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BIKRAM RAI

## New time frame

Half way through the extended CA term, the peace process and constitution drafting is being delayed by a seemingly intractable intra-party feud within the Maoists.

Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who had been grappling with other parties ever since he resigned as prime minister in May 2009, now has to deal with intense pressure from within his party. There is a three-way personality clash within the Maoists, and a feeling that Dahal has wielded too much power for too long. The goal of cutting Dahal down to size has made Baburam Bhattarai and Mohan Baidya unlikely allies.

The Bhattarai-Baidya alliance threatens to unseat Dahal from parliamentary party leadership. Currently, Dahal is the party Chairman, parliamentary party leader,

organisational head as well as the commander of the PLA. The central committee meeting has been put off for nearly three weeks now, and Dahal loyalists still command a majority in the central committee.

Ram Karki, who is close to Bhattarai, says the real rift is over party structure, not ideology. "This is the largest party, so if the problems persist it will ultimately have repercussions for the peace process," he says.

Dahal's detractors want devolution of the chairman's power, and have also been critical of corruption and the extravagant lifestyle of the party leadership. Dahal is squeezed by the opposition piling pressure for integration of ex-fighters on the one hand, and by his own rank and file on the other.

The NC and the UML, for

their part, feel the Maoists are trying to dictate terms on the numbers of fighters to be integrated into the Nepal Army. "Although, we have agreed to consider relaxing age limit, educational qualification and entry of married women combatants, there can be no compromise on the physical eligibility criteria set by the Nepal Army," the UML's Pradeep Gyawali told us.

The NC's Arjun Narasingh KC says: "The Maoists have

a split personality; there is a big gap between their public statements and their actions." He has counted the number of times the Maoists have committed to return seized property (18) and to disband the YCL (12). Says KC: "They just don't walk the talk."

Caught between the intra-party dispute and an interrupted peace process, the ball is now in Dahal's court. He has an enormous responsibility, not only to bring together a bitterly divided party but also to end the political stalemate that threatens a constitutional void in August. 

Anurag Acharya

### Electricity, or rafting?



Nepal's need to generate hydropower must not destroy the potential of its rivers for adventure tourism. We need to find a fine balance.

p12-13

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THE NEXT MOVE

After the Maoists emerged as the largest party in the April 2008 elections, a garlanded and vermilioned Maoist chairman spoke to the media at the BICC. “This is not just a victory for our party,” Pushpa Kamal Dahal said, “it is a victory for the Nepali people and it is a victory for peace.”

That was when many thought Prachanda had made the final transformation in his metamorphosis to Pushpa Kamal Dahal. It was a magnanimous speech, Mandelaesque in its message and tone. As it turned out, Prime Minister Dahal instead of being a leader of all Nepalis, became just another party apartchik riding the personality cult of Prachanda Path. As time wore on, he turned into a tragic figure who had lost the trust of the other parties, Kathmandu’s diplomatic corps (even those who hung to his every word), the governments of our two great neighbours, and also the most trusted allies within his own party.

Prachanda has no one to blame but himself. His chronic contradictions, compulsive lying, his deviousness and too-clever-by-half attitude finally did him in. All the wheeling-dealing, sneaking off to Bangkok and Singapore, exposed his naked ambition to get back to power by hook or by crook, and the nation be damned. He squandered his formidable power of oratory on petty name-calling, and threats. He never realised that after becoming victorious in the ballot he no longer needed to resort to the bullet.

It is still premature to write Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s political obituary. In the past 20 years of being the supreme leader of his party, he has used his in-born craftiness to wriggle out of tight spots. He can still play the various factions off against each other, as he did by surprisingly proposing



his rival and deputy, Baburam Bhattarai, as prime minister last week.

His other rival, Mohan Baidya is a serial splittist. Back in 1985 he did exactly what he is doing now to Dahal, when he launched a vitriolic attack on Mohan Bikram Singh accusing him of “anarchist

individualism and rightist opportunism”. But with his college mate Ram Bahadur Thapa and alter ego Narayan Kaji Shrestha both flirting with the opposition this week, Dahal’s position as head of party is suddenly much shakier.

All this wouldn’t have mattered much if the country wasn’t in such a fragile state and the peace process wasn’t so precarious. The nasty infighting within the Maoists adds another layer of complications in finding compromises on demobilisation of the cantonments and acceptable clauses in the new constitution. With his mentors at each other’s throats Prime Minister Khanal seems to have forgotten all about the five-point agreement that he had promised to step down to make way for a unity government. And with these distractions, it isn’t a surprise that the new budget is a wishy-washy, populist one designed to distribute cash to cronies.

the churning within the Maoists also indicates a necessary democratisation of a former underground party that waged war. The three-way rift should be easy to fix because it isn’t ideological but a multiple personality clash between comrades and disaffection with Dahal’s penchant to go it alone. (Proof of this is the unnatural and opportunistic alliance between Bhattarai and Baidya.)

At press time it looked like Dahal loyalists still commanded a majority in the central committee, but the Chairman should still take this as his cue to divest power. The party could then keep the eye on the ball and get on with proposing a candidate who can lead a national unity government, unblock integration once and for all, and help finalise a framework constitution by August-end.

ON THE WEB  
www.nepalitimes.com

HEALTHY MAJORITY

Excellent editorial (‘A healthy majority’, Editorial, #561). Rural health workers and doctors deserve praise for whatever Nepal has achieved in improving its health status in the last decade. There is no lack of committed, honest and hard working people in this country. If only the politics was not so bad, imagine what this country could have achieved.

RM

● Thanks for this well written and considered editorial, and also for the focus on rural health in this issue. ‘Poor health care in Nepal is not a medical problem, it is a political one.’ How very true!

Kiran

● Health may be a political problem, but it is also a social one. The medical profession has degraded into commercialism, and we invest on education based on that principle. Three decades ago, a very well known doctor was heavily criticised for making a statement that he entered medical field to make money. Today, it is taken as granted. When doctors forget their Hypocratic Oath what would you expect?

Kamal Kishor

● Beautiful front page picture (‘healthy progress’, #561), and a positive report. Thank you.

R Rai

● Birkha Dai for Prime Minister, or at least Health Minister (‘Birkha Dai’s clinic’, Abhaya Shrestha, #561).

Joongay

● Abhaya Shrestha’s article shows very clearly why HELP NEPAL Network: One Dollar A Month Fund for Nepal needs continued support from Nepalis around the world. HeNN is especially grateful to Everest Marathon Fund in the UK which has consistently supported the Mugu Health Post through HeNN.

Rabindra Mishra

● Yes, there are still some Birkha Dais in remote areas of Nepal. All the so-called doctors and others are just hanging around for their own selfish interests. Thank you for sharing this story.

Bishnu Khadka

● Thanks to Dambar Shrestha for such an interesting and uplifting story about how much a difference training young midwives makes for the health of poor Nepalese people (‘No home delivery’, #561). Much more, it seems than sending a doctor to a private medical school after paying Rs 25 lakhs in donation. Greed, selfishness, mismanagement, lack of compassion, these are the reasons why other hospitals are either way too expensive or so badly managed that even the poor won’t go there.

KiranL

● True indeed, Dhulikhel hospital is the best. If other hospitals in Nepal decreased

their profit by 50 per cent, we could see a new Nepal with better health care. It is frustrating to see a hospital in Chitwan which provides free treatment to Maoists and rich people and rip off poor.

Niraj

● I wish Dhulikhel Hospital will continue its tradition, commitment, enthusiasm.

RK

● Nepal needs doctors like Ram Makaju Shrestha to implement what one preaches. I am impressed with his motivation, dedication and results.

Dr Ranjeet Baral

INDIA’S NEIGHBOURHOOD

If decimating the LTTE was good then why did India nurture and support them in the first place (‘India and the ‘hood’, Jyoti Malhotra, #561)?

Jange

● Mr Manmohan Singh should solve his own domestic problems: why he is not tackling the issues of wide-spread systemic corruption, mismanagement, and violation of basic human rights? More than 400 million are still living in dire poverty in India. Is India not equally, if not more, responsible for the destabilisation of the neighborhood? The introduction of nuclear bombs in otherwise peaceful South Asia, growing Hindu fundamentalism and religious intolerance, and India’s covert support to the Tamil LTTE leading to the prolongation of the civil war in Sri Lanka for decades, an

ongoing interference in the internal political affairs of Nepal hindering the crafting of a new constitution, long-standing territorial disputes with her neighbors and frequent encroachment of international borders, and, an on-going historical animosity towards the nation of Pakistan. The laundry list goes on and on. The Indian leadership must get rid of its inherited colonial mindset and learn to be more open, sensitive and pragmatic to the needs of other nations. It must develop a culture of listening rather than bullying.

Anonymous

ASS

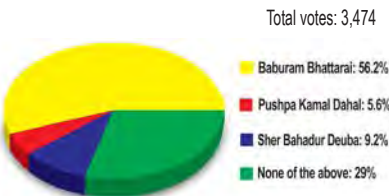
Thank god there is an Ass (‘Shahi Nepal Bayuseba Nigum’, Ass, #561). Love the Bhairav’s grin, or is it a grimace?

Anil



Weekly Internet Poll # 562

Q. Who should lead a national consensus government?



Weekly Internet Poll # 563. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Are you satisfied by the budget presented by the government?



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# The clock is ticking

The Maoists have less than two months to resolve their internal rift and restart the peace process



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

The last four weeks have not been encouraging for those of us watching talking heads on the evening news, or reading a rehash of headlines every morning.

The special committee has not been able to meet for the last three weeks, the rhetorical war among the senior leaders is getting vicious. The power struggle between and within parties is reaching a climax.

The media gives the impression that things are pretty messed up. But look at it this way: there is an undeclared democratic movement going on within the largest party that not too long ago was waging a war against the state.

A senior Maoist leader, asked if his party was headed for a split, put it this way: "What happened to the country in April 2006, is now happening within the UCPN (Maoist)."

It is tempting to oversimplify the rift within the Maoists. There are clear differences among the top leaders on several issues, but they all understand the strength of a united struggle. This is something the Congress, UML or the Madhesi parties could never do. The Maoist party is going about its internal disagreements in a slightly more mature manner.

The present rift may have come at the worst possible time, taking the focus off the peace process. But it is in the larger interest of the polity that the biggest party in the country comes unified and clear to the table. The opposition's trust deficit



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

towards the Maoists is to an extent fuelled by the fact that they are never sure if the comrades they are negotiating with reflect the official position within the party.

And now, the Maoist Chairman has lost the trust both within and outside the party at a time when he needs it the most. This is not a happy scenario for him, nor to his party. And for the country it means continued instability and statelessness.

It is a mess Pushpa Kamal Dahal is responsible for creating, and he better clean it up if he wants to regain his credibility. He has to overcome his persecution complex and stop behaving as if the entire world is against him. He can start by regaining trust of his deputies. A party that has committed itself to democratic politics must first address the democratic deficit within itself. Wartime bureaucratic centralism must evolve to allow devolution of responsibility and power.

Then Dahal has to face the other parties at the negotiation table. Gone are the days he could fool

people with his legendary persuasiveness. The opposition has heard enough promises, they want to see action. Anything less will stall the peace process and raise questions about the party's commitment to a new constitution.

It is true that the peace

process cannot be reduced just to the issue of integration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants. The absence of violence in the material sense is not peace, it is organically linked with ensuring justice and freedom in the new constitution. So, the drafting of an inclusive

constitution is very much a part of the peace process. Procedurally, however, the integration and rehabilitation of the combatants does not have to wait for the constitution.

The technical nitty-gritty of integration seems to be the least of the problems. The issue is trust, or the lack thereof. The Maoists have to trust that the public support behind them is more influential and reliable than the weapons they have stashed away. The quicker they jettison their guns, the more public support will they earn.

Mohan Baidya & Co, especially, have to understand this because (true or not) they are the ones slotted as "hardliners" and the onus is on them to clarify this within and outside the party. The clock is ticking, and the Maoists have less than two months to resolve their internal dispute and restart the sputtering peace process. ■

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# “Indifferent, politicised leadership makes development difficult”

**Nepali Times:** Looking back on the past three years of your tenure here, would you say the politics has got in the way of development?

**Sarah Sanyahumbi:** Clearly a government which is primarily occupied with politics has little time for development and that means, sadly, that there has been little leadership or support for development in the time that I've been here. I take my hat off to the dedicated government officials who are trying against the odds to deliver services and improve poor people's lives, but with an at best indifferent and at worst increasingly politicised leadership this is more and more difficult.

**And yet DFID has raised its disbursement in Nepal.**

DFID is used to working in challenging countries. Whatever the political situation, the fact remains that over 55 per cent of people in Nepal live on less than \$1.25 a day and face huge hardships. In the next four years we will provide over 500 km more roads, 230,000 jobs and provide 110,000 safe latrines. We will also work with the government to improve the provision of health and education and to reduce people's vulnerability to disasters. We estimate that we can lift approximately 570,000 people out of poverty, make their lives

Sarah Sanyahumbi is leaving Kathmandu this week after heading the Department of International Development (DFID) office in Nepal since 2009. She spoke to Nepali Times about the rewards and challenges of being the largest donor agency in Nepal.



KUNDA DIXIT

better and give them more hope for the future. That's really what it's all about.

**Which segment of DFID's area of activity would you say has achieved most bang for the buck, as it were?**

You can't really compare like with like. Our experience with our Livelihoods and Forestry program, for example, shows that we have lifted people out of poverty for a cost of around £35 per person. That's fantastic value for money, but it wouldn't make sense to do just forestry in Nepal. We deliberately have a broad program so that we can tackle different aspects of poverty, which are all inter-related. There is no point in providing health care or education if people can't get to it because there is no road, or they are too weak through

malnutrition, or because the children have to work to earn money. So we have to work on all these issues together to really make a difference.

**There has been criticism that donor money has gone to fund quasi-political groups espousing violence?**

We absolutely do not! Despite very good experience with NEFIN over a number of years, once its activities became more political earlier this year and the leadership called a number of bandhs, which clearly use violence to enforce them, we stopped our funding. This was a difficult decision as the organisation has achieved a lot of good, particularly at the local level, over the past few years.

**Where would you say the main challenges lie for your**

**successor and for other donors in Nepal in the next five years?**

Lots of challenges, but I'd single out two. Firstly, dealing with corruption. DFID has a zero tolerance policy to corruption, so this means we investigate every single allegation of corruption we receive. This takes time and money and means we have to be very careful who we fund and how. We have one full time member of staff who spends 75 percent of his time outside Kathmandu following up with programs and partners, making sure our money is being well spent, and investigating any such reports of corruption or mismanagement.

Secondly, safeguarding the amount of funding we put through government systems will be difficult. We fund

the government's health and education programs, LGCDP and the Nepal Peace Trust Fund through government systems. But weak financial systems, political interference and a lack of interest in development on the part of the political parties makes it increasingly difficult to justify to our headquarters at home that this is the best use of our funds. The rationale behind funding through government, as well as increasing government ownership, is that it improves government systems, galvanises reform and ultimately improves service delivery. If we can't clearly see that happening, then our Ministers and the UK public will be right to ask if it's worth the increased risk and additional cost of doing so.

**You are going on to Malawi from here, how do you think Nepal will compare?**

Nepal has huge potential in hydropower, its position between India and China, it has tourism. It just needs the political will to exploit these advantages. Used correctly this could make a massive difference to poverty in Nepal. The private sector is trying, and so are some international donors, but it is almost criminal that Nepal's huge potential is not being used. There are countries like Malawi which would be very envious of the kind of resources that Nepal has.

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# The Nepali dream

I am the perfect example of someone who will never return to Nepal, but I will



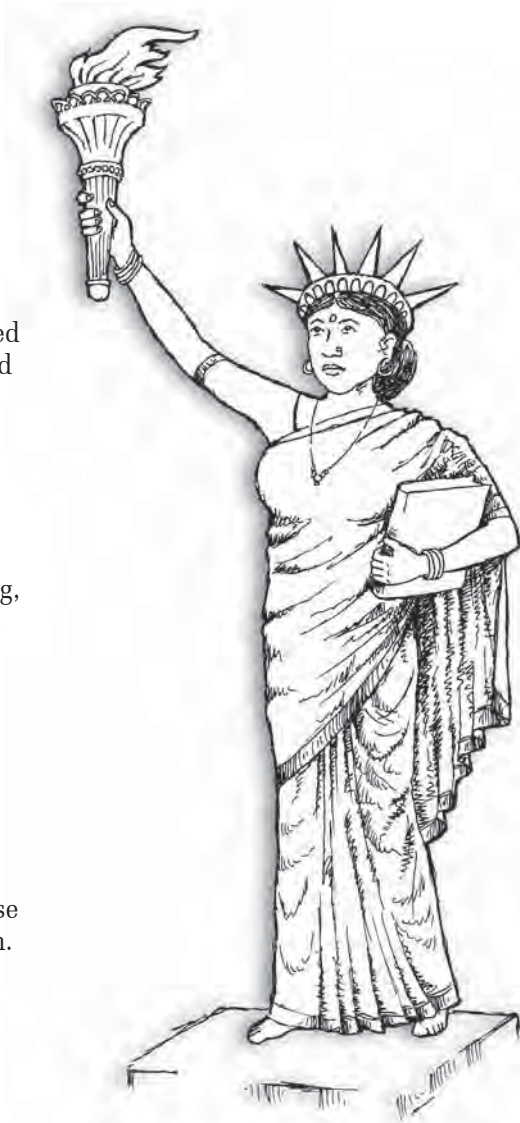
NEPALIPAN

Surabhi Raj Bhandari

I left home at 16. By the time I graduate in 2014, I will have lived in America for six years. It would seem only natural for me to work and live in the US after that. Yet, somehow, the idea of living away from Nepal never appealed to me.

There are entire institutions at my college dedicated to helping international students in networking, internships, resume building, mock interviews and job searches. They offer brochures of life in LA, San Francisco, Miami, DC, New York and I have often pictured myself as a working woman on Wall Street after graduation. Maybe a year or two at Morgan Stanley then on to a private equity firm, a future CEO who will one day live in a penthouse in Manhattan: The American Dream. It's a dream that I've been told should be mine, and many people around me have assumed it should be theirs too. It's tempting, but it is not my dream. My ideal future is one closer to home, closer to my reality. Let's call it the 'Nepali Dream'.

Keeping in touch with what is happening in Nepal while in the US fuels my Nepali Dream. My daily dosage of nepalnews.com punctuates never-ending papers and college classes, and reminds me that Nepal doesn't cease to exist while I am abroad. The happenings back home



are reflected in headlines, all of which shout 'opportunity'. Somehow, I see light in every seemingly negative article as they suggest the need for change and a solution.

Problems outnumber solutions, but luckily we have a new generation of educated and driven Nepalis both abroad and at home who can help solve them. We are a generation

fueled by revolution, one that has seen 20 years of change. We are a part of this movement and it is our collective responsibility to keep the ball rolling.

Opportunities for change exist at both the local and national level. Coming back to Nepal this summer, I have had the opportunity to work at an INGO in Kathmandu where the majority of staff are also Nepalis who studied abroad and have returned. I see the difference that can be made, and is being made.

There is a niche for anyone and everyone in the social, political and economic milieu around us. There is so much to be done, but not enough of the right people to do it. Returning, one can become a pioneer, making a big difference to society and to oneself. This is a path reserved only to those risk-takers who are willing to face and defeat technical, political and structural hurdles along the way. Nevertheless, there is something valuable on this difficult road: home. It is everything that defines me: my family, my friends, my home, my food, my culture, my religion and everything else that comes with the privilege of being able to live and work among your own people.

Coming home should not be an obligation or burden. The choice of returning is individual, and it should be driven by the Nepaliess in us. If you do come back, it is bound to be a win-win situation for you and for Nepal. Many my age may dream of a one way ticket out, but my return tickets home are already booked. 🇳🇵

## BIZ BRIEFS

### Mobile wallet



Kist Bank started Kist Mobile Wallet scheme which allows consumers to transfer and enquire about their balance and order cheque book, statement and other facilities. In its first phase, the service will be available for Nepal Telecom mobile users.

### Everest expands

Everest Bank opened new branches in Hetauda and Gorkha. The bank has a network of 43 branches, 43 ATMs and 19 extensions.

### Scratch and win



Samsung introduced Samsung Ek Size Thulo campaign, whereby customers buying a digital still camera can win a higher model through a scratch coupon. In case a higher model is not available, the customer receives 25 per cent discount.

### Micro cars

Lotus Global International launched two models of micro cars - Micro MX 7 Sedan car and Micro MPV Junior III van during its showroom opening at Uttardhoka, Lazimpat. MX 7 meets the Euro II safety standard and Euro III level on emission and MPV junior III meets Euro II emission standard.

### Contract signed

Commerz and Trust Bank Nepal has signed a contract with PricewaterhouseCoopers for usage of Business Process Management Solution software. The software will help the bank implement its paperless environment policy.

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# DISQUALIFIED

Discharged Maoist combatants held in limbo



Kamana, a VMLR ('Verified Minor Late Recruit'), waits to be interviewed at the film shoot of *Disqualified*

JANA NOLLE

## MARCUS BENIGNO

As intra-party wrangling over reintegration and rehabilitation of the 19,000 PLA combatants in cantonments continues, the Maoists are still harbouring more than 500 discharged combatants across the country.

*Disqualified*, a short documentary directed by German, first-time filmmakers Jana Nolle and Stella Jung, shows the state of 42

discharged combatants (nine of them women) living in a Maoist-rented four bedroom house in Dhangadi. Local NGOs and relatives provide food and other essentials.

"They're just there waiting," Nolle says. "They're perpetrators and victims at the same time, instruments of the Maoist party."

The directors interviewed on camera 12 residents with official discharged status, UN Interagency Rehabilitation Program advisor Desmond Molloy, psychosocial



Anup poses for the camera at the Maoist shelter in Dhangadi

counselor Ramesh Basnet and Hari Jawali, a Maoist district officer.

"There's shame involved," explains Jung. "They prefer not to return to their villages where others have jobs or are married. The Maoists devolve all responsibility to the government. It's as if the Maoists are saying 'the UN disqualified you, so you go to the UN to get support', so they're hopeless."

UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) expelled 4,008 former combatants from

Maoist cantonments, officially dubbed Verified Minors Late Recruits (VMLRs) on a twofold criteria: those under the age of 18 at the time of recruitment, or those who joined after the first ceasefire on 26 May 2006.

As consolation, VMLRs were given discharged cards and the opportunity to enroll in vocational training programs.

But according to a Saferworld report in November 2010, the programs were undermined

## The making of *Disqualified*

Beads collect on the temples of an interviewee. The camera keeps rolling, and a tissue is handed. Behind-the-scenes shots of *Disqualified* reveal the crew's sweat and effort in capturing the tangled reality of discharged Maoist combatants.

"I wasn't sure if it was possible to shoot there, if it would be supported or if they would be aggressive," says Jana Nolle, whose collegiate fieldwork inspired the project.

Nolle led the four-member crew (including co-director Stella Jung (*right*) and translators Suhit Dhakal and Pratibha Khanal) to Kailali on the day of the constitutional deadline on 28 May relying solely on personal funds and equipment.

"We had no budget, no car. Everywhere, we carried our equipment, bags with tripods and cables exposed, on rickshaws and minibuses," she recalls. The crew's

equipment was limited to Nolle's Sony A1, Tescom voice recorder and MacBook Pro. Two local film and media collectives, DocSchool and Sattya, provided additional support, peripherals and workspace.

Nolle and Jung are currently in postproduction with plans for a 20-minute short retaining raw footage, produced in a frill-free format of honest imagery and dialogue. The style inspired by a new generation of documentaries like Lixin Fan's *Last Train Home* gives room for character development and observations of life played out in real time. The technique borders on conventional documentary and classic fiction film. Says Jung: "It's a different way of storytelling, not a typical narrative reportage with a monotone voice."

[disqualified.film@gmail.com](mailto:disqualified.film@gmail.com)



Stella Jung (*right*) prepares her equipment during shooting of *Disqualified*

JANA NOLLE





JANA NOLLE

Surendra Prasad Bhat, a VMLR, shows his ID card during an interview with filmmakers

by a lack of decentralisation in service delivery, which discouraged VMLRs to travel long distances. The UN's humanitarian appeal to

## Fighter Figures

- 19,000 combatants qualified for reintegration, currently in cantonments
- 4,008 discharged VMLRs
- Of the 4,008, 2,000 participated in UN rehabilitation programs
- Of those who didn't 540 live in Maoist-supported venues

rehabilitate VMLRs also lacked an initial labour market analysis as well as a socio-economic profile, which the Maoists forbade.

"The whole motivation for the UN interagency rehabilitation program for VMLRs was humanitarian," Molloy says in the film. "A group of young people who partly deprived of their youth and education helped to get them back into their community to avoid that they become part of armed gangs. In this particular group (in Dhangadi), there has been a strong disincentive to avail

the opportunities offered to them coupled with the fact that it's way below their expectations that they may have had when they joined the Maoist army."

Questions remain unanswered: Are the Maoists housing the VMLRs as leverage if reintegration fails? Are VMLRs merely collateral to the success of the peace process? In a film clip, Anup, a VMLR, appears restless: "No one can stay indoors now. We've been inside all this time, and even the ministers have been indoors. This isn't the time to be indoors." 🇳🇵

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Jana Nolle (standing) presents to CA members at ICPD last weekend

MARCUS BENIGNO

# Reeling in politicians

Government ministers and CA members, including Maoist heavyweight Hisila Yami, the NC's Chakra Bastola and member of the Technical Committee for Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation of Maoist Combatants Shambhu Ram Simkhada, reacted with tacit gravity, after watching clips from the short film *Disqualified* at the Institute for Conflict Management Peace and Development (ICPD) office in Baluwatar last weekend.

Jana Nolle, director of *Disqualified*, was invited to present her documentary findings on discharged Maoist combatants as part of a two-day workshop. Veteran peace negotiator Ted Morse of USAID also took part. The screening spotlighted comments by Anup, a discharged Maoist combatant, who in one clip warns of the possible remobilisation: "What we have wished

for when we joined this revolution has not come true. Unless these dreams come true, the war is not over. Prachanda said we have the weapons. And just like that, we are ready with our triggers at full cock."

NC members may have hoped the screening would demonstrate a rift in the Maoist party. Yami carefully skirted around questions from Nepali Times regarding the film. "It's a political issue," she said. "Within our party itself, there is disagreement among those who are not able to grasp today's objective, those who fall back to the old ways of doing things and then there's one group who is always confused. The film is an effect of that confusion."

The muted reaction to the film during the screening does not seem to bode well for the future of the discharged.

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# Bagmati River

Plantation program,  
16 July, 7 to 10am, UN Park

STN Member clean up,  
23 July, 7 to 9am, Chobhar

Cycle Rally,  
30 July, 8 to 10am, Thamel

Bagmati International Marathon,  
6 August, 7 to 10am, Tripureswor

Dunga Daud 12-13 August,  
7 am onwards Sundarjal

Eco Football, 14 August,  
2 to 4pm, Chyasal, ANFA

Bagmati  
11am to 3pm

## EVENTS

**Charity Movie Show**, organised by WFS events, the movie 'Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara' will be screened. Funds from the event will be donated to Children and Youth First (CYF). 15 July, 6pm, QFX Kumari Cinema, Kamalpokhari, Rs 399

**The Art of Music Notation**, a workshop by Marcus Dengate. 18 July, 5pm, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel, info@katjazz.com.np, 5013554

**Organic Market**, a weekly organic market where along with picking the fresh organic produce for home you can enjoy brunch. 16 July, 10am to 12pm, 1905, Kantipath

**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, Babermahal Revisited

**Etching Art Exhibition**, featuring works of upcoming Nepali printmakers Sangita Ghimire, Manju Shyanla, Tika Datta Dahal and Bhishan Raj Bhandari. Till 16 July, 12 to 8pm, Asian Proofs Print Art Gallery, New Orleans Café, Pulchok

**Yalamaya Classic**, an evening of classical music, also featuring Kathak Dance performance by Mridula Smita Mandal from Delhi. 18 July, 5pm, Yalamaya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, entrance free, 5553767, 5522113

**Summer Music and Dance Camp**,

organised by Kathmandu Centre for Performing Arts. 18 to 19 July, Salsa Dance Academy, Bhatbhateni, 9803822622



**TEDx Kathmandu**, an independently organised TED event featuring speakers Ani Choying Drolma, Anil Chitrakar, Prabhas Pokhrel, Salil Subedi and Sunil Babu Pant. Event is restricted to 100 attendees only who will be selected through application process. Forms can be downloaded from www.

tedxkathmandu.com. 30 July, Nepal Tourism Board, Exhibition Road

**Nepal Cine Symposium**, a South Asia focused international film network and promotion platform for cinema which includes a film festival 'Something like a film festival' organised by DocSkool. 19 to 22 November, submission open until 30 August, www.cinesymposium.com, amanyu@cinesymposium.org, 4471104

**Funky Fresh E.L.E.M.E.N.T.S**, a youth empowerment program for young hip hop enthusiasts above the age of 13 to harness their skills to become independent hip hop artists. 23 to 30 July, 10am to 6pm, Sattya Media Arts Collective, Jawalakhel/ Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel, fee Rs 1000 (scholarships available), application deadline 21 July

## MUSIC

**Summer Music Fesvtival**, a month long celebration of summer with unique mix of musicians. 14 July, Actor Studio, 15 July, Saptak, 7.30pm, entrance Rs 200, 5528362, 9841320007

**Splash Grind 2011**, the program features DJ session, loud music and dance by the pool. 13 August, 1 to 6pm, International Club, Sanepa, Rs 1000

## DINING

**Fusion food**, Chef Shaun Kenworthy from UK will serve cuisines from different corners of the



# One day in the life of a country

A fine new collection of English translations of Nepali and Newari poetry

SMRITI JAISWAL

When reading Days in the Life with me , my American friend Emily had her head tilted throughout. Now and then she looked up, stunned by the beauty of certain phrases and surprised that there were ways of thinking she had not considered, realities she might have missed had it not been translated for her. This was her first anthology of Nepali poems and she memorized lines such as Bhupi Sherchan's:

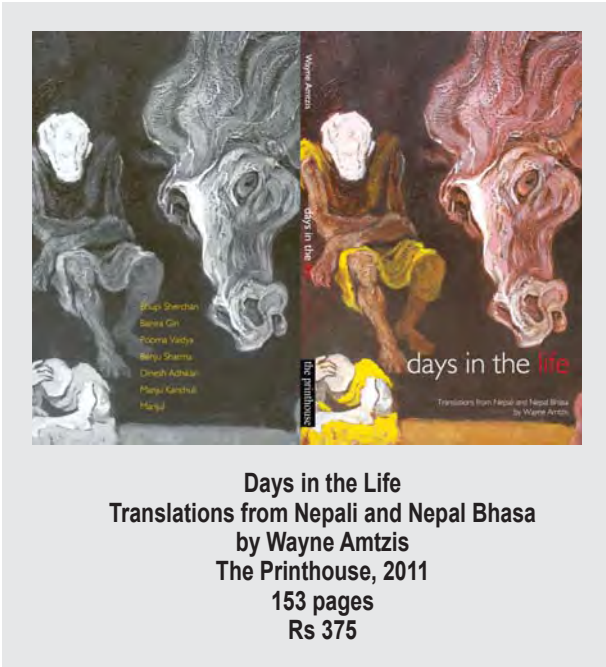
*all day  
like a flat mushroom  
far from the vast display of earth and sky  
planting his legs in a small place,*

Days in the Life is a collection of poems translated to English from Nepali and Nepal Bhasa by Wayne Amtzis, an occasional contributor also to Nepali Times. It collects poems by Bhupi Sherchan, Banira Giri, Poorna Vaidya, Benju Sharma, Dinesh Adhikari, Manju Kanchuli and Manjul. The poems are a tribute to Nepali and Nepal Bhasa, and the skill and delicacy with which Amtzis translates these works reveal him for the poet he is.

The translation is lucid, often forceful, and always lyrical. Reading through one can see the ways in which history has and has not shifted over the last century in Nepal. The images are stark – Nepal, for example, is shown as a helpless landscape, mauled by its citizens, raped until it revolts. Through an extended metaphor Banira Giri describes the nation as a hardened woman, who, despite all the violations against her, remains strong but has lost both her sweetness and her innocence.

*I've become  
the oven that contains the flame,*

In contrast Poorna Vaidya's poem 'Window Pane' is lyrical in its self-reflection. It uses language without care for boundaries, and the expressions within the poem are gorgeous and almost narcissistic, a weapon with which to describe and reflect.



On a window pane

...

*water comes perching like a tiny bird*

Here the language is involved with its own rhythm, the world built by line breaks and word choices. But most poems in Days in the Life leap for the referential, for objects and realities existing outside the page, and draw their complexities and stings, the sore nature of existence into words, and just like that the poems become rebellious complaints against injustice, carnivals where life, days, living, all are celebrated and censured without humility.

*I tell the truth—if hunger is a country,  
there couldn't be a country more pristine  
than Harka Bahadur;  
if grief is a country, there couldn't be another country  
vaster than Harka Bahadur*

Nation and nationality are backbones to many poems in Days in the Life. Even when refuted ('I told you Harka Bahadur doesn't have a country,' writes Dinesh Adhikari), the nation creeps in, and with it comes questions about what the nation owes its citizen and what the citizen owes in response. In a war infested Nepal where death has become commonplace ('The leg welcomed the bullet with a salute,' writes Manjul), where poverty has hardened its citizens, where the common person has hardly any resources with which to fight back, to deflect the 'bullet which it had not called', poetry becomes that weapon.

In their original language these poems would force the native speaker to become aware of herself and her surroundings, but in translation they force a larger audience, both native and non-native, to take notice. They force the reader to discern the blessings and the misfortunes not only of the Other, but to realise the troubles and the calamities of one's own self, to realise that the self too, though made immune, is suffering and fighting. The translations take these poems beyond the boundaries of Nepal and simultaneously push Nepal's boundaries, forcing even the outsider to stand alert tilt her head and ask, Really? Is that so? How come? Who can stop it? And questioning is the first step to reform. It is also the first step to appreciation. 🇳🇵

Smriti Jaiswal is a co-founding editor of the literary magazine The Raleigh Review. [www.raleighreview.org](http://www.raleighreview.org)





# Festival 2011

Film Festival, 15 August, 3pm, Nepal Tourism Board | Bagmati Eco-Challenge, 20 August, 7am to 2pm, Chobhar | Live Aid, 20 August, 2 to 6pm, Sundharighat | Hike for Bagmati, 21 Auguts, 7 to 9am, Tilganga/Teku | Grand Finale, 21 August, 11am to 4pm, Teku to Sundarighat

BIKRAM RAI

world. Till 15 July, 4pm, The Fun Café, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat

**9th Annual Wine Festival**, Kilroy's monsoon wine festival will feature 15 varieties of exquisite wines from six different countries. 1July to 15 September, Kilroy's of Kathmandu, Thamel, 4250440

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**Casa Toscana**, varieties of yummy pizzas to try and other Italian delights. Pulchowk

**Picasso**, for its authentic take on French cuisine. Jhamsikhel, 5009076

**New Orleans**, offers a wide variety of western dishes that are scrumptious yet healthy. We got hooked on the rosemary chicken and hamburgers. Jhamel, 5522708



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**SOMEPLACE ELSE**

# Hankook Sarang



MARCO POLLO

Sometimes there's something off about a restaurant that you can't put your finger on. For Hankook Sarang in Thamel, it isn't the ambience or the service or the price—those are all just fine, and the cuisine is bona fide Korean.

There's *kimchi*, the spicy pickled cabbage; built-in tabletop stoves for cook-it-yourself (CIY) dishes; *bibimbap*, a rice bowl mixture of fresh vegetables, cooked meat and egg; imported soju, Korean firewater; and even metal chopsticks (a feature unique to Korea).

But for one thing, I wasn't

satiated at the end of the meal, though the order was quite hefty and included free refills of *banchan*, or Korean side dishes like pickled cabbage, dicon, black beans, cucumbers and spinach; *galbi*, barbecued pork short-ribs with lettuce leafs for wrapping; *bulgogi*,

thin slices of raw beef for your grilling pleasure; *kimbap*, Korean-style sushi rolls; and complimentary bowls of broth and short-grained rice and cups of tea.

Maybe, it was just my enormous appetite or my consistent failure with CIY adventures that turn out

bland or unbearable (there's a reason why I dine out). If you're prone to burning or undercooking your meat, opt for a precooked meal. Plus, if you're vegetarian, Hankook Sarang is not the best choice, although you can order the tofu or cheese *kimbap*, the Korean-style pizza or a large

bowl of ramen.

Essentially, if you have never had Korean food or if you have already been to Hankook Sarang and are accustomed to its spread, then frequent the eatery, but be sure to save up for a trip to Seoul.

But if you were so fortunate to have sampled prime-choice barbecue and crunchy, tangy *kimchi* like those served in a Korean enclave or let's say Korea, then expect a slight downgrade set in a laidback garden. For the price, (the cheapest Korean establishment yet) you won't regret it. 🇰🇷

Marco Pollo

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# Diabetic dilemma




**DHANVANTARI**  
**Buddha Basnyat, MD**

Diabetes Mellitus which manifests as increased blood sugar in the patients is so rampant in Nepal that even nuances in the treatment have become important. Some years ago a robust trial (United Kingdom Prospective Diabetes Study, UKPDS) in over 5,000 diabetic patients revealed that with 'tight' blood glucose control, eye problems, kidney problems and nerve problems were significantly decreased. The study population was Type 2 diabetics just like the vast majority of diabetics seen in Nepal, who are affected by the


disease (not early but later in their lives). As we are increasingly starting to find out in Nepal, uncontrolled diabetes more commonly requires dialysis due to kidney failure, eye surgery for retinal hemorrhages, and even amputations for nerve and vasculature related problems. In other words, conscientiously controlling blood sugar leads to fewer complications of the kidneys, eyes and nerves. In medical parlance these are called "microvascular" complications. Unfortunately in medicine what may seem to be an obvious cause (high blood sugar) and effect (complications) does not always pan out. Indeed, as revealed in the same UKPDS trial what the tighter control of blood sugar did not do was decrease macrovascular




complications in other important organs that diabetes has a serious impact on, namely the heart and the brain. So, despite a good control of blood sugar, the rates of heart attacks and strokes in these patients did not improve, although there was a decrease in kidney and eye problems. However, there was a silver lining in the study. Hypertension or high blood pressure usually goes hand in hand with diabetes. Hypertension is an important risk factor for both heart attacks and strokes. So, those diabetics in the study who had proper control of blood pressure clearly had fewer strokes and heart attacks independent of their blood glucose control. The "take home message" for diabetics is that it is important to keep both the blood pressure and blood glucose under proper control so that the important organs (including the heart, brain, eyes, kidneys) that diabetes affects are protected. Furthermore, unlike high blood sugar in a patient which usually manifests with excessive urination, thirst, and hunger, high blood pressure may essentially have no symptoms to start with until there is that catastrophic stroke or heart attack. The prevention of both diabetes and hypertension with "way of life" changes also needs to be emphasised.



**WEEKEND WEATHER**  
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

The monsoon took a breather this past week, but it has now got "second wind" as it were. Central and eastern Nepal were under the spell of an area of relative high pressure which pushed the moisture coming in from the Bay south towards central India. This system has now moved on, and the moisture has returned with renewed vengeance. Expect clear mornings with hot and humid afternoons with evening showers, at times heavy.



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KRISHNA SINJALI

**WANNA FIGHT?** Wild elephants wandered across the Indian border into Bahundangi, Jhapa on Tuesday. Two locals were injured while chasing the elephants back.



BIKRAM RAI

**BILLS DUE:** Representatives of several Kamlaris' organisations met with PM Jhala Nath Khanal at his office, Singha Darbar, on Sunday with an appeal to ensure that the scholarship allocated for Kamlaris reaches the districts.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**MONEY'S WORTH:** Campaigners from Nepal Unites stage a protest at Bagmati Bridge, Thapathali, demanding that the constitution be completed on time.



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# Court chronicles

Politics matters, but so does the rest of Nepal



**KALAM**  
Rabi Thapa

Depending on how one perceives the profession, the last couple of years have been frustrating for Nepali journalists. Since the excitement of 2005-6, and the shock and awe of the 2008 elections, the Fourth Estate has found little worthy of its attention save approaching and extended deadlines, delayed budgets, and inter and intra-party feuds. As if sensing the sacks of culs that their charges have to deal with, editors have been compelled to back them up with editorials offering the polity a mixture of blandishments and threats to pave the road to peace, prosperity, and gross happiness. But the politicians, fat-clad in duck feather, merely shrug off the well-meaning advice and calmly go about their wheeling and dealing, business as usual.

I have sympathy for those journalists who, even as they tail the occupants of Singha Darbar, Baluwatar, and the Constituent Assembly, cannot be oblivious to the living that goes on in and out of Kathmandu in this not-so-very tiny and not-completely-Himalayan ex-kingdom, more 'Sorry...laaa' than Shangri-La these days. There has been plenty else to report on, including disasters on such scales that they have received (sometimes belated) coverage, such as the Kosi floods of 2008, and the diarrhoea-cholera epidemic of



BIKRAM RAI

2009. Un-newsworthy people have made piles of money (and a few headlines) selling their country down the river, as well as their brothers, sisters, and co-species. But good things have happened, too, mostly on very local levels. Newsworthy people are making money (and fewer headlines) through entrepreneurial businesses selling a range of products from dairy to ginger to coffee, and not just in Kathmandu.

Of course, I know of these non-political happenings because someone, somewhere has taken the trouble to report on them. But coverage is scant compared to the column inches devoted to the bilge at the helm of our ship of state, and no self-respecting journalist would dare suggest that agriculture (still accounting for about 40 per cent of GDP and three quarters of the workforce) deserves more attention than

politics.

Doubtless these journalists have a very keen sense of how what happens at the top will affect everyone downstream, whether the upstreamers take the initiative to set up a hydropower plant or simply foul the waters. Those at the top control the resources (even if policy does not always follow people into their lives), and what is happening now, it is felt, will determine how those resources will be managed in the new Nepal.

Does this mean the primacy of politics should be taken for granted? That political journalists should continue to chart the ups and downs of what are in most cases not clashes of ideology – which evidently affects policy and practice – but personality clashes? On some level, is not reporting on the Oli/Khanal or Koirala/

Deuba feuds (as opposed to the Bhattarai/Dahal/Baidya ménage) akin to gossiping about bickering neighbours?

Even so, you might say, they have no choice but to play the game. And indeed, reportage is not just event coverage à la TGIF. Layers of analysis attribute various significances to this and that meeting, and attempt to divine the implications for the nation. Political journalism in Nepal also plays an important role in uncovering, or underlining, the misdemeanours that political institutions are increasingly associated with. If there were no press monitoring, one can safely assume that whatever is going on pretty much under the public's collective nose would reach ever more grotesque proportions.

If the obsession with politics is set to continue

in journalism, then, at least we can hope for more of a bottom-up focus, as well as regional coverage within Nepal. Undoubtedly this would broaden and strengthen our sense of being Nepali. What better platform for a cross-fertilisation of values and ideas, what better preparation for federalism? Such a breed of journalism would give Nepalis a much better sense of what their country consists of, in all its human and natural glory, beyond the dhaka-topi propaganda of the Panchayat era and the ethno-melas in Tundikhel. It would teach us that Gen Next is more about those queueing up for passports than those wondering what's hot and what's not. And it would prime the state to better respond to the needs of Nepalis across the country. 🇳🇵



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# Generate electricity,

PAAVAN MATHEMA in SINDHUPALCHOK

Durga Shrestha of Sakhuwa village is worried. There is talk of a new hydropower project on the Bhote Kosi and he is concerned his adventure tourism job will go.

The 102MW Middle Bhote Kosi project is a subsidiary of Chilime Hydropower and will have a gated diversion weir at Chaku, and a powerhouse 7 km downstream at Jambu village. With the feasibility done, construction is set to begin in 2013 and the project will be completed in four years.

The project will be the third hydropower plant on this stretch of the river, and has become the latest example of Nepal's need for energy clashing with tourism. With the country reeling from 16-hour power cuts in winter, the government has declared an energy emergency and encouraged investors in hydropower.

"We hear that if the project is implemented, the river will run dry, so will our jobs," says Durga Shrestha.

The Bhote Kosi has its headwaters in Tibet and cuts through the Himalaya through mighty gorges

## Nepal's need to generate hydropower must not destroy the potential of its rivers for adventure tourism

with steep gradient. With 80 rapids within 21 km, many up to Grade 5, the Bhote Kosi is one of the world's top ten rivers for white water rafting and the venue for many international rafting and kayaking championships. It is also a river prone to glacial lake outburst floods, and there are a dozen lakes upstream in Tibet that could overflow in future because of thawing due to climate change.

Twenty-one rafting companies operate on the Bhote Kosi River, bringing in hundreds of tourists per day during the peak season. The river also has five major resorts along its banks, including The Last Resort, famous for its bungee jumping, and Borderlands Eco Adventure Resort which offers canyoning and rafting. The resorts provide hundreds of jobs for people from surrounding villages.

"Bhote Kosi is a world-class river, important for the local people here and for tourism," explains Megh Ale of the Nepal River Conservation Trust. "If the power house is built at Jambu, it will significantly decrease water volume along the rafting route, and tourism will lose its most important attraction."


Eco-tourism activists have been lobbying to shift the power house a little upstream from Jambu to Sakhuwa, leaving the rafting route intact. Prakash Man Shrestha, of the Madhya Bhote Kosi Jalavidyut Company, says shifting the powerhouse upstream would reduce

the head and cut generation capacity by half but costs will decrease only 20 per cent. "It is not economically feasible to build the power house upstream," Shrestha told *Nepali Times*, adding that the project has offered to help resorts if they need to relocate.

Subash Karmacharya is a former UML member of parliament from Sindhupalchok and was recently appointed to the board of the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA). He firmly backs the hydropower project, saying it will help develop the district. "It will bring jobs and a share in its equity," he says. "It will help in local development."

But tourism has also generated jobs. The suspension bridge built by The Last Resort for its bungee jumps saves villagers a five-hour detour. The resorts invest in local health and education.

Says Sankar Jit Tamang of Gathi VDC: "The hydropower project should be constructed in such a way that it does not hamper the tourism industry that has given us so much."

Ale is convinced there is a middle way that will protect rivers while also addressing Nepal's energy deficit. In an adjoining commentary, he advocates dividing rivers into three segments: the higher reaches from 1,200-5,000m for hydropower, from 200-1,200m for tourism and rafting, and below that for irrigation. He also argues that some rivers should be protected in their pristine state and left as free-flowing rivers. 

[nepalitimes.com](#)  
Roller coaster rides on  
Nepali rivers, #251  
A Himalayan challenge, #220



PAAVAN MATHEMA

## Power investor

Early this week, the government launched the Hydropower Investment and Development Company (HIDC). With an authorised capital of Rs 500 million and paid up capital of Rs 100 million, HIDC has pulled investments from the government, Employee Provident Fund, National Insurance Company and Citizen Investment Fund and will invest in hydropower projects of over 25MW. "The country needs investment in hydroelectricity but the market's interest rate is very high," explains Energy Minister Gokarna Bista. "This company will fill in as an investor in hydropower projects."



# Save our rivers

Protecting the Karnali, Madi and Tamor as free-flowing rivers will save them for future generations



COMMENT  
Megh Ale

It has become a cliché to say that Nepal's greatest asset is its rivers. Besides our three great rivers, there are nearly 6,000 smaller ones that drain the southern slopes of the Himalaya.

But when people speak of Nepal's water resources, they tend to mean only

hydropower. Yet, our rivers have great economic, social, cultural, and ecological significance. Geologists say Nepal's main rivers are actually older than Himalaya, which is why many of them have their origins behind the main range in Tibet. And just as we revere the mountains, our rivers are also holy. With global warming, Himalayan rivers are going to be more and more important as a source of survival.

Even from an economic standpoint, a river's tourism potential may be more important than hydropower. Nepal therefore cannot afford to destroy nature only for the sake of hydropower, no matter how severe the current energy shortage. Destruction of nature is irreversible, once it's gone it is gone forever.

Nepal can only prosper if our nature-based tourism, agriculture, trade, cottage industries and hydropower

are developed together: not one at the expense of the other. Before damming a river for energy, we must look at the long-term cost of that action. We may generate power, sell it to India, but will that create jobs within the country? How will it impact tourism, culture and

the ecology along the river? Energy is no doubt needed to power our homes and industry. But small and medium hydro schemes with low cost, low maintenance, and low footprints are more appropriate and sustainable. Small is not just beautiful, it is wise. Already, most of our bigger



# or protect tourism?



AGAINST THE CURRENT: The proposed site at Jambu village for the new power house of the 102MW Middle Bhote Kosi project.

# from ourselves




rivers have been blocked off by businessmen who are sitting on licenses. This is a recipe to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. A resource that should belong to all Nepalis have been grabbed by a few individuals with connections. And since big projects mean big kickbacks,

politicians and businessmen are in cahoots to back bigger and more destructive projects on our rivers. Nepal's topography is like a staircase rising from 80m above sea level along the southeastern plains to above 8,000m. Most of our rivers emerge from glacier snouts at

about 6,500m. This balance can be reached if we demarcate hydropower development on rivers between 1,200-5,000m, set aside rivers between 200-1,200m for tourism and conservation and sections of rivers between 80-200m for irrigation. In addition, we must protect some rivers as free-flowing. Just as there are national parks to protect landscapes rich in biodiversity, we must protect certain rivers. The Humla Karnali could be declared a Himalayan River Heritage, while its tributaries can be set aside for hydropower and irrigation. Similarly, since the Kali Gandaki, Marsyangdi and Trisuli in central Nepal have

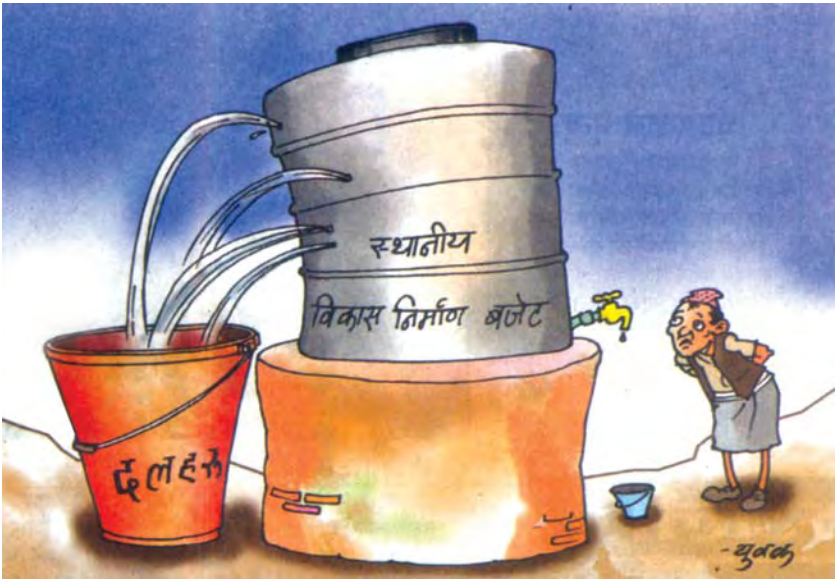
already been dammed for power, we should leave the Madi alone as a heritage river. In eastern Nepal, the Tamor deserves to be reserved as a free-flowing river. Keeping the Karnali, Madi and Tamor free from hydropower development will not mean a big loss in generation capacity, but these rivers will be kept in their pristine state for future generations. In addition, discouraging construction of dams on major rivers below 1,200m will protect them for adventure tourism and rafting. Current plans to build the Chilime project on the Bhote Kosi is a bad idea because it will block a stretch of river that is

considered one of the top ten rivers for white water rafting and kayaking. Nepal can host international competitions on these rivers and generate much more revenue than one more hydropower plant can. Nepal needs a long-term strategy for our rivers that balance our economic needs with our responsibility to protect the ecology of our rivers.  Megh Ale, an Ashoka Fellow, also heads the Nepal River Conservation Foundation.

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com)  
Take me to the river, #514  
Liquid gold, #399







Tank: Local development budget  
Bucket: Parties

नागरिक Yubak in *Nagarik*, 13 July

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“When I stepped down, I did not know things would get so bad.”

Former King Gyanendra Shah speaking on a press conference in his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday



# Fire in Kavre

*Nagarik*, 13 July

नागरिक

On Monday morning, a huge fire broke out in a noodle factory in Kavre. A fire engine from Bhaktapur and two from Kathmandu rushed to the venue. Kavre’s own fire engine, however, sat useless at the municipality premises. This is not a first time. Whenever a fire breaks out here, help has to be called in from the Valley. Kavre’s only fire engine was gifted by the German government in 1993 but hasn’t been used even once. The fire engine does not have a tank and its pipe has to be joined to a tap. “In most areas, the source of water is a pond or a stream and so we



were unable to use the fire engine,” says former President of Banepa Development Committee Rabin Shakya.

For years, the fire engine has been parked that the municipality’s backyard. In 2006 the vehicle was vadalised by protesters. There are several plywood, noodle, matchstick, sandal, biscuit and other factories in Kavre. There are four gas factories and over 20 petrol stations.

“We have always depended on Bhaktapur and Kathmandu whenever there is a fire incident,” says Satosh Tamang, a local police. “In case the roads get blocked and they can’t make the trip, the result will be disastrous.”



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## Face-off

Chudamani Bhattarai in *Nepal*,  
16 July

नेपाल

“Which side are you on exactly? It would be easier for us if this was clear.”

“I am Prachanda, the chairman of this party. The Chairman is the leader and party’s line is the leader’s line.”

That was the exchange between Maoist Chairman Prachanda and Mohan Baidya when the latter asked him to choose between him and Baburam Bhattarai in the party’s central committee meeting held on 24 June.

“Our destination is People’s Federal Republic and harping on a revolt will not take us there,” a central committee member quoted Prachanda as saying. When Prachanda said that the party’s line was the leader’s line, Baidya accused Prachanda of “decadence”. In response, Prachanda said that the party has been following his line since 1990 when he assumed leadership. “How come you, who has been operating under the leadership’s policies, is a revolutionary and I a traitor,” Prachanda asked.

The Baidya faction has been blaming Prachanda of defeatism on issues of peace, constitution and combatant integration. Prachanda attacked Baidya by raking up issues from the past. “What is the preparation you are talking about? He asked. “If it is the preparation for a guerilla war then guerilla war is not possible in these times anymore. If it is rebellion you are talking about, we have done that already with the People’s War. And if you mean insurrection, we are at that stage currently. But guerilla war will not take us where we want to go. The only way is by taking the route of peace, constitution and government.”



# Farsighted Prachanda



Lalrakshak, 10 July

Prachanda is the greatest leader in Nepali politics today. He is a clever mobiliser and strategist of international standards. He evaluates external conditions, studies internal circumstances and moves to his goal with conviction and even his critics praise this capacity of Prachanda. Prachanda strongly believes

in Marxism as a science. Whatever Prachanda has launched in Nepali society from a Marxist angle has never failed to hit the target. Prachanda had predicted a miracle in the last CA elections. And like a tidal wave, the historic CA results swept away all doubting analysts. This is not a coincidence. It is the result of Prachanda's political farsightedness,

correct evaluation of the situation, careful planning and mobilisation. After the Chunwang Meeting, Prachanda had declared to party workers that a great upheaval is going to take place. Less than six months later, the Maoists catapulted to the government's seat on the foundation of the 12-point understanding. These forecasts in themselves are outstanding.

History proves Prachanda is a revolutionary hero and Nepal's revolution cannot move forward without him. The alliance between the right wingers and the extremists seen at present, stems only from their hunger for power. Prachanda is the real commander of the revolution, the only helmsman who can sail the nation's ship towards its destination. The Nepali people would never accept any conspiracy against a historic leader like him.

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# PKD+NKS, NKS+BRB, BRB+MBK, MBK+NKS

His ex-Majesty's birthday last week was marked by celebrations befitting an erstwhile royal, including a life-size cutout of Kingji flanked by two real-life flunkies peering from above the Nirmal Nibas gate. Was this a decoy? Fans and paparazzi thronged the palace but one well-wisher was told it wasn't such a good idea to come over. Chairman Awesome had sent feelers to KingG for a tete-e-tete over a bottle of **Chivas**. The overture was turned down for now because the media would have got wind of it.



Natural for the formerly royal to be wary. Reporters are keeping track of all the covert meetings going on all over town at secret venues. Siddarth Cottage in **Dhobi Ghaut** seems to be the favourite of the BRB faction, while the PKD wallahs prefer a private residence in Kumaripati and the KPO cabal of course just sits in Balkot. In fact the only news worth reporting these days is who secretly met whom and where. News of cloak-and-dagger gatherings of various factions of the Baddies, Kangresis and Eh-maleys are leaked to the press so that rival paranoid



factions start imagining all kinds of goot bundis. In case future historians want it for reference, the Ass has compiled a list of who met whom this past week:

- Sunday:** AKS+PKD, CPG+DPG+TBR, BMP+RK+DR+KPKC
- Monday:** PKD+NKS, NKS+BRB, BRB+MBK, MBK+NKS
- Tuesday:** PKD+BMP+APS, BRB+RBT+NKS+MBK, PMS+PSM+SBD, RCP+RSM
- Wednesday:** KPO+MKN, SBD+PKD, RSM+RCP, MMS+Jhusil,

A cursory glance at the billboards along Thapathali prove that there is now a serious drought of names for schools in this country. It is a national emergency, and if something isn't done the entire 10+2 industry may grind to a halt because of the shortage of brand new brand names.

Nepal's schools and colleges used to have names like they existed since the time of the Ramayana: Shanti Vidyapeeth, Adarsha Niketan. But they have moved with

the times to name themselves after birds (Nightingale, Skylark), dynamite inventors (Nobel), dark beers (Guinness), wonders of the world (Pyramid) and even spy planes (U2). But with new schools sprouting every few hours, there aren't enough trendy names to go around.

In desperation, new colleges have become adventurous and started naming themselves after inland bodies of water (Caspian), exotic places (Caribbean, LA, Maple Leaf), New York boroughs (Brooklyn) and famous universities (Oxbridge). These schools immediately saw a spurt in admissions, so others followed suit with names of landmarks belonging to the US federal government: Pentagon, White House, Capitol Hill, NASA, Lincoln, Watergate, Golden Gate, Glacier. (Ass' footnote: None of these names are made up.)

With all terrestrial names now taken, colleges are going forth where no man has been before into outer space with schools named Cosmic and Galaxy, as well as heavenly bodies like Triton and Sirius. But the schools that are swamped are named after football teams (Chelsea, Liverpool).



In all the high tension excitement over the breakup of the Baddies, Comrade JN seems to have forgotten that he once promised to step down. In fact, the primordial minister seems so sanguine about being in Baluwatar for the foreseeable future that he has accepted an invite from **General Ban Ki Moon** to attend the UNGA in New York in September.



Just when air traffic controllers at TIA thought all the potholes on the runway had been patched, the airport had to declare a **Monkey Emergency**. An army of rhesus invaded the runway just as the heavies were on final approach. At first, officials thought the monkeys were refugees fleeing simian purges at Pashupati. But monkeys have now been traced back to a breeding centre in Lele which let them loose last year after animal rights activists opposed their export to America as lab animals. The rhesus could have been staging a sit-in on the runway to demand Green Cards.





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