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My way, or no way

Finally, last week, the Special Committee agreed on how and how many Maoist fighters to rehabilitate and integrate. But, after intense pressure from within their ranks, Maoist leaders backtracked. The three-way divide within the Maoists and the rift between the three main parties has stalled the peace process and constitution-writing. Locked into their power struggles, the coalition government has little

time to address a collapsing economy (**Editorial**, p2) and increasing lawlessness (**By the Way**, p3). The second level of younger leaders across party lines are more pragmatic, and want to forge ahead with a government of national unity. But they have to first overcome the rigid egos and ambitions of their own party bosses.



p6-7
**Praying
for rain in
Mustang**

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BUDGE ON THE BUDGET

There is nothing new to add to what we wrote last week, or the week before, about constitution-making and the peace process. It's still one step forward and two steps back. The NC and the Maoists are bargaining hard over the number of fighters and weapons, but the real obstacle is the triangular infighting within the Maoist party.

The refusal of the die-hards, and lately even Pushpa Kamal Dahal's supporters like Barsha Man Pun, to sign off on decommissioning the cantonments by the self-imposed 19 June deadline has stalled the process. The only person taking a pragmatic line seems to be Baburam Bhattarai and the younger leaders in the NC and UML, who say they can work well together in a national unity government as part of a package to resolve disagreements on sequencing demobilisation and meeting the constitution deadline. We believe them.

While all the spotlights are on the politics, few seem to have noticed that the economy has gone for a six. The liquidity crunch in the banking sector is now turning into a full-blown crisis that could end very disastrously, very soon. As Sanjib Subba, CEO of the National Banking Training Institute, argues on page 5, the alarm bells have been ringing for quite some time. The banking sector needs to regain the trust of the public, and for this the government has to bite the bullet, punish wrong-doers and protect the public's assets.

Among the reasons for the credit crisis is bad portfolio management, especially among financial institutions that have been allowed to sprout like



mushrooms. They have not been monitored, and over-exposure to real estate lending has caused the bubble to burst. The prevalent culture of impunity, greed and political patronage is an explosive combination.

One other factor that fed the liquidity crisis is the political wrangling over the past two years that dried up government spending. Budgets have been delayed, or held hostage by one or other opposition party. This has brought development to a standstill, and shut off the cash supply. The effect can be

seen in the economic, monetary and financial crises.

Our message to the politicians is: it's the economy, stupid. Be as corrupt as you want, fight tooth and nail among yourselves for power, but leave the budget alone. Gentlemen, by messing around with the economy you are sawing the legs off the chairs you are sitting on. By playing politics with the economy, you have undermined your own collective political future.

With the end of the conflict, our economy should have rebounded. There should have been investments, jobs should have been created. Even if our politics was a mess, there was no reason for the economy to collapse. It can still be fixed. Sounds like a cliché, but all it needs is for the thoroughly discredited party bosses to be a little less greedy and selfish. If they can't manage that, then it's time to pass the baton to those who can.

KD

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

TIBETAN REFUGEES

Thank you for this important and brave piece of reporting ('Ungentle to Refugees', Anurag Acharya, #557). I am aware of Nepalis who have been harassed by agents of the Chinese government for speaking up/writing about these issues. The pressure from this boulder on the side of the yam of Nepal may be growing, but the life force and integrity of the yam can still prevail.

Susal Stebbins Collins

Currently the Dalai Lama is in Australia. China has warned the Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and her cabinet not to meet His Holiness and they have obediently complied. Even the Premier of Western Australia, Colin Barnett doesn't want to meet him. Australia doesn't want to upset China, as it is a major trading partner. If China can bully a country like Australia, Nepal doesn't stand a chance.

Rob

If Nepal's official position is that Tibetans are illegals, then Nepal has to deport them to China. If Nepal's position is that they are refugees then send them to UN and let the UN deal with it. For those who complain about Nepali cops' treatment of Tibetans, that is how you deal with rioters. If you have any doubts check the videos how the western nations dealt with them during the Olympics.

Buzz

NON-NEGOTIABLE

The editorial ('Democracy is non-negotiable', Editorial, #557) is accurate in pointing out that the main obstacle to the

peace process and constitution are the Maoists. Prachanda thinks he is losing their support and therefore, cannot be seen to be handing over the weapons. It would be suicidal for him. So, he will go through the motions, but his militant mindset will never go. So the de-mobilisation and de-commissioning of Maoist fighters will never really happen because a Maoist without a gun is a contradiction in terms. And let's drop that silly euphemism called 'integration' that was outdated Ian Martin's terminology to show that his Maoist friends hadn't surrendered.

KiranL

In a country with more than 13 Communist parties, you expect democracy to prevail? Is this for the consumption of the Western countries? Communist literature clearly show the word 'democracy' has a different connotation to Communists. Baburam et al have explained this many times, yet you pretend not to understand. It was the gun that brought the Maoists this far. Why should they give it up? Tactical words are for tactical purposes. It is the gullible who take tactics as real intent. Congratulations, you are one of them, it seems.

K K Sharma

Your editorial says: 'For their part, the Maoists in the past three years have misled, lied and broken promises on demobilisation'. Oh yeah? And what is there to say that they won't do it for the next three months?

Raghu

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Buddha Basnyat is correct in saying that immediate care and emergency cases need allopathic remedies, but to add that 95 per cent of alternative medicine is not evidence-based or is quackery is ridiculous ('Alternative medicine', #557). There may be quacks out there, no doubt, but there are also a lot of genuine ones too. To say acupuncture, ayurveda, homeopathic medicine, etc, are all quacks, is stupidity. These medicines work better than allopathic medicines in a lot of cases.

Rajeev Das Hada

Herbal medicine is plant-based, and plants have active healing power. Many modern drugs are derived from observation of the practices of traditional herbalists. Herbal medicine is occasionally poorly applied, leading to harm, but the vast majority of medical harm is inflicted by the monopoly of the pharmaceutical industry.

Bob

The hardcore positivist approach to research methodology, that evidence validated through RCT is the only 'scientific truth', is problematic even in medicine. Search for a holistic approach to healing, promotion of health, and prevention of disease has been a big challenge in medicine since the dawn of modern age. 'Chemical management' of illness, though practiced extensively in modern age, is philosophically reductionist. But I agree with the author that rigor must be maintained in research. Perhaps we need to develop an 'integrated approach' to healing illness and promotion of health.

Anonymous



BIKRAM RAI

WORK IN PROGRESS

Interesting picture by Bikram Rai ('Work in Progress', #557), the constitution looks half-done, the balls of wool seem to symbolise the four parties, and there is no one actually weaving the carpet.

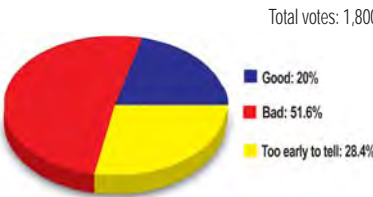
J Joshi



nepalnews.com

Weekly Internet Poll # 558

Q. How will you rate the first two weeks of the extended peace process?



Weekly Internet Poll # 559. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Is the UCPN (Maoists) headed for a split?

Reinstating the state

We end up maiming the messenger when politics and crime merge



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

Politics in Nepal is in crisis, not because we have a stalled peace process or an incomplete constitution, but because it has mutated into an ugly beast, which is ideologically eroded and without ethical and moral conscience.

The greatest legacy of the present leadership is the politics of money and muscle, and it is already manifesting itself in impunity, erosion of the rule of law and lack of accountability. In 2008, Avenues TV correspondent Birendra Sah was brutally murdered by Maoist cadres. In December of the same year, the body of a missing editor of Janadisha daily J P Joshi was found in a forest in far-western Nepal. In 2009, radio journalist Uma Singh was hacked to death by 15-20 men in her room. This is not an exhaustive list, but they all have one thing in common: although some small fish were caught the masterminds of the murders have got away with it.

The benchmark set by the parties is religiously

adhered to by their lumpen youth brigades who target individuals and journalists. The killing, abduction and manhandling of journalists in various parts of the country for critical reporting, vandalism of media property and arson on newspapers meant for delivery have become everyday affairs.

Every party has a militant brigade, and now factions within them also keep rapid deployment gangs. Last year's clash between the Maoist YCL and the UML Youth Force resulted in street riots in various parts of the country with at least one casualty and dozen injured. It is getting difficult to distinguish between criminal gangs and political gangs. Most clashes between rival youth wings are not over ideology but over government tenders, contracts and extra-judicial settlements of local disputes that often involves large sums of money, and collusion with real estate and land mafias.

Whenever a journalist has dared to expose this nexus, they have been threatened, beaten to pulp, as in the case of Khila Raj Dhakal in the Biratnagar incident last week, or even killed. The messengers are trapped in between the criminalisation of politics and the

MEDIA MURDERS: A three-storey wall of portraits of journalists killed in recent years at the Newseum in Washington, with a section below on journalists killed just in 2010. Uma Singh's picture is circled.

politicisation of crime, so that self-censorship has become the norm. The guilty go unpunished because they enjoy the patronage of the parent party, and impunity breeds further impunity.

The proliferation of small firearms from the porous border and absence of the state in law enforcement, signal a dangerous future. This is not a transitional law and order problem anymore, politics in Nepal has been replaced by the politics of violence and intimidation that seeks to stifle and eliminate dissent. Politics has become only a means to amass ill-gotten wealth and power.



KUNDA DIXIT

The political parties call their youth brigades *pratihar dastas* (counter-force) as a deterrence against rival party youths, as a fundraising unit to replenish its war chest and deploy at election time. And all of this happens right under the nose of the state, which is run by the same

people that shelter them.

Only by bringing an end to the instability, and reinstating the state will this change, and politics will be what it is supposed to be: a non-violent competitive process of finding the most efficient and honest managers to run the country for a limited period. 🇳🇵

Revenge culture

The decade long war has had a devastating effect on the minds of children who lived through the years of violence. They have developed what we call a "Revenge Culture", where they believe they can get away with anything they do.

It is a concern for all of us that the killers of Muktinath Adhikari showed no remorse for what they did. The state rewarded those who took revenge on killings during the conflict. Both parties shielded killers, and nobody stopped to condemn violence.

Today's youth seem to have taken it for granted that crimes committed under the banner of a political party is all right. Hence, there is a tendency to seek refuge with the most militant group in order to establish fear and dominance. This has become an ideal situation for people with a criminal mindset and encourages people with psychopathic behavior to commit heinous crimes with absolute impunity.

The behaviour of individuals is conditioned by the society they live in. Socialisation with family and friends act as deterrence against any violent tendencies, but in the absence of peer pressure individuals go astray. Even today, victims of the conflict live with their traumatised past. Many may harbour feelings of vengeance when they see the guilty walk freely.

The political leadership and the government must address these grievances, otherwise it could grow into dangerous proportions.

Sishir Subba is a psychiatrist

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An idiocracy of old men

It is hugely symbolic that Nepal's impatient urban youth have seized on the urgency of new media to express their disgust with politicians



THIS IS IT

Rubeena Mahato

A quarter of Nepalis are adolescent. Half of Nepal's population of 28 million is below 25. Yet we are governed almost exclusively by elderly gentlemen. Many 'young turks' within the parties are themselves grandfathers. Governance in Nepal today suffers from a generation gap.

Nowhere was this as apparent as on the sidewalks outside the CA building in Baneswor last month, when young Nepali men and women camped out day and night to put pressure on assembly members to finish writing the constitution by the 28 May deadline.

What was unprecedented was that the rallies were mobilised not by political networks, but through social networking sites. Nepal's Facebook and Twitter generation, as in North Africa, have found in the convergence of internet and smart phones, an ideal medium of solidarity.

The rallies last month and the concerts this week on Darbar Marg may not yet mark a watershed in Nepali political activism, but it certainly tells us which way the wind is blowing. It indicates a growing disillusionment among the youth that is finding an outlet through the net. With nearly a million Facebook users and Twitter adherents growing exponentially among college students, these are not numbers to be scoffed at. The fact that the top news portal in Nepali language is a blog site also offers a warning to gatekeepers in the mainstream media.

It is hugely symbolic that Nepal's impatient urban youth have seized on the urgency of new media to express their disgust at the rulers who continue to let us down. Everything in the country is at a standstill because of political scorekeeping by a handful of myopic old men who couldn't care less about governance, development and the economy.

Most people had become so apathetic they had detached themselves completely, allowing rulers to be even more unquestioned. The few who want to change things also stand at odds with the unaccommodating nature of Nepali politics, dominated by the same old faces from the 1990s. The student bodies and youth wings are so politicised they stopped representing the aspirations of the youth long ago.

Young people, who used to be removed from politics till recently, suddenly found an outlet in social media, if not for anything else than to have their voices heard, to vent frustrations and assert their presence: just like jobless Spanish youth in Madrid's Sol Square last month. But revolutions cannot be built just

on the Internet, especially in a country where only one in ten people have ever been online. Driving social change needs an agenda, a charismatic leader, needs a strategy, it isn't like clicking the mouse to change your FB profile picture.

With Nepal's digital divide, social media can at best organise people around a cause and bring them out to the streets. Even now, the rallying has merely shifted from Ratna Park to the information superhighway. To reach critical mass, it needs concrete goals, not just blanket abuse at all politicians and general calls for a timely constitution.

The campaign has been trivialised by columnists (who are themselves long in the tooth) for being hijacked by upscale celebrities. To discredit Facebookers as an elite club of young, idle, spoilt brats is not just simplistic, it is wrong. The number of FB-users in Nepal is already four times more than the readers of all daily newspapers put together, and they increasingly come from a wide social spectrum from all parts of the country, and this number is only going to grow.

The ridicule heaped on new media by those in old media stems from their inherent distrust of the younger generation and unfamiliarity with modern technology. Just because the campaign was not mobilised by the usual suspects among grey-haired civil society stalwarts doesn't mean it has no meaning. This country has been held hostage to the idiocracy of irrelevant old men for too long.

But go anywhere in Nepal today and it is clear who is driving this country: the resilient, energetic and enterprising youths. Yes, many vote with their feet and hop on to planes for Doha, but even as they sweat in the desert they prop up the economy. The women who stay behind are members of mother's groups, forestry committees and vaccination volunteers. They have done more for the country than the political hoodlums who believe only in bandas and vandalism on behalf of their fossilised masters.

What the virtual rallies on Kathmandu streets are doing is they are bringing out the previously-apathetic, educated, future-oriented youth, students, professionals to say in one voice: "We care about our future because we are also Nepali." 🇳🇵



BIKRAM RAI

United they stand

Social networking sites offer a platform for new age activism

PAAVAN MATHEMA

They gather at Khula Manch, outside the Constituent Assembly, at the gate to the airport and on the sidewalks of Darbar Marg. They appear on cue, singly and in groups out of nowhere in white tees and carry the Nepali flag. Last Saturday, they were gathered at Sherpa Mall to attend a special concert by Abhaya Subba debuting her new anthem, 'Hami Sabai Nepali' (pictured above).

They are all part of 'Nepal Unites', a Facebook group that was started by cyber-activists who got tired of sitting at home complaining about the delayed constitution, the load-shedding, garbage and other ills.

"We are a mass of concerned citizens, not a political organisation," explains Mega Bank CEO Anil Shah, who helped launch the group. "This is a citizen-led initiative that aims at making the political leadership accountable and the citizens responsible so that a positive environment is built in the country."

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter have been credited for playing a critical role during recent revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia. The scale of Nepal Unites is much smaller, and here the activists are protesting for timely constitution from an elected government, not against dictators.

Still, it has gathered much

attention, partly because influential businessmen, bankers, musicians and celebrities have joined the cause. In only a month and a half, the group has over 6,500 'likes' on its Facebook page, with members based in Nepal, Australia, the US and UK.

"Anyone can join the group and any member can suggest an event," says Suman Joshi, CEO of Laxmi Bank. "The feasibility of the idea is discussed on our pages and we support it as long the event is non-violent and does not disrupt normal life."

The group started with the slogan "Jyala pura liyau, aba sambhidan deu" which demanded that the CA members complete the work they were paid (and elected) to do. With the extension of the CA, Nepal Unites has been focusing on reminding everyone of the deadline.

"We have been facilitating dialogues among the CA members and businessmen and students," says another activist, Anil Chitrakar.

The campaigners have also been urging donor agencies, foreign embassies in Nepal and INGOs to stop funding foreign trips for the CA members until 28 August so that they stay in the country and complete the job. Almost 3,000 people have supported this cause on Facebook. Chitrakar says that Nepal Unites can be a platform to voice concern on any national issue, including corruption and tax evasion.

Nepal Unites follows from the success last year of a mass citizens' rally that ended the week-long Maoist strike in April 2010 and was launched through SMS, Facebook and Twitter. Groups such as Die Nepal Banda Die, Come on Youth, Stand Up, Gari Khana Deu have been using social networking sites to gather support and promote their cause.

Facebook alone has nearly one million Nepali users. Ujjwal Thapa, who is also associated with Nepal Unites says: "Social networking is growing at a rapid rate and tapping into it allows causes like ours to get real time responses and magnify our reach." 🇳🇵

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Hami Sabai Nepali (music video)
Question of Trust, a film on Nepal's current deadlock

Eight reasons why



COMMENT

Sanjib Subba

When government decided to open the licensing of banks and financial institutions (FI) of every shape and size, it was in line with its policy to liberalise the economy so the free market fundamentals would set the rules.

The mushrooming of banks coincided with the ten-year conflict, mass emigration, closing of factories and a slump in investment. Money is liquid and needs to flow constantly. Liquidity explores opportunities in the economy, and in Nepal it flowed into the real estate sector. The price bubble meant that even overseas Nepalis sold their Kathmandu property to buy in the US. Brokers and bureaucrats became tycoons overnight.

When the Nepal Rastra Bank woke up and decided to drive monetary policy into corrective mode followed by consolidation, it meant there was less money in the system. This triggered a liquidity crunch, which is what we are in at present. Many investors with real estate holdings were caught off guard and suddenly found there were no buyers because they were cut off from cheap and easy financing. The worst is yet to come.

Trust and confidence in the banking system is evaporating, and what can be done about it

In the past few months, this is what has happened to the FIs:

1) Poor portfolio management. The use of short term deposits to fund long term loans was a mismatch and poor asset liability management. To maintain their credit deposit and other statutory ratios the drive to attract more deposits led them to offer higher interest rates, which then would increase cost of funds and the narrowing spread would prompt them to increase lending rates too. This would also mean interest on existing bank loans would get more expensive and hence high probability of borrowers not being able to repay already troubled loans.

2) Corporate governance. This is a core issue in many of B and C Class FIs. Conflict of

interest issues are either ignored or not understood. FIs have not drawn the line between what belongs to the promoter/directors and what belongs to the banks. In some cases the Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive are the same person.

3) Greed. The desire to earn overnight dividends and bonus. Reasonable profit is fine, but the banking industry operates within certain parameters and a conservative approach ensures sustainability.

4) No innovation. Even though 70 per

cent of Nepalis do not bank, there is little innovative thinking. The market is open for banking services, especially the informal sector.

5) Size matters. Innovation and investment is hampered by the small size of some FIs. Consolidation would help FIs so that they can take sound financial decisions and improve efficiency.

6) Weak monitoring. In the past there has been serious shortcoming in the part of regulators and governments. The numbers of FIs were allowed to grow haphazardly with out proper assessment.

7) Delayed action. How long can the regulators postpone action because of the fear of the unknown? Wrong doers must be booked and action taken as soon as possible. There have been bailouts and FIs have not been allowed to fail, which is fine as long as it doesn't send a wrong signal to stakeholders.

8) FIs forgot what prudent practice is: how would an FI place large deposits without addressing counter party risk with another FI?

Trust and confidence in the banking system seems to be evaporating, and restoring it should be a priority. Protecting wrong-doers will send the wrong message. The industry still has many competent institutions and professionals that can drive quick corrective measures to restore public confidence.

Sanjib Subba is the CEO of the National Banking Training Institute www.nbti.com.np

BIZ BRIEFS

Picture perfect

Cannon launched five new models of digital cameras - three in PowerShot series and one each in Ixus and DSLR series. The capacity of these cameras range from 10 to 12.2 mega pixels, 2.5 to 3.2 inch LCD screens and 3.3 to 5 times optical zoom. A 2 GB memory and camera bag come free with every purchase.



Win a million

Qatar Airways announced that passengers from Nepal can also participate in their US\$1 Million Draw by purchasing raffle tickets while transiting Doha International Airport.

Double celebration

Dell launched its new Inspiron R series laptops in Nepal on the occasion of the 1st anniversary of Generation Next Communications, authorized distributor of Dell. Inspiron R series, equipped with the latest Intel core processors, has high definition displays and outstanding battery life.

Supporting education



NIC Foundation provided scholarship to 27 orphans of New Children Home, Hattigaunda. They will contribute 50 per cent of their school fee for this academic year.

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ALL PICS: BIBI FUNYAL

BIBI FUNYAL in LOMANTHANG

Nepal may be a republic, but Mustang is still a kingdom. Here in the arid trans-Himalayan district on the Tibetan plateau, water is a precious commodity. Every year, the hardy and devout inhabitants of this cold and high desert undertake a divine ritual to ensure water for the coming year. The Mustang water festival commemorates the deity Dorje Jono's defeat of his demon father TENCHI, who refreshes the pools of Mustang and restores the glory of its people.

The ancient legend of TENCHI gives life to a three-day festival here in Lo Manthang every May. Like many religious events, the celebration coincides with the changing seasons and the Mustangis re-enact the myth through dancing, gun fire and horn blowing to banish the demons and usher the rains.

French ethnologist Michel Peissel was the first westerner to observe the TENCHI festival in 1964. "The scenes I witnessed were so extraordinary and so unexpected that I dared not believe my eyes and even today I have some trouble in believing in the reality of what I saw that day," Peissel wrote.

The walled city of Lo-Manthang with the Annapurnas dominating the horizon far to the south.

Water worshippers of Mustang



A monk chants mantras to evoke the god of rain



The traditional circle dance is performed in front of Raja Jigme Prabal Bista's palace.

Lo
Manthang's
annual rain
festival carries
on a grand
tradition



Monks herald in the festivities with traditional horns.



An elder onlooker with his prayer wheel.

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EVENTS



E- car Rally, rally of electronic vehicles in support of Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre. 18 June, 8am, starts from Maitighar Mandala, 9841595707/ 660846

The Glass Menagerie, a play by Tennessee Williams directed by Eelum Dixit. 17 June, 5.30pm, 18 June, 1.30pm, 19 June, 5.30pm, Kamalmani Theatre, Patan Dhoka, Tickets Rs 200

Picture This, a 3 day writing workshop organised by Photo Circle in collaboration with Katha Satha and Bookworm. 17 to 19 June, 3 to 6pm, Bookworm, Jhamsikhel, Application fee Rs300, applications can be downloaded from <http://www.photocircle.com.np/learning-initiatives/picture-this/> and send before 14 June

Becoming modern in Kathmandu, the thirteenth edition of Tavern Tales in Kathmandu organised by Quixote's Cove featuring speakers Rabi Thapa and Deepak Thapa. 17 June, 3.30pm, Nepal Bharat Library, NAC Building, New Road

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Blissful Entanglement, exhibition of paintings by Sandhya Silwal. 19 to 3 July, opening day 5.30pm, Weekdays 11am to 5.30pm, The Art Shop, Darbar marg, 4267063, 9841444848

Celebrating Fulbright in Nepal, an exhibition of artworks and photographs by US and Nepali Fulbright grantees. 7 to 21 June, opening day 5.30pm, Weekdays 11am to 6pm, Saturday 12 to 4pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, 4218048

Behind Closed Doors, first solo painting exhibition by artist Bhaikaji Manandhar. Till 19 June, 10.30am to 6pm, Park Gallery, Pulchok, 5522307

Learn to Photoshop, a two day workshop on Adobe Photoshop organised by Sattya Media Arts Collective. 25 to 26 June, 11am to 3pm, Jawlakhel

Know your DSLR: Digital SLR Photography, a photography workshop organised by Sattya Media Arts Collective. 28 to 29 June, 11am to 3pm, Fee Rs 1000, forms are available at sattya.org

Programme on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural rights, an evening with leaders of change from 12 different nations of South Asia organised by PWESCR, talks by Kamla Bhasin and Virginia Bras Gomes, along with a performance by Kritika Campaign of Nepal Disabled Women Association. 21 June, 6 to 8pm, Hotel Himalaya, Kupondole

MUSIC

Golden Moments- Tribute to Rock, a second series of Golden moments featuring artists Abhaya and the Steam Injuns, 17 June, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, and the grand finale with Soaked, 24 June, 1905, Kantipath

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, Tripureswor. Last date for submission : 10 June

Fashion and Music fest, fashion show by students of IEC with musical performance by Naren Limbu, Sirish

Thapa, Bijaya Gurung and Shadows. 11 June, 6pm, 1905 Restaurant and Bar, Kantipath

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. 21 June, 3pm, Dattatrya Square, Bhaktapur

Betty Argo in Kathmandu, popular French band live in concert. 26 June, 6pm, Nepal Academy Hall, invitations only

DINING

Das Din Dilli Ke, the essence of North Indian cuisine brought to Nepal by Indian Master Chef Anil Khurana. 10 to 19 June at The Café, Hyatt Regency from 6.30 to 10.30pm. For bookings call 4491234.



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Tiziano Terzani and the cycle of life

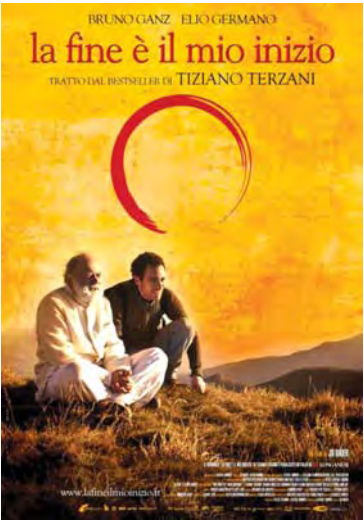
Two hours into the flight, flipping through a choice of inane movies, I clicked on *La Fine è il Mio Inizio*. As the titles rolled, I sat up. It was an Italian movie in German with English subtitles about the legendary journalist, Tiziano Terzani.

I had heard about Terzani in my days as a media nomad in southeast Asia, the dapper hack always dressed in white who had covered Mao’s China, the fall of Saigon, the Cambodian holocaust and the People Power Uprising in the Philippines. But this wasn’t a movie about a foreign correspondent, but Terzani’s conversation with his son, Falco, as he lay dying of cancer in Tuscany. The movie is based on Falco’s book of the same name, translated as *The End is My Beginning* published after Terzani died in 2004 at age 66.

Terzani was fascinated with Mao Zedong and how he was trying to transform feudal China through a true peasant revolution. He convinced

the German magazine *Der Spiegel* to hire him as a roving correspondent and travelled to China at a time when the country was difficult to get into for any European, let alone a journalist. Terzani looked at China with journalistic objectivity, and tried not to be judgmental. But, he confesses to his son in the movie: “It took me some time to see the reality.”

Caught in between the excesses of western materialistic consumerism and Asian communist revolutions gone horribly wrong, Terzani turns to spiritualism even though he himself was an atheist. This quest became his final journey when he found out he had only a few more years to live and sought the solitude of an ashram in



the Indian Himalaya.

The film follows the last days of Terzani’s life as he sits under a tree with Falco gazing out into the serenity of the Tuscan hills. One expects flashbacks to break the monotony of the father-son conversations, but there are none, yet the film is riveting.

Father tells son about what he has learnt about life and death, how they are part of a cycle of creation, how in the ashram he discovered the “great one-ness not just of human beings, but also of the universe”. Terzani says that once he saw his own life as a part of a greater universal whole, he did not fear death anymore. “You are one with the world, and everything is a part of you,” he says, “I stopped looking for a cure for my cancer, and

for the mortality that affects us all.” Falco takes his father for a walk to a mountain top, and both gaze out into a vast quilt of clouds below. Terzani wonders aloud: “Who or what holds all this together?”

After he passes away quietly in the little gompas he built in his garden, Falco takes his father’s ashes to the same mountain top. The final scene is an exquisite long shot of the son in silhouette, unfurling the scarf to let the wind carry his father’s ashes away.

On the plane, three weeks ago, the screen flicks back to the map showing our flight’s progress. Because of the Icelandic volcano, the jet was taking a southerly route over Italy. Below us, I could make out the hilltop towns and forests of Tuscany. 🇮🇹

Kunda Dixit



PICS: MARCO POLLO

CIBO

Cibo (pronounced ‘CHEE-boh’) is Italian for ‘food’. But aside from its modest offering of pasta dishes (Bolognese, Carbonara and Aioli) and paninis, the menu isn’t really Italian.

More akin to a bistro or a European *strassencafe*, the lunch-hour haunt in Lazimpat specialises in

appetising pitas and pressed sandwiches. The pesto chicken pita is an edible homemade pocket stuffed with boneless grilled chicken and a vegetable assortment of chopped zucchinis, tomatoes and lettuce harvested from the Gamcha Organic Farm in Sano Thimi.

A sandwich bar at heart, Cibo crafts a mean steak sandwich with caramelized onions and mustard on an oatmeal baguette, tailored for the hungry exec. The *croque madame*, a typical brasserie snack, is a tastier version of the classic *croque monsieur* or grilled ham and cheese. A fried egg tops the sandwich in lieu of the traditional

poached egg as advertised, but still hits that hearty spot. Sides of tart and peppery coleslaw (mayo-free) and a generous handful of crunchy crisps compliment the sandwich specials.

Bread aside, the pasta carbonara, done right with real bacon and real cream, and a slice of apple tart drizzled with a vanilla-cream sauce make for a filling afterschool snack.

Quick service and healthy portions make a perfect setting for busy bees on the go. If its dining space (four tables) has reached capacity, don’t fret. The backyard of

the Ambassador Hotel serves as an outdoor extension. So, tuck your lunchbox away and dine in. 🇳🇵

Marco Pollo

On the way to the British Embassy in Lazimpat, sneak by the Ambassador Hotel and find the red square sign or visit its second location in Pulchok.

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Immunisation imperative



like small pox and how they were brought under control.

Small pox had been a scourge for thousands of years. In Nepal, there are temples dedicated to gods that cure small pox. In the twentieth century alone (before small pox was eradicated in 1977) it killed a staggering 300 million people. Today, amazingly, only two tiny vials of this virus exist, one in Siberia and the other in Atlanta.

But micro-organisms have a tendency to behave unpredictably. In 2003 the viral disease SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) scared everyone and departments were created by the World Health Organisation to tackle the problem and try to produce a vaccine, but surprisingly the virus disappeared at the end of 2003. Similarly in 2009 a novel influenza virus, H1N1 emerged in Mexico and threatened a global pandemic and vaccination was strongly recommended, but then the disease appeared to peter out.

Those examples notwithstanding, we should never be complacent about trying to obtain the life-saving vaccines which have helped modern medicine triumph over common infectious diseases still prevalent in countries like Nepal. 🇳🇵

DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

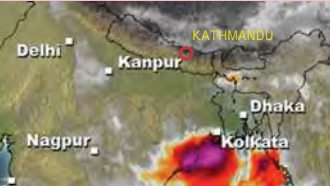
This week, vaccination was in the news with US billionaire Bill Gates and a consortium of western nations pledging \$3.7 billion at an international donor conference in London to fund vaccination programs to protect children in poor countries. The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation aims to extend vaccination programs to children in developing countries by 2015 so they don't have to die of preventable diseases. Gates alone donated \$1 billion, more than what most countries contributed.

In a sense, public health officials in the developed world are struggling with the consequences of their own success in the prevention of diseases using vaccines. When most members of a community are vaccinated against a particular disease, the minority who do not receive the vaccination are also protected by a phenomenon called 'herd immunity'. However, recently there have been outbreaks of measles in Europe and the US because many people are choosing not to be vaccinated. This may be a genuine clash between individual liberty and social welfare. Unlike in the developing world where we continue to witness the onslaught of many vaccine-preventable infectious illnesses, anti-vaccine activists in the developed world may have forgotten diseases



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

The first monsoon showers finally reached Kathmandu Valley at about 9:30pm on Wednesday. By then, it had traversed eastern Nepal and dumped 28mm of rain in Biratnagar on 15 June and 12mm in Dharan. The satellite/radar composite on Thursday morning showed the monsoonal front to be weak, and struggling against lingering westerlies. We will have to wait another week for the main body of the monsoon to arrive in central Nepal. Till then, expect evening showers and night rain. Cool nights and days will be sticky.



FRI	SAT	SUN
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BIKRAM RAI

NO UXO: PM Jhala Nath Khanal looks on as Captain Dikshya Rajbhandari of Nepal Army conducts the demining exercise at the landmine field in Phulchoki on Tuesday, marking the conclusion of the NA's demining initiative.



ABIN BARAL/ ICIMOD

CARBON CREDITS: ICIMOD Director General Andreas Schild hands over a cheque of US \$27,560 to Gorkha's Community Forest User Groups on Wednesday under the Forest Carbon Trust Fund. The fund offers rewards for sequestering of carbon emissions.



NHUCHHE MAN DANGOL

REJUVENTATION: The renovation of the historic Palpa Darbar in Tansen that was destroyed during a Maoist attack in 2004 is now nearly complete.

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Kamaladi, Kathmandu

Ode for Namobuddha

In the end, there was no compassion for Namobuddha the Tiger



KALAM

Rabi Thapa

Further on from the resort town of Dhulikhel lies the sacred site of Namobuddha. Though a massive, opulently appointed monastery dominates the hilltop today, pilgrims will be more interested in the caves in which the Sakyamuni Buddha is said to have offered his body to a starving tigress, so she could feed her cubs. Some locals believe that chanting 'Namobuddha' will protect them in the event of their encountering a tiger in the surrounding forests.

Never mind that the chances of bumping into a tiger and enacting an Androclean fantasy are close to zero in Namobuddha these days. Whoever named the first tiger to be collared with a GPS system and translocated from Chitwan to Bardiya National Park 'Namobuddha' must in fact have hoped his spiritual moniker would protect the 28-month old male from humans. But poachers respect nothing but the material. In a self-fulfilling irony, Namobuddha went missing a mere four months after his move in January. Two weeks later, park officials confirmed they had found his charred GPS collar along with a few hairs. Arrests were made, but the damage had been done.

The push to double the



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

number of wild tigers by 2022, decided on at the International Tiger Forum in St. Petersburg last year, is a commendable one. But in the battle to save and boost the population of the 121 breeding tigers that remain in Nepal, every casualty is a significant setback. In a country of politicians who jump on every bandwagon while the going's good, it's useless casting back to the grandstanding of the likes of Madhav Nepal and Deepak Bohara. Rather, we should consider what is actually being done on the ground. In this regard, the GPS collaring project may have stalled in tragedy, but there is much to hope for from the newly created Banke National Park

(adjoining Bardiya).

We have yet to see what the various committees created to oversee Nepal's efforts to save the tiger will accomplish, and whether anti-poaching patrols can seriously deter the highly profitable trade in tiger parts.

It's obvious that as long as there is a demand for tiger parts, poachers will take any risk to supply them, whether they do so to fill their stomachs or their pockets. As long as the likes of rich Chinese businessmen continue to believe they can make up for their sexual inadequacies by consuming tiger penis, there is little hope for Namobuddha's fellow tigers. We should do what we can in Nepal, but

it is the Chinese government that needs to dispense with its amoral position on its tiger farms, which has it pretending that the existence of over 5,000 farmed tigers protects their wild counterparts. And from a country with such a glorious history of suppression, the claim that government cannot intervene to shut down private farms is simply eyewash.

There is no need to go over all the reasons why we do need to do everything we can to save the tiger, as a keystone species crucial

PUT TO SLEEP: A tranquilised Namobuddha being trans-located from Chitwan to Bardiya in February. Four months later, poachers had killed him.

to the health of our forests, and an emblem, a reminder of our humanity. But if you will, visit the site below to watch Namobuddha burst out of his cage and into the forests of Bardiya. Consider the negation of his primal vitality by the poachers that tracked him down. Visualise the smug idiocy of those who will pay thousands of dollars to purchase dead flesh from which the spirit has long evaporated. If it bothers you, do something about it. 🇳🇵

<http://wwwf.panda.org/?uNewsID=200511>



HIMAL
Khabar Patrika
15 - 29 June 2011

COVER

Brutal Politics
Editorial
UML's silence
Commentary

Nepali dream
Politicisation of Corruption
Bank 'Run'
Autonomous Capital

REPORTS

No action 'action'
Losing trust
Mocking the law
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Unhealthy practices

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Winds of change

Shyam Shrestha in
Kantipur, 13 June

The five-point agreement has laid the foundation for consensus politics. The political parties are in agreement on many contentious issues except the number of Maoist fighters to be integrated and the rank harmonization. If the agreement is honestly implemented, constitution writing is possible within the extended three months. However, there are still challenges to overcome.



Against all odds, leaders of different parties defended the CA extension. The next hopeful thing is improving relationship between the Maoists and the NC. The Maoists have been showing willingness to implement the past agreements while NC has shown flexibility in the issue of integration of the Maoist fighters. This has created an environment conducive for politics of consensus.

Nepal's peace process could become an example to the world. The public disenchantment could turn into hope and respect. For this, there are four points that political parties should take into account.

- Honest implementation of the agreements.
- Prioritisation of constitution writing.
- Flexible and respectable integration of the Maoist combatants.
- A consensus government of the Maoists, NC, UML and Madhesi alliance.

The extremist faction in the Maoists should focus on how to include socialist and progressive elements in the new constitution and weed out wrong practices within the party.

It would be wise for the Maoists to give up arms and stop issuing threats of revolt. NC and UML for their part, must allow the Maoists to lead the government. Madhesi alliance should also know that if the CA is dissolved, they will be losers as well.

Mr Dahal you are guilty

Salokya in *mysansar.com*

Eighteen allegations made against UCPN (Maoist) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal by the party Vice Chairman Mohan Baidhya:

1. Superficial in philosophy.
2. Centrist and opportunist, leaning towards right-wing revisionism. Although the party's main struggle was aimed at the Indian expansionism, under his leadership, the party has done just the opposite.
3. Ignored the slogan of national sovereignty.
4. Collaborated with Indian expansionists and their lackeys.
5. Prioritised peace and constitution over people's revolt as the main strategy.
6. Although agreement was on People's Federal Republic, he is leaning towards Democratic Republic.
7. Abandoned the original idea of autonomous ethnic states



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

8. Limited the idea of proportional representation of women, marginalised ethnicities, Dalits and the Madhesi at all levels of the state, to paper.
9. Supported a judicial system unendorsed by people's representatives.

in favour of a centralized and unitary governance system.

10. Made it easy for the foreigners to obtain naturalised citizenship when encroachment from the open border is rising.
11. Scrapped the party's transitional period provisions on the reappointment of the president, cabinet, officials of the constitutional bodies and the judges of the supreme court.

12. Emptied the cantonments in the name of regrouping and disarmed the PLA.
13. Promoted foreign investment, multinationals and lackeys of capitalists by bringing Electricity Act, Real Estate Act, and declaring Special Economic Zones instead of encouraging national agro-based and industrial economy.
14. Promoted Indian investment in Arun III and Upper Tamakoshi hydropower projects.
15. Curtailed the party's relationship with international community and emphasized relationship with the class enemy and the Indian secret service agency.
16. Encouraged personality cult, suppressed dissent, and showed fascist tendency by physically attacking dissenters.
17. Involved in corruption and gross misuse of the party resources and failed to maintain financial transparency.

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Our multi-disciplinary team of specialists offers a complete range of medical and surgical interventions to treat patients with kidney diseases including acute and chronic disease management, end-stage disease management and kidney transplantation. We adopt the latest medication and quality care to undertake complicated transplantations for blood group incompatible and crossmatch positive (sensitised group) patients. ParkwayHealth is the first in offering such solutions to patients in Southeast Asia.

Living Donor Liver Transplant

ParkwayHealth is the first hospital in Asia to perform a Living Donor Liver Transplant in 2002. With the first fully integrated centre for liver transplant and treatment in Asia, ParkwayHealth's Gleneagles Hospital is the only private hospital in Singapore with a dedicated liver Intensive Care Unit (ICU) within the ward. The liver ICU is equipped with sophisticated equipment, liver dialysis machines, monitoring devices, ventilators to ensure that every patient receives the best treatment for his specific liver condition.

ParkwayHealth Patient Assistance Centre (Nepal)

24-Hour Helpline : (977) 1 422 2908

Mobile : (977) 985 111 7408 • Fax : (977) 1 422 6795 • Email : ppac@parkway.com.np
Website : www.ppac.sg

Our ParkwayHealth Patient Assistance Centre (PPAC) provides a seamless and one-stop 24-hour service to our patients, connecting them to a comprehensive choice of medical services and doctors across ParkwayHealth's hospitals.

Gleneagles Hospital • Mount Elizabeth Hospital • Parkway East Hospital

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Getting to the point

There is debate among political analysts about who started this trend of doing everything in points. Why do Nepal's political parties always have to pointedly point out their demands point-by-point? The blame must go to the Baddies who started it all with their 40-point demand on the Sher Budder govt in Feb 1996. As we know, they never waited for Lion Brave to respond to even one of the points and launched their pipal war. Then there was the 12-point agreement between the **Baddies and Goodies**, and along the way we had 19-point agreements, 14-point agreements, right up to the eight-point agreement, the NC's 10-point conditions and the secretive JNK-PKD five-point pact. The beauty about all these pointy things is that no one ever fulfilled any of the total 1,657 points that have been agreed to by various groups in the past 15 years. True to tradition, Baddie hardliner Com Kiran has issued a list of 18 deviations of Chairman Awestruck. Among them, PKD is accused of being a "fascist", "running dog lackey of the Indians", "revisionist", "corrupt", and



the most damning of all: "bourgeois".

This just in: the Special Committee that had formed a Sub-Committee to iron out contentious issues has found more contentious issues and the Sub-Committee has decided to form a Task Force to sort them out through a Working Group. If all this doesn't work, they can always

form a High-Level Ministerial Commission which can then set up an Experts Panel and, if needed, even a **Dispute Resolution Caucus**, which should do the trick.

Luckily, our national pride is intact because of the gumption of student Ruchit Regmi who has purportedly invented a plane that can be flown by thought-control. An investigative report in a

national daily which shall remain nameless since it is so embarrassing to its editor, says Regmi has invented a head cap with sensors so the pilot can navigate the plane to its destination through difficult terrain in bad weather "through his thought and emotion". Regmi claims this will prevent crashes due to pilot error, but one minor point: what if the pilot starts involuntarily thinking about

his girlfriend while on final approach to Lukla? Anyway, the Minister of Education thinks this Nepali invention worthy enough to cough up 20 laks of **hard-evaded VAT-payer money** to get Regmi a US patent.

Our national pride suffered a major blow last week when our very own Khagendra Thapa Magar was unseated from his lofty pedestal of being the World's Smallest Man by an even punier Filipino. But all is not lost. We hear Khagendra is planning to be the world's shortest man to climb the world's tallest mountain and re-enter the Guinness Book. Poor Prakash ("Dear Leader") Dahal is going to be upstaged in his own Everest bid next spring if Khagendra beats him to the summit and steals all the headlines.

Speaking of George, there is another reason to climb the world's highest mountain: peace and constitution. Apparently, **Bal Tapaswi Gadyanchal** (that's his name, I swear, not a new development region) has spent 27 hours on top in deep meditation. He now

wants to present the snow from the summit (don't ask if it's still frozen) to President Ram Baron. Gadyanchal also has a 3-point solution for the 5-point problem of our (e)steamed lawmakers: "spiritualism, meditation and prembad". The Baddies sure could do with a bit of Prembad at this point.

Every political party in Nepal adds a "Unified" prefix to its name just before or after it splits. The UML split down the middle just after calling itself the **Unfed Marxist-Leninists**. The Baddies called themselves UCPNM, and now they're sure to trifurcate. And just last week, the Nepal Janata Dal, which has only two members in the CA, split in two. One faction is led by Gayatri Sah, who became famous for selling her red passport. The other faction is led by a certain Biswo Uggerwal who said he'd donate a couple of karods to the party but never did and got beaten up for not keeping his word. Guess what his





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Communication Corner Pvt. Ltd.
Kupondole, Lalitpur, Tel: 5546277

Ujyaalo 90 Network
Sanepa, Lalitpur, Tel: 5551716

Fax: 977-1-5549357, P.O.Box:6469, E-mail: info@unn.com.np, URL: www.unn.com.np



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