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Nepal can feed itself

Next week, the country marks rice-planting day. Nepal used to be a net exporter of rice, today it imports staple grain. The ongoing census will show us how fast our population is growing, and whether or not our farm productivity can keep pace.

Despite a banking crisis, a power crisis, a political stalemate, and stagnant investment Nepal's economy is expected to grow by 5 per cent this year. What saved us was the most-neglected part of the economy: agriculture. Nearly half the paddy fields are rain-fed, and last year's favourable monsoon with

timely winter rains meant that rice production grew by 11 percent.

With sustained investment in irrigation and technology there is no reason why Nepal can't feed itself. Travelling across Nepal this week, it was clear that for a majority of Nepalis the priority was neither the constitution nor the politics in faraway Kathmandu. It was whether the rains will come in

time, whether fertiliser will be affordable and whether farmers will get a fair price for their produce.

A new way of rice farming called SRI (System of Rice Intensification) is bringing new hope to thousands of farmers in 35 districts across Nepal. With minor

adjustments to their planting method, farmers can grow double the rice with less seed, less water and less fertiliser.

Not all solutions for Nepal are political. The farmers seem to have got the point.

Rubeena Mahato in Kailali

Full story p4-5

The rise and fall of Acharya B

A Nepali associate of Ramdev finds money and politics don't mix very well with religion, new column by Jyoti Malhotra in New Delhi

p3



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IN A STATE OF IMPUNITY

A man accused of being involved in a murder is appointed minister by a party in the ruling coalition. Challenged by public interest litigators, the Supreme Court rules that the minister has to take personal moral responsibility, and asks the police to report on progress in the murder investigation every fortnight.

A senior Maoist member was promoted by the party after being accused of masterminding the murder of Ram Hari Shrestha in 2008. A senior Maoist who doesn't deny that it is his voice in a phone tap soliciting half a billion rupees from a Chinese businessman to buy off CA members is now the Home Minister. The only opprobrium that Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal ever had to bear for the Shaktikhor Video, in which he is seen laughingly admitting to lying to just about everyone, is that his interlocutors now think twice before taking him at his word.

Tycoons who also happen to be CA members pressure the new finance minister to call off an investigation against fake VAT bills in which the exchequer lost crores. An honest and

efficient finance secretary resigns on moral grounds and blows the whistle, yet nothing happens to the finance minister, nor the businessmen. Politicians tainted by the APC scam are trying to pass the buck to police officers, even though everyone it seems had their hands in the honeypot.

The current epidemic of impunity in the country sets the backdrop to the case of hooligans from the UML-connected Youth Association Nepal (alias Youth Force) Morang chapter attacking a reporter and then using its connection to the ruling partner in the coalition government to get away with it.

This is no longer just an issue of press freedom, it is emblematic of a collapse of the rule of law, a breakdown of accountability that is affecting all facets of public life. It wasn't just Khilanath Dhakal of Nagarik who got beaten up last month in Biratnagar, it was violence against all Nepalis by goons in the payroll of our rulers. The attack is getting a lot of press because it was against a journalist, but it is happening all over the country all the time. Honest members of forestry user groups

are beaten up by illegal loggers. Mother's committees trying to protect water sources are threatened by quarry owners. No one dares speak out against the politically-connected sand and boulder-mining mafia that are clawing down the ecologically-sensitive Chure hills.

The prime minister has to act to bring the known culprits in his party's youth wing who gave the orders to beat up Khilanath Dhakal and set an example that no one is above the law. The home minister is twiddling his thumbs because he knows arresting the Basnets will set a precedence and he will have to detain half of his own YCL.

This coalition isn't making much progress on the peace and constitution front, on governance and the economy. But one way it can redeem itself in the eyes of a thoroughly disillusioned public is by urgently catching some high profile crooks, and start due process.

KS

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

IDIOCRACY

It is nice to hear that the young generation still in Nepal is trying to be heard because only they can save Nepal ('An idiocracy of old men' by Rubeena Mahato, #558). The leaders of current Nepal are the grandfathers and great-grandfathers who fought the monarchy from the 60's. They can only be replaced when they die. The new generation has to takes charge if anything is to be done, a new breed of conscientious and moral young men and women who truly want to do something for the country. The sad thing is that such leadership is hard to find. And the YCL? The last time I checked, they were more interested in extorting money from the poor. Leadership from them?

BNS

- Some 'old men' who feel comfortable within their own cocoon and with the status quo cannot simply label the social media-aided youth campaign as 'irrelevant'. I completely agree with Rubeena Mahato that it is far better to take action than to be an arm-chair cynic always complaining, and doing nothing

ASP

- The YCL is an organised criminal gang. To be fair, that is true for the other parties and their youth wings too which is why people of all ages don't like the political parties. It is not because of the age of the leaders. It is because they are all criminals.

Danny Birch

BUDGING

Your editorial ('Budge on the budget', #558) says: 'Our message to the politicians is: it's the economy, stupid.' The fact that politicians have a huge patronage network to cater to, means the NC, UML and the Maoists have to do what they are doing. Normally, a democratic government would present the budget, the opposition would find flaws in it that would be debated, and if the majority government overrules their objection by taking advantage of the majority, there are a number of ways in which the opposition can benefit from that, or not. But of course, this is no democracy. This is an Oligarchy. But (by endorsing Baburam Bhattarai) Kunda Dixit appears to be supporting a man who has repeatedly justified the murder of many thousands, has not proposed a single original idea, including during his time as the FM, has shown himself to be an extraordinary hypocrite by sabotaging his



DIWAKAR CHHETRI

own party for his own benefit. The list of this man's hypocrisy is probably exceeded only by Prachanda.

Soni

STATE OF ANARCHY

Anurag Acharya ('Reinstating the state', #558) writes '...politics in Nepal has been replaced by the politics of violence and intimidation that seeks to stifle and eliminate dissent'. This is the inevitable outcome of the 12-point agreement when the political parties decided that violence was an acceptable means of achieving political power.

And this article is an example. The author, while mewing about the violence still cannot bring himself to say clearly and unequivocally that violence is wrong. Having supported Maoist violence, however tacitly or by default, his ethics are so compromised as to make it impossible for him speak against violence in any real sense.

Jange

- The crux of the matter is that petty partymen should not be able to get away with targetting journalists. Maybe installing a judiciary mechanism, consisting of magistrates who can deal with such cases sternly at the local level, may help?

Rituraj Sapkota

AWESOME

Exactly right ('From Awesome to Awful', #558). Once a man loses his character, then he loses

everything. Prachanda betrayed and let down his people. PKD has proven that he is just anot her Nepali politician, a pathological liar, corrupt and power hungry, wants to become a Raja of Nepal. The Indians helped him and he turned against the Indians.

Gopal Bahadur Rai

- As someone who was born and brought up in remote Salyan and who can count his childhood friends among those killed needlessly by both sides in the conflict, I feel disgusted by the violence unleashed by Prachanda and others. What we have always needed in Nepal is 'evolution' and not 'revolution'. There is the danger of too many things going wrong in a revolution, as is happening now in Nepal. I agree neither Gyanendra nor Girija were fit to rule. But we certainly did not need a revolution. Nothing can justify killing unarmed people, in the name of revolution.

Manohar Budathoki

- Pushpa Kamal Dahal is a wily operator and understands power more than any other politician in this country. Yes, there are disagreements within his party but whose position ultimately gets passed in the Maoist party's meetings? Who ultimately had the greatest influence in the creation of the current government? Who is it that towers above all the other 'senior leaders' with sheer will, tenacity, and calculations that would make Chanakya proud? But the understanding of power: where to find it, and how to use it isn't enough to make

a great political leader. What Dahal does not understand is that folks can't be forcefully coerced into living their lives according to the diktats of a self-chosen few, no matter how revolutionary, equitable, and ethical the ideas of these leaders. The belief that emancipation can come from the exercise of unrestrained power is the true nature of Dahal's corruption.

Battisputali

BANKING

Being an Austrian School Economist, I've serious qualms over what actually pushes market to the edge of slumps, stock crashes, liquidity traps, demand shock, supply shock, runaway inflation etc ('Eight reasons why' by Sanjib Subba, #558). Let's first be clear at the epicenter of economics lies finance. And, capital is the brain of finance while any form of cash flows is its heart. Nepal's fiscal order is beginning to show the signs of modern market trends but it's still incipient. So to hope that doing something close to printing money which we can't do independently isn't a solution at all. Next, whether interest rate is fully stitched to the peg of Nepali currency to the Indian currency is still a premature not only in theory but also in practice. Private sector in Nepal, (which in turn borrows from the higher order of banks, and finally all banks sluicing money from central bank), charges exorbitant interest rates, meaning no Indian investor cares to borrow from Nepal, and especially so due to risks associated with liquidity, credit, market, etc.

Economist

- I thank Nepali Times for bringing Sanjib Subba's non-partisan voice on economic analysis in its paper and web editions. Hats off!

Neophyte



Weekly Internet Poll # 559

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



Weekly Internet Poll # 560. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Should the Minsiter of Information, Agni Sapkota step down from his post?



Cock-fight



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

BIRGANJ -- Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal will not forget those last few hours of grilling political negotiations with UDMF when the Madhesi front refused to extend the tenure of the CA and warned that they would resign from the assembly and get Madhesi members to meet in Birganj. The Madhesi front even threatened the Kathmandu establishment that if their demands were not met they would declare a secession of Madhes declaring Birganj its capital.

It is doubtful if the UDMF would, or could, have pulled off all that because at three in the morning it agreed to the extension but stayed away from voting for the extension. The government incorporated their demands (Khanal’s resignation and the inclusion of at least 10,000 Madhesis in the army) in the 5-point deal.

But here in the heart of a sweltering monsoony Madhesh, one is struck by the air of normalcy. This doesn’t seem to be the kind of place that could be the capital of a new Madhes. It is hard to believe that the streets are the same that witnessed historic protests in the winter of 2007.

Back then, a strong wave of identity politics had galvanised people across the Tarai’s economic and political background. In spite of criminal infiltration and violent upsurge in places like Gaur, Nepalganj and Butwal, the movement gained credibility due to an assertive presence of people from all walks of life. The burgeoning aspirations of the hitherto marginalised fuelled the movement and in the April 2008 elections, the Madhesis became fourth largest political force in the country.

The anger in the Madhes this time is against Madhesi leaders themselves

But since then, Madheshi parties and their egotistic leaders have splintered, squandering those aspirations. Madhesi civil society stalwarts who had earlier played a crucial role in bringing leaders from different ideological backgrounds into a united platform, have now gone off on their own and are largely discredited in the eyes of their own people. There has been a re-amalgamation of some Madhesi parties, but it is uncertain how long this marriage of convenience will last.

Ask people in the “capital” of the proposed Tarai-Madhes Pradesh about Madhesi leaders, and there is a common refrain: “They are all the same.” A 40-year-old rickshaw driver wiped the sweat from his brow with his gamchha and spiced his Maithili with a choice epithet: “People died here to put those ch**iyas in CA so that we could get a constitution that would end the centuries of humiliation.”

Large sections of the Madhesi population does not foresee an overnight change in their fortunes. However, people here had counted on those who used Madhesi grievances to carve out political space for themselves in Kathmandu to deliver on some of their promises.

Foremost among them was security, but the criminalisation of politics in the Madhes actually worsened the law and order situation. One of the changes after 2008 was that Pahadis started treating Madhesis with more respect. But even that has changed.

“Before the Madhes Andolan people were rude, the police ate bananas and did not bother to pay,” recalls a fruit vendor in the main market here, “for some time they began talking politely. But things are back to what they were, nothing has changed for us.”

The constitution, if and when it is finalised, may have a trickle-down effect on rickshaw drivers and fruit sellers, but what is stopping the self-proclaimed messiahs of Madhes from taking the trouble of going down their constituencies to address everyday problems? Or is the political cock-fight in Kathmandu too exciting to miss? 🇳🇵



CHALO DILLI
Jyoti Malhotra

Until a fortnight or so ago, Acharya Balkrishna was one of thousands of saffron-clad godmen claiming either a direct or indirect connection with the almighty, who crisscrossed the India-Nepal landscape without fear but lots of favour, disregarding man-made rules of citizenship and lines demarcating borders.

Except, Balkrishna decided that his was not the way of the ascetics in the holy books. He became the new age guru, at the very least the most enterprising aide behind India’s best-known new age tele-evangelist guru, Baba Ramdev, whose latest claim to national headlines is his protest against corruption and black money. To cut a long story short in which India’s leading politicians cut a sorry figure by bending both backwards and frontwards to appease the Baba, Ramdev and Balkrishna have become (depending which way you look at it) either victims of a dastardly establishment trying to discredit spiritual figures, or valiant upholders of the Hindu faith.

Early on, Balkrishna decided the road to gurudom was through the acquisition of wealth. What better way to satisfy Kuber, the pot-bellied god of wealth than to create a spiritual empire which fulfilled several needs at the same time? The first thing to do was to acquire several acres of land, and yes, build an ashram on the banks of the holy Ganga in Haridwar on which organic food would be grown and sold through wholly-owned patents. There were dark whisperings that some of the land had been

Rise and fall of Acharya B

A Nepali associate of Ramdev finds money and politics don’t mix very well with religion

illegally sold to Balkrishna by the Udaseen Akhara.


And since information is power, and since all those fattened on Manmohan Singh’s material reform were also now seeking spiritual gain, what better way to feed them soul food than through 24x7 religious messaging on the Aastha TV channel, 99 per cent of whose shares were owned by Balkrishna himself?

The Ramdev-Balkrishna empire, including an island in Scotland, now amounted to a karmic cool \$300 million. But the empire of the state struck back. Influential Congress leader Digvijaya Singh fired the first salvo, accusing Balkrishna of being a Nepali with a criminal record back home, that his Indian passport was fake, and that he had violated the Indian Arms Act.

Poor Balkrishna. Not really being versed in the ways of the Indian elite, leave alone the political elite which can run rings around the most sophisticated entrepreneurs, he began to defend himself to the press. Short of invoking the 1950 India-Nepal treaty, which guarantees to all Nepali citizens the right to live and work in India, the young godman did everything he could to paint a picture of being an honourable citizen. Even if he didn’t pay his taxes on time.

A fawning media was taken aback when Balkrishna refused to come clean about the alleged land grab around the Divya Yog Trust. “Who do you think you are? Who are you to ask me?” Balkrishna answered.

That’s how the first thread of the holy struggle within the unholy alliance began to unravel. The police cracked down on Ramdev & Co and in the ensuing melee, Ramdev escaped from the police dressed as a woman. Balkrishna went missing and subsequently said he had actually been tending to the injured. At present, the live tv tamasha is over and India is catching its breath. 🇳🇵



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RUBEENA MAHATO in KAILALI

A smiling man with dark hair stands in a lush green rice field. He is wearing a purple t-shirt with the text "BGY" and "SITELU" printed on it. The background shows a line of trees and a small building under a cloudy sky.

ALL PICS: RUBEENA MAHATO

believe my eyes. I had never produced so much with so little," he says. The word has spread and Bedanand is now training neighbouring farms in SRI.

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SRI in Nepal

System of Rice Intensification (SRI) was invented by French Jesuit Fr Henri de Laulanie in Madagascar in 1983 after 30 years of research. Today it is used in 30 countries including China, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Laos and Cambodia, where research has shown yield increase by 30-50 per cent using half the amount of water. China in particular, is leading the way, using SRI in conjunction with hybrid seeds. India has adopted SRI as one of the components of its food security program and is promoting the method in 39 districts and is planning to convert 5 million hectares of land into SRI plots in the next five years.

In Nepal, SRI was pioneered by Rajendra Uprety when he was District Agriculture Extension Officer in Morang. He read about it in an agriculture journal and decided to give it a try. Today there are SRI tests and demonstrations being carried out in 35 districts across the country: 300 ha in Dang, 120 ha in Jhapa and 80 ha in Kailali. Test plots like these produce up to 12 tons per hectare, compared to 3 hectares produced by the old method.



However, while farmers across the Tarai don't need much convincing about SRI, the government in Kathmandu is more reluctant. The National Agriculture Research Centre (NARC) is still not backing SRI as government policy. "It is surprising why the government is not supporting SRI," says Bijay Mallik, Director General of Department of Agriculture. "But we are not waiting for NARC and are holding SRI demonstrations in all rice growing districts so that farmers can adopt the technique themselves." 

In Dakshin Purba VDC, 24 farmers this year converted to SRI with assistance from FAO. Farmers are trained in the technique right from the transplanting to harvest in field schools over a period of 16 weeks.

“Where irrigation is available, SRI can be done pre-monsoon, allowing farmers to harvest at least one rice crop before the rains, increasing their food security,” explains Xavier Bouan of FAO.

nepalitimes.com

The miracle is it's no miracle. #256

Growing much more rice. #422

Less food, more mouths to feed, #463

How it works

With all the advantages it offers, SRI is quite simple, and can be done on local or hybrid varieties alike. Instead of waiting for the seedlings to mature, young plants of 8-10 days are transplanted one by one, allowing the roots to spread out further. They are also planted farther apart, at 20 cms, so that seeds don't have to compete for food and light and this also reduces the amount of seed required. The difference of old rice and new rice transplanted at the same time is apparent in paddy fields of Dakshin Purwa VDC, Kailali, below. The patch in the foreground uses the old method, and the one behind uses the System of Rice Intensification (SRI).

The field is irrigated just enough, without submerging it in water and water is drained two-three times at an interval of 15 days. This allows bacteria in the soil to improve fertility. A weeder machine and composting means less pesticides and fertilizers are needed.

Traditional paddy-growing submerges fields to control weeds and pests, and the downside of SRI is that it is more labour intensive, requiring more hands for weeding, timely drainage and careful planting. But the benefits in greater harvests far outweigh these shortcomings. SRI produces 150 quintals of rice per hectare for a land that yielded 20 to 30 quintals in the old method, using 35 per cent less water, 10 per cent of seed and 50 per cent less fertilisers.



BIZ BRIEFS

New branches

Sanima Bikas Bank has opened new branches in Biratnagar and Naubise. Sanima's customers can also withdraw their deposited amount free of cost from any SCT network ATM all over Nepal by using Sanima debit card.

Supporting noble mission

Everest Bank provided financial support to Susmita Maskey for her 3rd Everest expedition aimed at



raising money for Childreach Nepal. She will be helping them build 100 toilets and conduct 500 awareness programs on child health.

gender equity and child protection over the next five years.

Branchless banking

Siddhartha Bank has started a branchless banking service in Pagnath VDC, Dailekh. Transactions will be made by identifying fingerprints or photographs of clients via smart cards.

Free trip

Under a new scheme, San Miguel is sending three winners to Boracay, an island getaway in the Philippines. The winners decided through a lucky draw can take one friend for the trip.

New Series

Morang Auto Works launched Yamaha SZ 150 series motorcycles in an event organized in Birtamod. The series has two models, SZ X - self start and SZ R - self start with disc brake.

Branching on

Commerce and Trust Bank launched its 7th branch in Newroad, Pokhara. They plan to open up new branches in Biratnagar, Butwal, Kalimati, Basundhara and Thamel by the end of this fiscal year.

Bajaj Discover



HH Bajaj has launched Discover 125cc motorcycle. It has 5-speed gearbox and comes in two variants-regular drum brake and disc brake

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Bending over backwards

New yoga center offers choices for up-market consumers

MARCUS BENIGNO

Yoga in recent decades has undergone a western facelift or perhaps more fittingly a reduction. Avid practitioners of the discipline are less likely to be full-fledged yogis on an ascetic quest

to moksha (liberation from worldly suffering) and more likely to be well-to-do urban women. “They say there are 15 million people practicing yoga in Europe and the US, but I wouldn't say there are 15 million yogis,” explains Sam Voolstra, director of

Pranayama Yoga at the Moksh complex in Pulchowk. The newly opened yoga center joins a list of studios available in Kathmandu, but its fresh, modern look contrasts with its typical ashram counterparts. Voolstra, a partner of the successful adventure

sporting company The Last Resort, brings a similar approach to Pranayama: a streamlined, frill-free brand with program options tailored to the customer's requirements. “There is no such thing as one style of

yoga,” says Voolstra. The center offers a set of diverse styles at varied levels of difficulty, including pregnancy, post-natal and children's yoga. It hopes to appeal to a wider

Li Na represents not just

CLARENCE CHUA in BEIJING

First Asian woman to win a grand slam singles title prepares for Wimbledon

Li Na's victory on the red clay courts of Roland Garros has caused a media frenzy in China. Her win at the French Open makes her the first Chinese and Asian woman to win a grand slam singles title and her play is inspiring a generation of budding tennis stars across the country. After winning the French Open, Li Na is now ranked No. 4 equaling Kimiko Date of Japan as the highest ranked Asian woman tennis player ever. Li will stay in Europe to prepare for Wimbledon

and looks set to serve up some strong play as China and the rest of Asia watches closely. CCTV commentators equate the win to Lu Xiang's Olympic gold on the track and field and Yao Ming playing in the NBA. For 12-year-old Alvina Lai, Li Na is her new favorite player. “Hi! My name is Alvina Lai and I come from Hong Kong. I've been playing tennis since I was three and a half and Li Na is my favorite because she won





demographic that would otherwise be repelled by yoga's religious connotation.

Pranayama teams up experienced instructors from Europe, Nepal and North America. Yogatara (Lisa Alessandra) is a French American, who has lived in Nepal for 15 years and studied yoga at Bihar University, and Nadia Turgeon is a French Canadian who has been practicing Hatha yoga for 11 years and teaching for two. Both instructors are trained therapists and counselors who prescribe yoga as an alternative medicine.

"With yoga you go through the body to understand the mind, the soul and the whole being," Turgeon says. "Whereas in counseling, we address the mind mostly to understand. They're just different doors to the same goal."

As a Western import modeled after Hatha yoga of the late Hindu revivalism in the 19th century, yoga popularised as an alternative

workout centered on its health benefits.

"So when yoga went to the West and stepped out of the spiritual context, it was almost necessary for it to be understood as separate practice from religion," says Yogatara.

Ironically, as a consumable product imported from the West back to South Asia, yoga strips away the dogma rooted in the yoga sutras of Patanjali, practised by Hindu monist schools.

On the surface, a cultural typing emerges with this exchange. Layered apparel in muted, earth tones and a vernacular which echoes in eco-conscious and organic fads, shape a trademark lifestyle. Beneath, however, the foundation of postures (asanas), breathing (pranayama), and relaxation (savanas) remains.

In a beginner's Asthanga (Power) yoga class at Pranayama, teacher Karina Skjelmose guides novices, mostly expat women,

through basic forms, holding and controlling breathing techniques. Her instruction is professional, informative and strict to K Patabhi Jois's original teachings of Asthanga.

Drop-in classes are priced at Rs 600, and package deals are available. Two-day retreats at Rs 12,000 make for a pricey weekend workout. And to accommodate communities across the city, Pranayama will conduct classes starting 1 July at a second branch at 1905 in Kantipath.

Says Yogatara: "Yoga is a very practical science and tool that can take people to a spiritual path, but not necessarily. Through their breathing and postures, they might discover something else, but that's their choice." 🇳🇵

www.pranayama-yoga.com

nepalitimes.com
It's all in the mind, #228



China, but Asia



the French Open," says Lai after her tennis lesson.

At the Potters Wheel Tennis Academy on the outskirts of Beijing, groups of young girls are perfecting their backhand strokes. Carlos Rodriguez, the former coach of Olympic gold medalist and former world number one Justine Henin, is their full-time trainer.

"We have to use this momentum to encourage young players. I promise you she is going to inspire a lot of kids and players who are now going to say, 'It's possible for us now too. If she can do it,

we can do it.' Whether that is in Thailand, Malaysia, China or whatever," says Rodriguez.

About 14 million Chinese play tennis, while more than 100 million play badminton. The tennis academy's director Andres Bruno says they are already expecting an increase in membership. "When Li Na lost the final of the Australian Open, more and more people called to sign up. Now, just a few days ago after Roland Garros, people are coming to sign up for the summer camps. I think there will be 20 or 30 per cent increase after Li Na's success," he says.

Twenty-two years ago the fresh-faced 17-year-old Chinese-American Michael Chang created history by

becoming the youngest player to ever win a tennis grand slam.

His victory at the French Open sparked a tennis boom in Asia, making Prince Racquets and Reebok 'Pump' shoes fashionable must haves. But Li Na, notes Rodriguez, has the potential to be more than a 'one-slam wonder'. "There are a lot of players that win only once, but if her ambition is to be the No.1 player she can do it. She can improve her serve and her forehand and her stamina. Mentally, emotionally and physically it is not easy, but if she can recover, for sure she has the game. No doubt about that," he says. 🇳🇵

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EVENTS

Expressions in Clay, ceramic art exhibition by Ceramic Hands, display of works created by local and foreign artists under the tutelage of Kalapremi Shrestha and 'P1' by Man Bahadur Harijan . 23 June to 23 July, 11am to 6pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited

9th Higher Education and Career Fair. 23 to 26 June, 11am to 6pm, Exhibition Hall, Bhrikuti Mandap

7 Days script writing workshop, organised by Indigenous Film Archive (IFA) for innovative Nepali writers and filmmakers. 4 to 10 July, 9am to 5pm, fee Rs 1000, Application deadline: 29 June, 9851063480

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

Talking Color, an interactive talk program with Ashok Man Singh, author of Color on use of colors. 24 June, 11.30am to 1pm, School of Creative Communications, Kupondole, fee Rs 1001



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. 28-29 June, 11am to 3pm, Fee Rs 1000, Forms are available at sattya.org

Call for entries for Film Southasia, a festival of South Asian documentaries. 29 September to 2 October, early submission deadline: 31May 2011, final submission deadline (for films made after April 2010): 31June 2011, Film Southasia Secretariat, Patan Dhoka, 5552141, www.filmsouthasia.org, fsa@filmsouthasia.org

Destination India 2011, an expo on education in India for Nepali students. 1 July, 11am, Hotel Annapurna, Darbar Marg

Fellowship for Research, the Bihari Krishna Fellowship for Ethnographic Research invites applications from researchers interested in themes: Gender relations, construction of good society, narratives of violence, co-operation and conflict over the past 50 years. Deadline 4 July, budget for this research Rs 5,00,000, www.sosbahan.org

Career Fair Nepal, a platform to obtain information regarding career

opportunities. 8 to 9 July, 12pm onwards, Bhrikuti Mandap



Organic Market, a weekly organic market where along with picking the fresh organic produce for home you can enjoy brunch. 2 July, 10am to 12pm, 1905, Kantipath

MUSIC

2nd Paleti series, the much awaited series will begin with performance by Sunita Subba. 24 June, 6pm, 'r' sala, Nepa-laya, Kalikasthan, 4412469, paleti@nepalaya.com

Jazz in Concert, jazzy fest for music lovers followed by special 'Blues' session with 'Rusty nails'. 25 June, 6pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, 5013554

Golden Moments-Tribute to Rock, the final performance of the series will see the band Soaked rock it out. June 24, 1905, Kantipath

Monkey Temple Unplugged, live performance by the band with the premiere of the video of their new single 'Anumati'. 25 June, 7pm, Lakhey Restro and Bar, Durbarmarg, Free entry

Fashion and Music Fest, launch of the New Episode followed by a Fashion show and musical performances by Bijay Gurung (Kalind band) and The Shadows. 1 July, 6pm to 11.30pm, 1905, Kantipath , entry Rs 600, 9849565905



Betty Argo in Kathmandu, pop French band live in concert brought by Alliance Française. June 26, 6pm, Nepal Academy Hall, invitations only

Off-beat trekking

Two new hiking guide books give us a fresh perspective on trekking in Nepal

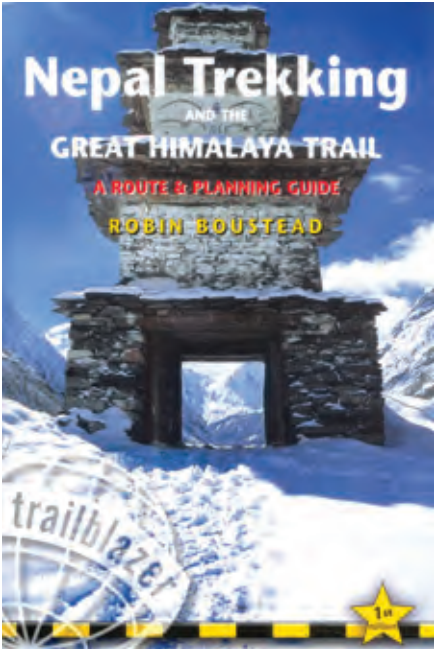
To the list of numerous Himalayan trekking guidebooks come two new ones this season that take hiking enthusiasts to routes less traveled by, and also to take a fresh look at established ones.

Nepal Trekking and the Great Himalayan Trail looks at the "holy grail" of the traverse of high-altitude passes not just in Nepal but from Bhutan right up to Kashmir. In Nepal, the trail takes about five months at one go, but can also be done in more manageable sections

It is well-established that inappropriate tourism fouls its own nest. Examples are some of the popular trekking routes in Nepal, where the influx has brought visitors and huge numbers of porters and support staff that overstretch the carrying capacity of fragile mountain valleys. Tourism provides some income but also brings inflation with the nett effect of making poverty worse. And lately, trekking trails in Nepal have been overtaken by highways, bringing both advantages and disadvantages.

The Great Himalayan Trail is a project designed to re-invent trekking tourism in Nepal, with the world's longest and highest trek. Boustead, who has done the great traverse himself, has put together the book from his own personal experience and sprinkles it with advice on local communities and their needs. Getting Trailblazer to add this title to its other handbooks like Indian Rail, The Silkroad, Trans-Siberian and Himalaya by Bike will provide a fresh new dimension to eco-trekking in Nepal.

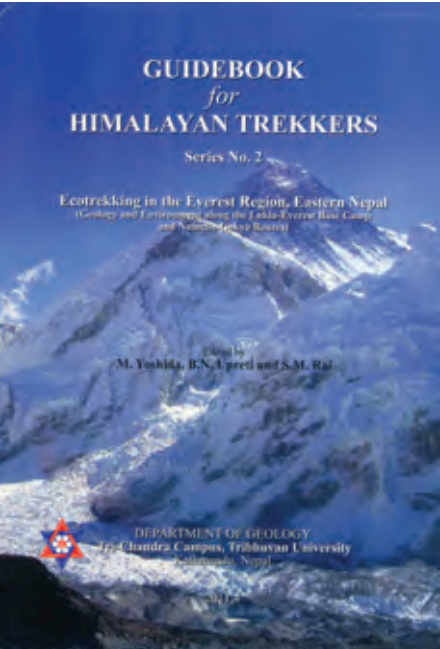
Nepal Trekking is different



**Nepal Trekking and the Great Himalayan Trail
A Route & Planning Guide
by Robin Boustead
Trailblazer Publications, 2011
Price: \$24.95**

from other trekking guides not just because it takes the various sections of The Great Himalayan Trail chapter-by-chapter, but also because it approaches trekking from a whole new perspective. It looks at an expedition's ecological footprint, how the arrival of outsiders can help rather than hinder local development and enlightens visitors about Nepal's incredible biological and ethnic diversity.

The Guidebook for Himalayan Trekkers is published by the Department of Geology of



**Guidebook for Himalayan Trekkers
Ecotrekking in the Everest Region
M Yoshida, B N Upreti and S M Rai
Department of Geology
Tribhuvan University, 2011
192 pages**

Tribhuvan University can be best described as a naturalists' guide to trekking in the Everest region. Although it is called a guidebook, the book reads more like an academic report on the geology of the Khumbu. For the lay-trekker, the description and terminology may be too technical and dry.

Any native of Nepal or visitor must wonder at the cataclysmic collision of the continents 70 million years ago that thrust the Himalayan mountains nine km into the stratosphere. In that sense, one doesn't have to be a

geologist to be curious about the tectonic forces that created this range and the aeons of erosion that sculpted our mountains and valleys. In that sense, everyone is an amateur geologist and this book is a quaint guide to understanding the geology, physiography, climate and vegetation of the Himalaya.

Having the handbook handy while walking from Namche to Phreiche, for example, will be an on-the-spot guide to interesting outcrops, explanations of rocks and boulders found along the way as well as pointing to the hazards of glacial lake outburst floods caused by global warming.

The authors even take us beyond base camp to the summit of Mt Everest to explain the amazing fact that the summit is made of yellow limestone. Microscopic examination of this rock shows remains of prehistoric marine microorganisms, forcing us to marvel that these rocks were once at the bottom of the Tethys Sea. We see the effects of the glacial retreat following the last ice age, the little ice age 800 years ago, as well as the accelerated thawing of the Himalaya today due to climate change.

If you can bear with the overdose of technical terminology and the academic language, the book will whet you appetite for geo-tectonics and may be worth the extra weight in your backpack. 🇳🇵

Kunda Dixit

DINING

Sunday Jazz Brunch, Enjoy a relaxing Sunday at Hyatt with barbecue and live Jazz music by "Inner Groove" from 12pm to 3.30pm. *Hyatt Regency, Boudha, for bookings call 4491234*

Saturday @ Hyatt, Make your weekend more exciting with family and friends. Enjoy the afternoon with a splash in the pool, relax and sample the sumptuous barbecue brunch. *Hyatt Regency, Boudha, for bookings call 4491234*

Degaa Restro Lounge, for mouth watering Newari cuisines. *Kumaripati(Old Campion Building), 9849136479*

Hankook Sarang, from Bibimbab to Samgyeopsal, Hankook offers a wide range of Korean delicacies at affordable prices. *Thamel (opposite Road house café)*

Jazz Upstairs, the perfect place to chill down with your friends, listen to good music and have a plate of the best momos ever. *Lazimpat*

Tapas Night with Sangria, for the true flavours of Spain indulge in Tapas buffet snacks with a glass of Sangria @ Rs499. *17 June onwards, every Friday 6pm onwards, Splash Bar and Grill, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat*

Arabian Nights, taste the culinary delights from the Middle-East everyFriday at The Cafe from 6.30pm to 10.30pm. *For bookings call Hyatt Regency, Boudha at 4491234.*



Cinnamon Grill Lounge, offers delicious food and good music, added bonus- live performance by Ciney Gurung every Saturday. *Jhamsikhel*

GETAWAYS

Adventure De' Monsoon Mania, a two day fun trip that includes beach games, typical Nepali games Guchha, Chungi, Kabbaddi, drinking competition and live performance by the Saayas band organised by Country Road 4 Hamro Soach in association with Himalayan Enchanter Treks & Expedition. *8 to 9 July, Departure time 6.30am, 9am (rafters), 2pm (non-rafters), Royal Beach Camp*



काम सानो ठुलो भन्ने हुँदैन । पसिनाको कुनै रङ र जात पनि हुँदैन । काम गरेर खान लजाउनु पनि हुँदैन । चोरेर, ढाँटेर, छलेर, लुटेर खान 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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सूचना विभाग

SOMEPLACE ELSE

Not quite *thukpa*, not quite ramen, *phở* (fuh) is a Vietnamese hotpot that has fast become an affordable and reliable fixture in the global kitchen. Luckily, Kathmandu has jumped on the *phở* wagon with the five-month-old Upstairs Café in Maharagunj, where Xiebao Uy and her husband Dol Saru ladle out bowls of the steamy staple. Uy, a Ho Chi Minh native, adds new terms to the city's gastronomical lexicon:

Bánh mì Việt sandwich. Probably the only good that came out of French colonialism in Southeast Asia, the marriage of a crusty baguette with



PICS: MARCO POLLO

UPSTAIRS CAFÉ

slices of roast pork, pickled carrots, julienned cucumbers and sprigs of mint, christened with pâté, is a tasty vestige of Indochine.

Cà phê sữa (đá). Unique to Vietnamese café culture, the coffee concoction is

presented in a filter contraption that slow drips dark roast into a gooey layer of sweetened condensed milk, served iced or hot. Upstairs's rendition could be a few beans stronger.

Chè đậu xanh. Upstairs unfortunately holds back on the rich dessert offerings from Vietnam, but this sweet mung bean coconut

milk soup serves a mellow lining to the tongue-punching cuisine. Other options of crème caramel flan and fruits are toothsome diversions.

Gỏi cuốn. A must order, the summer roll is a handheld appetizer made from rehydrated rice paper stuffed with Vietnamese basil, cooked shrimp, salad and fresh veggies served with a sesame-peanut dipping sauce.

Gỏi hoa chuối. Banana hearts, common in Southeast Asian dishes, are a meat alternative with a texture comparable to the artichoke. A lovechild of the Chinese chicken salad and Malaysian yee sang, the banana flower salad at Upstairs tosses strips of grilled chicken with crispy vegetables and steamed banana hearts drizzled with a sweet and tangy dressing.

Phở. The quintessential Vietnamese meal, *phở* consists of rice noodles, lime, bean sprouts and basil or mint churned in a clear consommé. Upstairs offers beef, chicken and vegetarian *phở*, but trumps with its duck special.

Sườn heo rim. A house specialty, the caramelised pork ribs make Upstairs worthy of a weekly standard dine out. Marco Pollo

Head 100 meters north from the US Embassy, turn right into the first alley and climb Upstairs.

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



E coli alert



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

The authorities dealing with the recent E coli bacterial outbreak in Germany could have drawn lessons from travel medicine literature. E Coli and other bacteria like shigella, campylobacter, and salmonella are a constant source of problem for tourists and expatriates in developing countries. (The native population is also affected and suffer severe gastroenteritis, but locals probably require a more sizeable dose of the organism to fall prey.)

Halogen compounds like iodine and chlorine tablets are useful companions of tourists in the developing world. In Germany, even as the hunt was on to find the source of the E coli outbreak, an effective means to deal with the problem would have

been to tell the German public at large to soak all salad for at least 20 minutes in iodine or chlorine solution. This procedure would have killed the E coli and inhibited the outbreak.

In Nepal we tell people who wish to eat salads to buy a small bottle of 5 % Lugol's iodine (locally available) and to put 6 to



8 drops of this in 1 l of water and soak the raw vegetables in this solution with a bit of stirring and allow it to remain in contact for 20 minutes to kill the pathogens (except probably

cyclospora, a seasonal cause of diarrhea in expatriates). Chlorine tablets can also be used, but potash (potassium permanganate) is not effective and causes teeth staining. Washing the salad with just bottled or boiled water is unhelpful because a germicidal activity is necessary.

An important point on water purification (which is unrelated to cleaning salad) is that all pathogens are killed as soon as the water starts boiling. For good measure you can let the water boil for one minute, but there is absolutely no need to boil the water for 10 or more minutes even at high altitude where the barometric pressure is lower and water boils more promptly.

Finally, a sobering thought: there must be many infectious disease outbreaks we never hear of in countries like Nepal because of lack of surveillance and detection. The Health Ministry and related INGOs need to strive for better documentation so that effective plans can be made. But for now Germany can certainly use a page from available travel medicine literature. 🇳🇵



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

This satellite radar composite image taken on Thursday morning shows that the monsoonal trough that brought us heavy rains earlier this week has veered off to central India. A relative region of high pressure has prevailed over central Nepal, which is why it seems like the monsoon has taken a breather. This dry interval is expected to continue until the next southwest monsoon pulse, currently over Bangladesh, arrives here next week. Till then expect sweltering days with light night rain. The high humidity will make it feel much hotter.



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



BIKRAM RAI

HUAN YING: The newly appointed Ambassador of China to Nepal Yang Houlan presented his creddeentials to President Ram Baran Yadav at Shital Niwas on Monday.



KRISHNA SINJALI

HEAD COUNT: Census enumerator Bhumi Lal Rajbanshi questions Sanju Lal Meche, a resident of Mechi Nagar, Jhapa, on Monday for the 11th National Census 2011. Over 46,000 enumerators have been deployed nationwide for the purpose.



BIKRAM RAI

IRON GATE: Students stand outside the Exam Controller's Office in Sano Thimi, Bhaktapur, on Monday, awaiting announcement of results of the SLC examination. This year, 55.5 per cent of the examinees were able to clear the examination.

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Last Friday, after participating in a literary event in the starched environs of the the Nepal Bharat Library in New Road, I made my way to a Jhamel bookshop only to find the space below it crammed with those present for the opening of an art exhibition by Ragini Upadhyay. After once more confirming that had I the time, I'd love to spend a year held hostage in this particular bookshop, I ran across to Yala Maya Kendra, where Bhaskar Dhungana was previewing his short movies. The rain began, relentless, but could not prevent us from stumbling through running streets and dripping eaves to finally arrive at a Newari *bhoj* in Chyasal, that warren to the east of Mangal Bajar.

I was bemused (and entertained) by the range of events on offer that weekend. Doubtless, people across the Valley were congregating in other galleries, bars, restaurants, cinema halls, malls and public spaces, the totality of their experiences making for a panorama of what you can do in Kathmandu on any given day. These



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

More is less?

Gone are the days when renting a video was the in thing – launches, galleries, restaurants, bars, malls and cinema halls compete for your time and money today

days, things have moved on somewhat from the time arented VHS tape from Suwal was occasion for the entire joint family to sprawl across straw mats and while away a Saturday, and even that would have represented an advance on your generic Kakani *banbhoj*, or picnic. As I've noted before in this space, the world has come to Nepal, and Nepal is making its own world at least as far as culture – high and low – is concerned.

But is our latterday

cornucopia of consumption really so much of an advance? Far be it from me to bemoan all the choices available to one, but what is the opportunity cost involved in choosing how to spend one's time (and money)?

It's not only a matter of choosing between a book launch, an art exhibition, a movie. It could be between the above and a get together with friends, getting on with that hobby (which one?), and a good old-fashioned *dalbhat* with family. Too

often, the more conventional timepasses are passed on in the name of keeping abreast with what's new.

Does this mean less of the old? Inevitably. Our mental architecture is as clogged as the Kathmandu Valley. But just as we must provide for parks and public spaces where the old can breathe with the young, we must carve out – and the violence of that expression is exactly what is intended – space within our busy lives to accommodate what we

value from the past. Either something has to be given up, or something will give, by which time it is usually too late to go back. That field where you played seven-stone as a child will be gone, and your parents whom you don't have the time for will be gone, and in your incessant bustling about in a future-oriented present, all you'll have of the past will be a few photos someone else has uploaded onto Facebook.

In the brave new world of Nepal, every activity is geared towards achievement, making a difference (for oneself), or partaking of something worthwhile. Perhaps we can't all be renaissance men (and women). Perhaps there is some worth in spending the day playing cards after all. If you still remember how to do that.

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Pizza Hut

What are you celebrating today?



The spine of a ridge at 4,100 is where many of the harvesters fall prey to altitude sickness.

Yarsagumpa picking season is also a time for young men and women (like these two from Rukum) from all over mid-western Nepal to meet up and find their partners.

Standing room only on narrow sections of the trail with mules, men and women all carrying enough food and fuel to last them for two months on the high valley.





ALL PICS: DIPENDRA BHANDARI



Mothers fix a net around their dokos so their babies don't fall out.



The high camp at Pupal valley



YARSA-LAND

DIPENDRA BHANDARI in RUKUM

Jagraj Pun (*pictured below*), 38, took a long breath, prayed to his ancestors and pitched his tent on the banks of the icy cold stream. His wife held their two-year-old son and heat up the raksi jar. This is going to be their home for the next two months, and the family is getting comfortable after a long trek.

Here, in upper Rukum, it is the picking season for yarsagumba, the Himalayan caterpillar-fungus that is worth its weight in gold in China for its supposed aphrodisiac properties. Chinese medicine's demand for this creature is generating income for hundreds of thousands impoverished Nepali villagers from Humla to Gorkha.

Just on this one valley alone, there are 7,000 people, some of whom have trekked two weeks, from various parts of mid-western Nepal. The pickers each pay Rs 1,000 to a committee that organises the harvesting every season and provides security from armed robbers who prey on pickers.

Many like Jagraj have come with their families, entire villages in mid-western Nepal are padlocked during the yarsagumba picking season. The trail is steep and made more difficult by the sheer numbers of people.

At their destination in Pupal Valley, the official yarsagumba picking is declared by opening a gun shot, and suddenly thousands of people fan out like ants up the grassy

slopes. It is strictly 'first come first gets' because yarsa harvests decline steadily in the two months that the pickers are here.

On the first day itself Dharmajit Pun of Pelma in Tukum found 45 caterpillars, a family of six found 30, Nainkala of Thabi in Rolpa found only one, and 19-year-old Hiramati of Ranma in Rukum hadn't found a single caterpillar even by the end of the second day.

Yarsagumba from Rukum and Dolpo are big and bright yellow and fetch the best prices. One kg of yarsgumba is worth Rs 30,000 here, but is Rs 100,000 in Kathmandu and US \$8,000 by the time it gets to Shanghai. Yarsagumba worth Rs 1.4 million in Kathmandu was harvested here last year from this valley alone. An average family of four can earn up to Rs 140,000 in the two months they spend up here, but they have to spend about a quarter of that in food.

Old-timers say yarsagumba harvests are declining and there will come a time soon when the caterpillar-fungus and butterflies that they metamorphose from will be extinct in these mountains. 🇳🇵

Nepal's new cash crop is a caterpillar and provides a living for hundreds of thousands

nepalitimes.com
Gold rush in Dolpo, #151
Potent insurgency, #252



Jagraj Pun with his wife and son of Yamakhar in Rukum arrive at the harvesting site after five days of walking, others trek for two weeks from as far away as Rolpa.



SLC of PLA



BIKRAM RAI

Netra Panthi in *Naya Patrika*, 23 June

नयाँ पत्रिका

The PLA’s company commander Dil Bahadur Rokaya passed his SLC exam in first division. He was in grade nine when he joined the insurgency eight years ago. “I am happy. I want

to pursue higher studies,” he said. This year, 270 Maoist fighters passed SLC examination out of 380 examinees from Fourth Division. Why did so many Maoist fighters give the SLC exam? Some said they wanted to continue their education and some said to earn a

degree, but most of them said they wanted to make use of their time in the cantonment. According to Brigade Commander Saral Sahayatri, the PLA fighters decided to use their time productively after they were sent to cantonments when the peace accord was signed. He had made arrangements for tuition and other facilities for the PLA fighters within the cantonment from last year. He said those who passed the SLC exam last year will pursue higher studies now. The PLA spokesperson Baldev says educational qualifications could be one factor to qualify the combatants in integration. Even Maoist CA members took exams under the program. CA member Gita Thagunna cleared SLC this year. However, rumour has it that some PLA fighters passed the exam without even appearing for it.

Mid-year review

Editorial in *Karobar*, 20 June

कारोबार

The Nepal Tourism Year 2011, which started with the ambitious aim of bringing in one million tourists, is half way through. Yet, we do not seem close to achieving our targets. The five-star hotels are not satisfied with the room occupancy, the locals who invested in home stays are now skeptical about it, and tourism festivals do not look very encouraging. It is time for us to now evaluate our shortcomings in promoting Nepal internationally. Perhaps we announced the tourism year too soon, without considering the support system required for it. Not enough effort was put in to develop the required infrastructure and little work that had been started was stalled because of the delayed budget. Yes, the budget was delayed, but the Tourism Year Secretariat and the Tourism Board cannot pass the blame on budget delay The truth is both the government and the private sector have failed in promoting the tourism year. Distributing few brochures and posters is not enough to change the perception of Nepal internationally. Little has been done to attract internal tourists. The politicians too have forgotten their promise of not calling any bandas during 2011. They have conveniently deployed their sister-organisations to call strikes, even against the arrest of a criminal. The best thing to do would be to evaluate tourism year and develop a new strategy for a half-year success.

DFID Department for International Development
Leading the british Government fight against world poverty



DFID, the Department for International Development, is the part of the UK Government that manages UK aid to poor countries. Our work is focused on achieving the Millennium Development Goals – the United Nations targets for fighting poverty that must be met by 2015. We work with the governments of poor countries, charities, and international organisations to find lasting solutions to the global problem of poverty. DFID Nepal is responsible for managing the British Government’s contribution to development in Nepal, set out in our new country business plan 2009-2012.

DFID Nepal is a fast moving environment that prides itself on being responsive to new opportunities. DFID Nepal is looking for **one** adviser – **Nepal National Public Financial Management Adviser** - to enhance its workforce. He/she must have the enthusiasm and authority to build relations with, and influence, senior government officials, the private sector, civil society and donor partners to help address fundamental issues that hamper Nepal’s growth and the ability of poor people to lift themselves out of poverty.

Essential Skills and Qualifications

- ♦ A Masters degree in a relevant subject area, e.g. accountancy, financial management, public administration, business administration or a related field.
- ♦ At least 5 years experience working in financial management, including audit, procurement and financial information systems, with an emphasis on the public sector.
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- ♦ Understanding of the public expenditure cycle, including how countries formulate budget priorities, allocate scarce public resources, and the political economy of budgets.
- ♦ Understanding of financial accountability mechanisms including: government accounting officers, internal audit departments, supreme audit institutions, parliamentary accounts committees, and informal institutions that help citizens to participate in budget processes.
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You can download the application form, diversity questionnaire and job description from <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/recruitment/> and send the completed forms to recruitment-nepal@dfid.gov.uk. Only completed applications made on the prescribed application form and diversity questionnaire will be considered. If you are unable to access the forms please contact recruitment-nepal@dfid.gov.uk. Telephone enquiries after the deadline of the application will not be entertained.

Closing date for applications is Sunday, 10th July 2011.



Foreign

Editorial in *Rajdhani*
Antarastriya, Doha

राजधानी

For some time now, there is growing public perception that interference by foreign governments in Nepal has become more intense. The reasons could be many: the disunity among the political parties, the growing balance of payments gap, the burgeoning petroleum import bill or cross-border crime. In most of these areas, Nepal’s rulers are not clued in, they are apathetic while foreign governments are stepping in to fill the vacuum. The question arises, does Nepal even have a foreign policy? Traditionally, foreign policy is the policy of the party in power at any given time. But because there is a balance of power between the left and non-left parties, foreign policy is ad hoc, and not in the overall long-term national interest. A country that is geo-

Will the Maoists split?

Sudheer Sharma in *Kantipur*, 18 June

क्रान्तिपुर

The top three leaders of the Maoists who appeared together on the stage in Rautahat last week announced the party would not split. In a two-hour long program, the leaders were seen avoiding talking to each other.

The split is now manifested vertically down to the cadre level who mock of rival leaders openly by name. The leaders are all holding separate meetings of their supporters, publishing separate newspapers and magazines, forming parallel committees. It is as if the party has virtually split already.

Many argue that this is just a strategy. But given the party's internal disarray in recent times, one can easily conclude that this is not to distract the other parties. It might have helped their bargaining position with the NC on the number of PLA to be integrated and their facilities,



BIKRAM RAI

but the rift has landed the Maoists in serious trouble.

There are two facets of the Maoists internal conflict, one is the disagreement over whether to go for peace/constitution or revolt. The other is the party's standpoint vis-à-vis India.

The Kiran Baidya faction believes there is no alternative to revolt, a fight

for national independency against Indian hegemony. The Baburam Bhattarai faction favours peace and constitution and believes Nepal's unequal relations with India have to be sorted out diplomatically, instead of irritating India now.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal's stance on the issue of peace and constitution is similar to that of Bhattarai but

it varies on India, where his line is closer to Baidya's. The strategy of this faction is to bring together all anti-Indian political forces, and the Khanal-led coalition was conceived as preliminary model.

If it is to avoid a split, the Maoist party now has three alternatives:

First: compromise saying the party split will not benefit anyone

Second: collate opinion of their cadres on three separate political documents, which they adopted in 2004/05

Third: call a national convention

If none of the above work, the Maoists will split. This is nothing new in the Nepali communist movement, but the Maoists remained undivided despite differences over the years. If the Maoists internal disputes are not resolved, this will not only affect the peace process but also have political impact on the national level.



BILASH RAI

relations

strategically located and neutral in its dealings must have a foreign policy that reflects this. But Nepal is also a developing country, and it needs a foreign policy that reflects this reality. There needs to be continuity in this policy so the country benefits from economic and political diplomacy.

Some parties are beginning to call for a long-term vision and strategy for our foreign policy. But what should be the nature of this policy? This needs to be the subject of public debate. Surely, one of the main points is that foreign policy should not be buffeted by which party is in power, foreign interference should not determine the outcome of domestic political negotiations on leadership. For this, the parties, the CA and parliament should immediately working on a plan to reduce foreign interference.



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Work permits for the Gulag Archipelago

It looks like the implied threat from donor governments in Kathmandu that any party organising bunds will be denied funding and/or visas is already doing the trick. Last week, the **Youthful Force** had announced a bund against a government lead by its own mother party to protest the arrest of their leader for beating up a journalist. It was mysteriously and immediately withdrawn because top leaders of the UML youth wing suddenly realised they'd never be able to overstay their visas in the land of the free and the home of the braves. More ideas for visa deterrence and rewards to finally fix this country:

- Feuding sports council officials will not get British visas for the Olympics
- CA members accused of VAT fraud will be on a Schengen shitlist
- Those making illegal U-turns on Putali Sadak will not be eligible for DV lottery
- YCL and YF members beating up journalists won't even be allowed into Bihar
- Baddie extortionists get visa to enter the Stalinist paradise of DPRK, but no exit visa

- CA members selling red passports cannot have Indian ration cards
- Relatives of tiger poachers will not get student visas for Australia (tigers and rhinos can travel without visas to Melbourne Zoo)
- Ministers who are ex-war criminals will get a visa waiver and an all-expenses paid trip to The Hague
- Owners of illegal quarries will get expedited work permits for the Gulag Archipelago
- Those caught stealing electricity will have their request for political asylum in Belgium rejected
- Corrupt NOC and NAC officials and their political bosses will be on the B1 visa watchlist

Must admire the hon'ble prime minister for going about his duties as if he doesn't have a care in the world. One month into the three-month extension of the constitution deadline, he has very conveniently forgotten to step down as promised in the 5-pt agreement, the peace processer is sputtering, the budget is uncertain. Yet, JN has all the time in the world to lay the foundation stones, unveil statues, declare Nepal



landmine-free and declare Kaski open defecation-free. No wonder PKD wants his job so badly. To Whom It May Concern: henceforth pls invite Upadro Yadav for ribbon cuttings, he hasn't got much to do except dash off periodically to Lithuania and Ulan Batar.

And now it's time for our weekly update on the intra-Maoist feud. Despite the show of unity in Rautahat last week, the body language of the Top Three stone-faced leaders was revealing. And how come they arrived in Gaur in two different helicopters from Kathmandu? Either the party is rolling in dough, or the leaders all have their own independent source of funds.

PKD had postponed the party's central committee meeting again to buy time to mollify Mohan ("Bad Hair Day") Baidya by inviting him to the Pistachio Palace for a tete-e-tete. But it did not go as planned: Kiran immediately brought up The List of the Chairman's 18 Deviations. Why are you going around meeting phoren intelligence handlers without telling us? You have developed a dangerous personality cult. You are a revisionist of the worst kind. You have belittled the sacrifice of the brave martyrs and of the fighters in the cantonments. You have planted spies in my camp. Awesome tried to turn on his charm, but to no avail. Meanwhile, Deb

Kamred and CP Kamred have also raked up history from 20 years ago to prove that PKD has never been sincere towards the revolution and flirted too easily with the Injuns. The Ass' prediction is that the Chairman is going to take another retreat one of these days to Sukute to get sloshed.

Baddie students of the Cranti-Curry persuasion have been warning senior leaders not to exhibit bourgeois tendencies by enrolling their kids in private schools, but this hasn't stopped them from doing exactly that. And now that Awesome's grand-dotter is becoming a Xavierite, can others be far behind? Another Baddie scion, Comrade Atom, has refused to go back to the cantonment where he is sub-commandante and has instead ensconced himself as Daddy's PA in the Home Ministry.





उज्यालो 90 नेटवर्कमा आर्थिक खबर हरेक दिन बिहान ७:०० बजे

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