities.
- Monitor the general situation of private sector development and advise the Embassy accordingly and assist in relevant private sector tasks.
- Assist in updating relevant section of the Embassy's homepage.

#### Skills, Qualifications and Competencies:

- Bachelor's degree or higher in business administration, business studies, economics, commerce or subjects relevant to economic growth.
- More than two years of relevant professional experience.
- Good knowledge of the private sector in Nepal.
- Knowledge of the agricultural sector an advantage.
- Ability to work in team and in a multi-cultural environment.
- Good interpersonal skills.
- Excellent English and Nepali speaking and writing skills.
- Good skills in report drafting.
- IT proficiency including mastery of the MS Office package (Word, Excel, PowerPoint).

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- 3 year contract with possibility of extension.
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The Programme Assistant/Officer will be based at the Embassy of Denmark in Kathmandu. The Embassy is an equal opportunity employer and encourages under-represented caste and ethnic groups, and women to apply for the available position.

Interested candidates are requested to send their applications (a cover letter not more than one page and a CV not more than three pages) no later than 15 June 2011 to:

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PO Box 6332

Written applications should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Application for Program Assistant/Officer post in Growth and Employment". The application can also be sent electronically to [ktmamb@um.dk](mailto:ktmamb@um.dk) with the subject line "Application for Program Assistant/Officer post in Growth and Employment". The cover letter should describe why you are fit for the position and the CV must include two recent references with contact details. Enquiries by telephone will not be entertained. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for further selection process.



# Into hot air



**KALAM**  
**Rabi Thapa**

On a stormy day on the top of the world back in 1996, eight climbers lost their lives. The story of how a lifetime's dream for some (and a lucrative business for others) went horribly wrong has been ably recounted by Jon Krakauer in 'Into Thin Air'. His bestseller, unlike many other mountaineering accounts that focus on the pioneering exploits of elite climbers, charted the folly and plain bad luck of rival expeditions pushing to get their clients to the top of Everest. In common with the likes of 'Annapurna' and 'Touching the Void' however, Krakauer's book highlighted the perils involved in high-altitude climbing for even the fittest and most determined people on the planet.

'Into Thin Air' would have brought many amateur climbers and would-be Everest summiteers back down to earth: for a while the idea faltered that anyone could 'conquer' the highest mountain on the planet, courtesy a little training, a lot of cash, and an experienced support crew. But clearly the lesson has not been learnt closer at home. When 15 civil servants (pictured above) announced their plans to scale Everest as part of Nepal Tourism Year 2011, I laughed



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

at their audacity, until I realised this exercise was to cost the state exchequer Rs 30 million. When former foreign minister and octogenarian Shailendra Nath Upadhyay threw his glove into the ring for title of oldest Everest summiteer, I shook my head in disbelief.

Upadhyay perished on the mountain in early May. This would have sent shivers deep into the paunches of our brave civil servants who, unlike the ill-fated Upadhyay, had not ventured beyond the altitude of 5,500 metres prior to this expedition. But as Republica reported without a trace of irony, they were 'dead set about scaling the mountain.' Thankfully, another tragedy was avoided; though six turned back, the remainder reached the summit of Everest Wednesday morning.

Congratulations aside, the real issue here is just why

these men were allowed to assert their masculinity at our expense. Yes, the image of civil servants needs to be dusted off world-wide, and nowhere more so in Nepal, where they are not only seen as pen-pushers but corrupt and inept ones at that. Doubtless the leader of the expedition, newly appointed Home Secretary Lila Mani Poudel, was seeking to follow up on his headline-grabbing tirades against corruption last year. But shouldn't the

tarnished image of civil servants be burnished by getting them to wield their pens with more alacrity? Should a cricketer lambasted for the poor quality of his play sit down and write a play to prove himself or should he get back in the nets?

It's hardly a surprise that the civil servants concerned participated in such a glorious junket. But whoever signed off on such a wasteful and pointless endeavour

Civil servants committed to serving tourists better would do more for NTY 2011 than civil servants committed to being tourists

should be called to account. Was the point to inspire civil servants all across the nation to begin scrambling up mountains, or was it to get civil servants from all across the world scrambling into Nepal and up our mountains? One can't help but think civil servants committed to serving tourists better would do more for Nepal Tourism Year 2011 than civil servants committed to being tourists. What's more, to address another of the rationales behind the trip, you don't need to go further than Base Camp to 'understand' climate change; anywhere above that you are probably more concerned about altitude change. As far as I can see from 1,350 metres above sea level, this was a stupid stunt, conceived by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. And we're all paying for it. ❑

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**UMN**  
The United Mission to Nepal (UMN) seeks fullness of life for all Nepalese, and works towards this in partnership with Nepali organisations, addressing the root causes of poverty, pursuing for peace and justice for all, and empowering communities to meet their own needs.

**CVICT**  
CVICT is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that rehabilitates victims of torture and trauma (domestic violence, witchcraft related violence etc.); advocates the eradication of torture and promotes human rights in Nepal.

**EVERY ONE**  
Save the Children's 'Every One' campaign has raised voice for the rights of healthy life of children below 5 years of age.

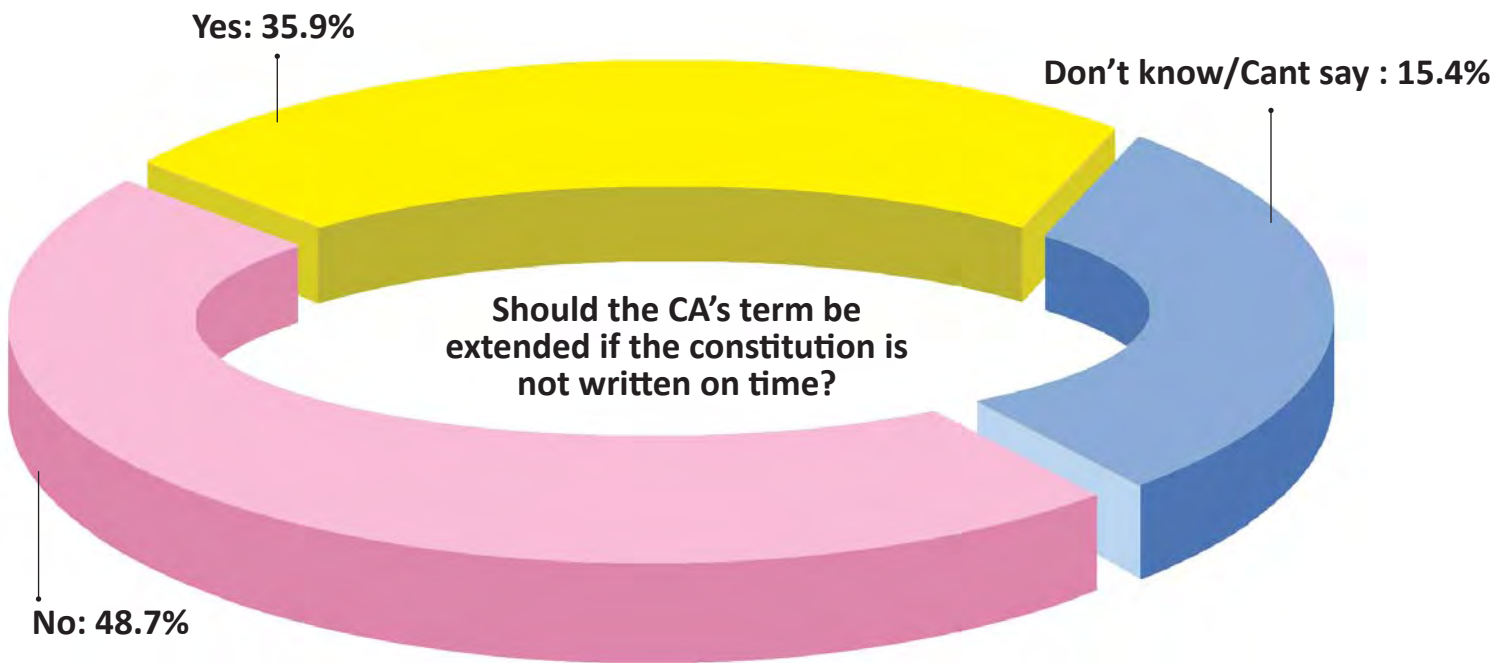
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**NEPAL TOURISM YEAR 2011**



# We, the people

Nepalis are willing to give the politicians one last change to reform themselves



KIRAN NEPAL

With a week to go for another constitution anticlimax, speculation is rife not about whether or if the constitution will be completed (it won't) but what comes after. There is bristling resentment among Nepalis about the performance of the CA after the last extension a year ago.

In last year's Himalmedia poll, 43 per cent of the respondents called for one year extension of the CA, but this year almost 49 per cent have voted against the extension. Even among those that have called for more time, 81 per cent are in favour of extension by only six months. The people understand well that time was never an issue as far as drafting the statute is

concerned. Asked what they thought was the reason constitution wouldn't be drafted, 32 per cent pinpointed the ideological differences between the Maoists and the NC. An equal proportion thought it was disagreement over the peace process and federalism. The bottomline is that the people know it is the polarisation between the Maoists and NC that is

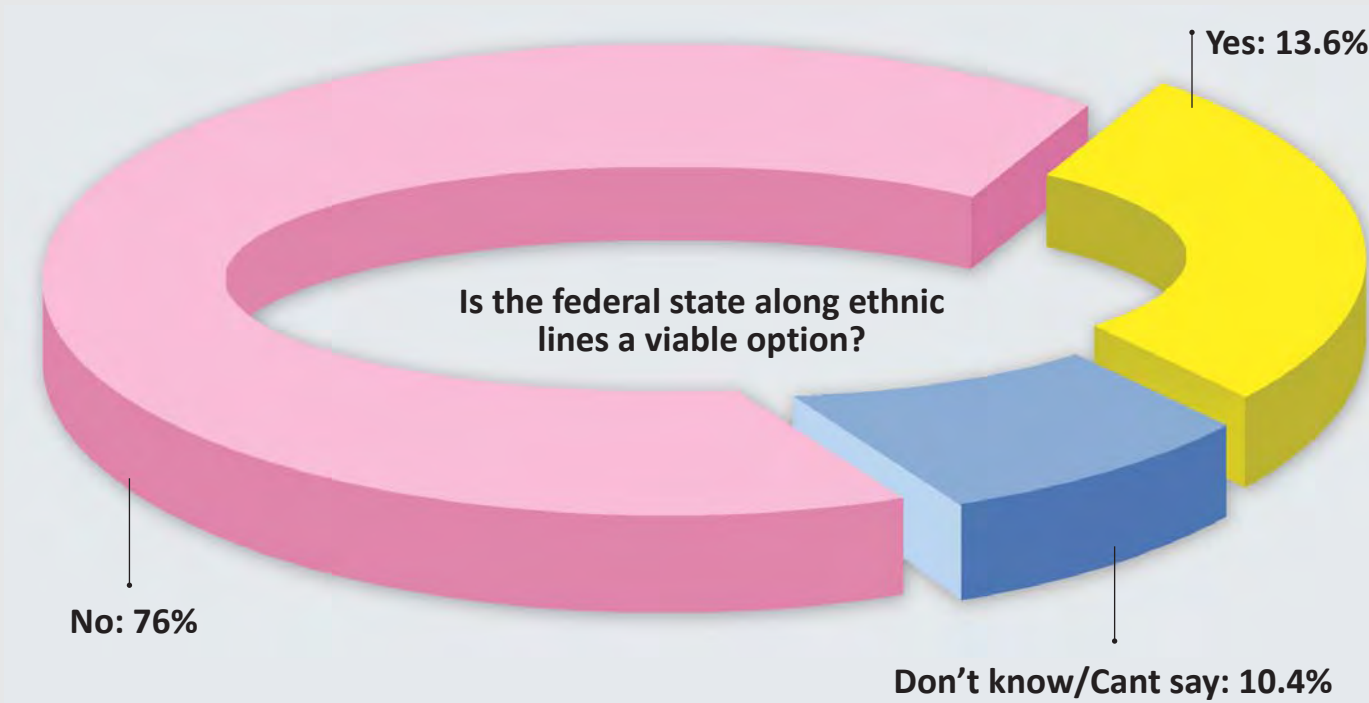
holding back an agreement. Many respondents took the opportunity of their interviews with Himal's enumerators to send word to the leaders in Kathmandu to shed ideological rigidity on contentious issues like federalism, governance and elections to come up with a framework that is acceptable to all. Among those that were against the extension, 48 per

cent wanted a fresh election, 21.7 per cent wanted the constitution-drafting job handed over to the experts and 10.4 per cent want the country to revert back to 1990 constitution. These are not auspicious tidings for the new republic. The Madhesis (54.5 per cent) in particular do not want the CA term extended. This is a resonating response to Madhesi leadership which

## “No”

People refute the idea of ethnic federalism

J B PUN MAGAR



Caste groups who said ethnic federations is not a viable option:	
Hill caste groups	: 81.8%
Madhesi caste groups	: 64.9%
Hill ethnic groups	: 67.3%
Madhesi ethnic groups	: 64.8%
Hill Dalits	: 67.3%
Madhesi Dalits	: 55.6%
Newar	: 75.7%
Muslim	: 74.8%





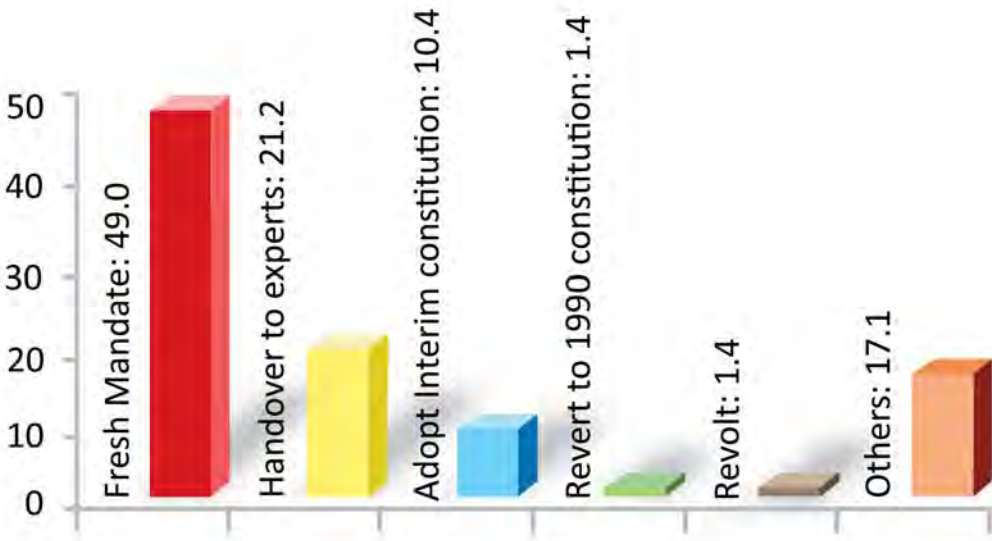
has been preoccupied with the power sharing game and has failed to articulate Madhesi aspirations in the CA. It is not surprising that only 11 per cent of Madhesi respondents expressed their trust in Madhesi parties.

However, the results are most worrying for the Maoists whose popularity appears to have sharply declined this year. The party’s decision to abandon the line of ‘people’s revolt’ seems to have come too late as only 20 per cent trust the Maoists to lead country to peace, prosperity and democracy. What is interesting here is that 21.8 per cent put their trust on NC, but 32 per cent remain undecided on the question.

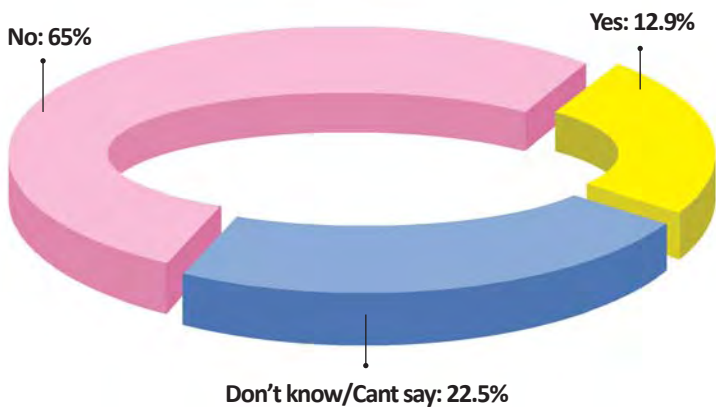
As far as the Jhal Nath Khanal government is concerned, 65 per cent feel that it can neither complete the peace process nor deliver the constitution. People blame the 601 law makers collectively for the failure to draft the constitution. This may be unfair to some of the hard working and honest members in the assembly, but it is the general perception fuelled by series of scandals which has maligned the image of the entire house.

Even as 34 per cent of the respondents blame the Maoists the most for obstructing the peace process and constitution drafting, most respondents

What should be done if CA term is not to be extended?



Can the present government conclude the peace process and write the constitution?



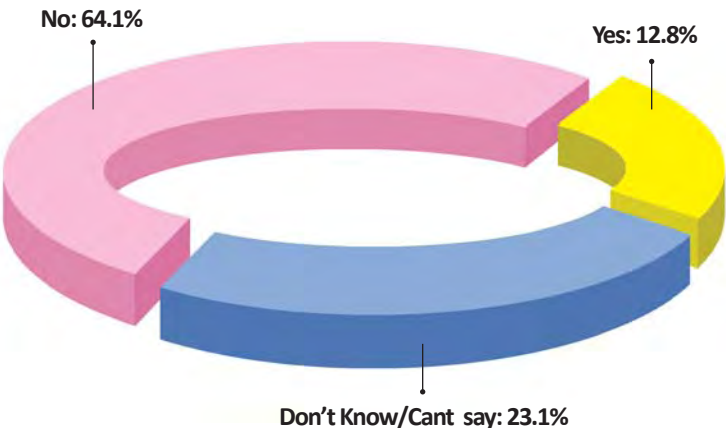
(22 per cent) said they want an all party government led by the Maoists to complete the obstructed process. Another 21.6 per cent want the NC to lead it.

A public opinion survey, even one carried out among 4,000 respondents carefully selected according

to scientific random sampling, has its limitation. But it is as good an indicator as any to gauge the general mood of the people in the social, economic and political milieu at any given time.

This year’s Himalmedia survey gives a clear

Do you see possibility of a revolt by the UCPN (Maoists)?



message to the political parties and their leaders that people are thoroughly fed up with their activities, or lack thereof. Even the response against extending the tenure of the CA is an expression of this anger.

The people have been very mature and reasonable

in their analysis that inspite of politics, the country has made great strides which need to be protected. If the parties commit themselves to the peace process and constitution drafting with renewed vigour, people may be willing to give them one more chance. 🇳🇵

The propaganda of ethnic federalism used by the UCPN (Maoists) during the ‘People’s War’ translated into votes during the 2008 Constituent Assembly elections. But the party had obviously miscalculated the risks of politicising the ethnic sentiments of the people. While fully appreciating the socio-economic disparity in the remote districts, the party failed to appreciate the fact that ours is a diverse ethnic and religious society living in a heterogeneous mix. No single ethnic community commands a demographic majority over a given territory So fuelling such ideas would do nothing but damage the social fabric of the nation. The concern of commoners in this regard is evident by the fact that 89.9 per cent respondents said that social harmony is on decline and majority blame the government for this.

As a part of the government now, UCPN (Maoist) has to bear their share of the blame. The rise of militant ethnic movement in Madhesh and the hills and the growing indulgence of mainstream political parties in it is the result of sectarian politics that Maoists have been propagating over the years. The leaders of ethnic parties and their cadres continue

to paralyse Kathmandu streets demanding autonomy, but ethnic communities from all over Nepal have rejected the idea of ethnic federalism. This is proved by the big ‘No’ to the ethnic states by 76 per cent respondents in 38 hills and madhesh districts. Even in the eastern region, where demand for ethnic autonomy is considered to be strongest, 75. 7 per cent have rejected the idea.

For those that would argue that the opponents of ethnic federalism don’t understand its concept, the result might be more interesting. While 54.1 per cent of the illiterate respondents have opposed the idea of ethnic federalism, this result is as high as 71.5 per cent in the literate category. Surprising still that 78.8 per cent of the school graduates, 89.3 per cent of the college graduates and 93 per cent post graduates among the respondents say ethnic federalism is against their common interest.

Closer analysis of the result also reveals that among those that support ethnic federalism (13 per cent), only 22 per cent want special privileges for a particular community. Those that support ethnic state are cautious about its potential impact on the social harmony. Also it is surprising that

31. 8 per cent of the respondents were unaware of the special provisions for ethic states proposed in the Constituent Assembly. This shows that demand for ethnic states is just a political bargaining chip for the Maoists and the leaders of ethnic groups and people seem to have understood this very well.

Even in the case of Madhesh, only 7 per cent of the Madhesi respondents have supported ‘ek Madhesh ek Pradesh’ line that the Madhesi leaders have been ranting for the last three years. Most of the respondents suggested a federal state based on fair resource distribution and equal access to all the communities, ensuring proportional representation at all levels of the state. The strong feeling of social harmony and co-existence expressed by ordinary citizens of a heterogeneous society is indeed laudable.

However, people did not seem impressed by government’s reservation policy aimed at improving the situation of backward communities. Only 8.2 per cent of the respondents supported reservation and special rights policy of the government, out of which 15.2 percent are dalits and 10.4 per cent are Muslims.

On the electoral system, 42.3

per cent people suggested that the Prime Minister should be directly elected by the people. Similarly 31.2 per cent of the people were in favor of directly elected Presidential rule. But what is most striking is that only 13 per cent were in favor of Westminster style parliamentary system. This shows that people are fed up now and want to directly elect head of the government directly whom they can hold accountable. People also suggest a fully proportional representation system of parliamentary election to ensure fair representation of all. In a society dominated by upper class elites, it is only fair that marginalised communities like Muslims, dalits and janajatis seek proportional representation.

The major political parties and their leaders have been so indulged that they have lost the pulse of the nation. What they say and do in the name of ‘the people’ is far removed from what an ordinary citizen of this nation feels or needs. The people, through this years survey have answered all the trivial questions that the parties have been unable to deal with in the last three years. All they need to do is put their words into action. 🇳🇵



# To extend or not to extend

Sindhunath Pyakuryel in *Nepal*, 22 May  
नेपाल

The political parties have already reached an understanding on the structure and content of the new constitution. The 12-point understanding of the past and the interim constitution 2007 have helped build a template for the new constitution too. So it's wrong to say that we don't have a framework.

Governance structure, justice system and election process are secondary issues. If the question of federalism is settled, rest will fall in place. During the first two years communal forces, anti-nationalists and foreign interference almost led the country to the path of disintegration. So the delay in constitution-making had its material reasons. As far as the legality of the extension is concerned, I can say that the Article 65 which deals with the CA's term is amendable like other clauses.

The problem today is the political validity of the CA and not constitutional. The parties should provide a sufficient basis to win this validity. There have



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

been talks about going to fresh polls at this moment. But would that solve anything? Is it an economically feasible option for a poor country like ours? Would not the same people be re-elected after the new polls too? And then people have also been talking about getting a panel of experts to draft the constitution. But our experience of the 1990 statute has already proved that this is a wrong idea. The best option is to continue with the present CA.

Bhimarjun Acharya in *Nepal*, 22 May  
नेपाल

Those who are arguing for the extension of the CA despite its incompetence and unconstitutional proceedings are only trying to drive the country towards failure.

The argument that constitution could not be written due to time, resources, ideological differences or other constraints is just a farce. The fact is that the CA's term was

made to expire deliberately by people who are benefitting by selling the name of constitution. For the first seven months, CA meetings could not take place because the house was brought to a halt. A high level task force had been set up to settle contentious issues in the constitution. And it had successfully resolved 130 out of 230 contentious issues. If only this task force was allowed to work for few more weeks, all disputes could have been settled. But for reasons unknown, the task force was dissolved abruptly. If it had not been dissolved, most likely we would have had a constitution by now.

The only option now is to write the constitution. The parties and leaders should face the consequences if they can't write the constitution. Why should people take any responsibility for this? The unconstitutional assembly cannot be continued after 28 May. A committee can be formed from among the parties representing in the CA which can form a draft constitution with the help of experts. After that, fresh polls should be conducted. The elected body can then amend the draft and move forward. This is the only legitimate and viable option.



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## Lumpen proletariat

समाचारपत्र

Editorial in *Nepal*  
Samacharpatra, 18 May

The internal disputes in the UCPN (Maoists) are getting uglier by day and battles have now become too personal. The ideological rift between the Chairman and his two deputies had already split the largest party into three camps but the indiscipline and lumpenism in the party reached a new climax with cadres issuing death threats to their own leaders.

Janak Bartaula, a Casino bouncer and cadre of UCPN (Maoist) affiliated trade Union has threatened to assassinate party vice chairman Baburam Bhattarai within five days. Bartaula was upset over the scuffle that took place in Casino Anna few days ago between the workers of Prachanda and Bhattarai camps.

Bhattarai has informed the party about the threat and demanded that the party take action against the criminal elements within the party. The incident is a disaster for the party which is trying to establish itself as a progressive and democratic party in the mainstream politics. The rampant anarchist tendency among the party cadres and their repeated physical attack against their critics contributes to the violent image of the party in public memory.

A party which wants to lead new Nepal has to first be able to control its own cadres and activists.



# Anti-nuclear mayors

President Ram Baran Yadav conferred the first Gautam Buddha International Peace Award to Tadakashi Akiba, ex-Mayor of Hiroshima and Tomishisa Taue, Mayor of Nagasaki, at a ceremony in Lumbini on Buddha Jayanti, 17 May. The two mayors were interviewed by the *Nepali Times* shortly before they returned to Japan.

**Nepali Times:** How do you feel, coming to Lumbini to receive the Gautam Buddha International Peace Award?  
**Tomishisa Taue:** We have found the people of Nepal very peace-loving. We can do things together. We have acquired a new kind of confidence from your recognition of our campaign.

**Tadakashi Akiba:** This is the first time that Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been awarded together, even though of course we have been working. It is an expression of the commitment of Nepal for peace and a nuclear-free world. I believe that you are helping create a new era for the world by instituting this award.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**There is a sense that the anti-nuclear weapons movement has weakened significantly worldwide in the last decade. Perhaps you are trying to revive the momentum?**

**Akiba:** We represent the Hibakusha, the survivors of the nuclear bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their wish has always been to create a nuclear-weapons-free world. Mayors for Peace is a group which has grown rapidly in recent years. Some 5,000 mayors from around the world have come to realise that we do represent the universal voice of the world's population. If we don't get rid of nuclear weapons, they will get rid of the human race. This is the realisation which has helped the Mayors for Peace to grow.

**Taue:** In order to promote nuclear disarmament, and convince reluctant governments, we are networking with civil society, the United Nations, as well as those proactive countries.

**In Nepal, we are surrounded by three nuclear weapons states: Pakistan, India and China. Can you tell us from your experience how the people of Nepal can feel secure?**

**Akiba:** Mayors for Peace has member cities in India, Pakistan, Nepal and China. Increasing the members from those countries will help. Exchange of young people between the cities is another way to build a peaceful future. In Hiroshima, we have hosted youth from India and Pakistan and this has helped build understanding.

**Taue:** We try to create a mindset that helps governments to enter into conventions and treaties. We seek to represent the universal values of all the people of the world, and influence policymakers towards nuclear disarmament.

**What is the feeling among hibakusha for the tsunami survivors?**

**Akiba:** Any time a disaster hits Japan, we are reminded of the nuclear events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. People feel an urgency to go to the affected area and carry out emergency relief works. We still have the memory of what it was like in the aftermath of the nuclear attack on our cities, and this gives added sensitivity.

**Taue:** Human-made disaster is different from natural disaster. The survivors of Nagasaki are campaigning for a cause that nobody should suffer from any kind of risk. Only few are aware of the dangers of the leakage from nuclear power plants.

Full text of interview on [www.nepalitimes.com](http://www.nepalitimes.com)

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 पो लजाउनुपर्छ । जो जहाँ रहेर जुन काम गर्छ ऊ त्यसैमा रमाउनुपर्छ  
 गौरव गर्नुपर्छ र समर्पित भएर गर्नुपर्छ । काम नै शक्ति हो, भक्ति हो र  
 मुक्ति हो । कामको इज्जत गरौं, पसिनाको सम्मान गरौं ।

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**शाखाहरू:** नयाँ बानेश्वर- ०१-४१०६२८७/८८/८९ । ब्युरोड- ०१-४२५१२८८/८३ । जावलाखेल- ०१-५५५८५०६ । कपल- ०१-४८१२६०२/६०३/६०४ । पोखरा- ०६१-५३१११२/३/४ । विराटनगर- ०२१-५२१३५६  
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# What comes after May 28<sup>th</sup>

**C**A Chairman Name Bang is getting sick and tired of being asked whether or not the constitution will be written in time. So, he has started coming up with funny answers to stupid questions. One such exchange:

**Ambush Reporter:** Will the constitution be finished in time?  
**CA Chairman:** Yes, it will be finished in time. In due time.

Another exchange with a smart aleck columnist went something like this:

**Smart Aleck:** What will happen after May 28?  
**CA Chairman:** May 29.

The mysterious Asia-Pacific Foundation has done it again. The foundation sure seems to be fond of holding seminars at the drop of hat like the sudden conference in Bangkok on Monday. Chairman Awesome air-dashed to BKK, even making the flight wait. The 250+ pax in the Triple Seven were told there was a technical snag and



the plane sat in the tarmac for two hours. The AsPac Foundation must hold nocturnal meetings because Fearsomeness came back to KTM the very next morning. The Big Question is why was the Maoist Chairman spending **one night in Bangkok**? To make a hard man humbler? Was it to meet his uncooked minders, or wok operatives, or both?

We have it on good authority that PKD desperately wanted to meet **Sri 3 Ravishankhar** last week. The

Indian Godman finally agreed to grant him an audience and the two had a top secret tete-t-tete at the swami's hotel during which PKD is said to have asked Sri Teen to work his magic on Delhi so they like him more.

Comrade Chairman once told the BBC that he instructed his followers to execute class enemies with a bullet to the temple. The same fellow is now fond of comparing himself to Mohandas Gandhi and Gautam Buddha. And, a day after returning from Thailand, he did it again in a speech on the occasion of Buddha Jayanti on Tuesday. The atheist leader of the **godless baddies** said Nepal's leaders could "learn a lot" from the Buddha's teachings, things like "compassion", "non-violence", and "humility". Watch out, this guy is going to turn into a monk if we don't make him president soon.

Wonders never cease in this capital of the New Nepal. You can tell a revolution has come a full circle when underground guerrillas turn into casino bouncers and start beating each other to pulp. A week after the brawl at Casino Venus left a BRB unionist with multiple fractures of the skull, Awesome's goons issued an oral death threat against BRB in person for lodging a complaint with the police. (It was only a question of time before the **bowtick carbuys** the baddies used to inflict on reactionaries, would be meted out on themselves.) What is interesting is that BRB turns to the same police force of which his party butchered 1,400 members to now save his life.

Of all the people the baddies got JN to appoint a blacklisted war criminal as Misinformation Minister. Ugly Kamred his replaced Mahara Daju on this job after his predecessor had got his son Mister Atom (yes, that's his real name) to fix all available telecom deals. And as Homely

Minister, his first order of business has been to disappear all files of human rights violators from the rebel side. And he has been proving authentic what CP Kamred said: that taking control of the Nepal Police and the APF was the first step in wresting full state power.

Don't want to go to school? Sick of your boss at work? No petrol for your bike? Declare a bund, it has never been easier. Engineer your own shutdown via SMS like someone did this week in Mechi-Kosi. It just takes three easy steps:

1. Come up with a scary-sounding name that include the words 'Backward Liberation Front (BLF)' in it
2. Send out an SMS to everyone in your address book saying: 'BLF has called a bund tomorrow.'
3. Sit back and enjoy a well-deserved holiday



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