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DIVAKAR CHHETRI

Too little, too late

Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal announced his much-awaited package on moving the peace process forward at a press conference on Thursday, but it may be too little too late. If it was announced till even last week, there would still have been a chance of a consensus government. The NC and UML had demanded concrete progress on integrating the Maoist fighters into the national army before agreeing to joining the Maoists in a coalition.

Dahal finally came out in public with a one-and-half month work schedule to complete integration and rehabilitation of its combatants and a condition of extending the CA by six months. He also proposed that 8,000 of the ex-guerrillas be integrated and agreed to a

directorate under the leadership of the Nepal Army. He would be open to negotiation on the rehabilitation package of Rs 700,000-1 million. "Through this proposal we have shown maximum flexibility in order to save the peace process and request the other parties to show same gesture by trusting our leadership," Dahal said, adding ominously, "if not, we will not be responsible for what happens."

An NC central committee member told Nepali Times Thursday: "The proposal is too little too late for a consensus government, but if one of the candidates agrees to back out we can still work together." He and other politicians agreed that it would not help to keep the Maoists and Madhesis out of government.

The interim legislature has fixed

the date for first round of election for prime minister on Sunday, just before the CA's term expires at midnight on Wednesday, 31 August. It is most likely that the UML will back the NC with a faction of Madhesi parties supporting them, and a NC-led majority government.

If the Maoists or NC remain in the opposition, it will not help the peace process. But for this either the Maoists' Baburam Bhattarai or the NC's Ram Chandra Poudel has to step down before Sunday, or agree on a rotation formula. So far, both the leaders are confident they have the numbers.

If only the big leaders think about what their voters want and not what they want, they will see that lasting peace is not just desirable, but actually possible. Anurag Acharya



SOLO TREK

Sunil Tamang hikes right across Nepal by himself because it is there

p6-7



Those who want to stay

Not all the refugees from Bhutan want to be resettled in Europe and America

p12-13

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PROMISES TO KEEP

When they signed the five-point agreement to extend the Constituent Assembly just before dawn on 29 May, the leaders of the three main parties swore to use the three month extension to conclude the peace process and finish writing the constitution. In return, the prime minister promised to resign. The prime minister has resigned, but on the constitution and peace there hasn't only not been progress, things have regressed.

All three big parties have been too busy with their internal power struggles and preventing each other from leading the next government to think about peace.

The only thing we can say about the debilitating power struggle within the NC is that given a choice between Sher Bahadur Deuba and Ram Chandra Poudel, most Nepalis will say: "neither". three-time PM Deuba has shown himself to be an opportunist of the lowest order, who has done more to dismantle democracy in the past 15 years than even the Maoists. Poudel is an aparatchik who lacks the charisma and team-building qualities.

The UML is now a seriously divided political entity that has no ideology or principles left to speak of. It commands and protects a nationwide network of criminals whom it can't prosecute because they replenish the party's war chest.

Of the Maoists, all we can say is that it is a party that wants to have the cake and eat it too. Its leader is either unwilling, or incapable (or both) of dismantling its fighting force. Every time he meets leaders of the other parties, with

Kathmandu-based ambassadors or UN officials, Pushpa Kamal Dahal is still giving them spiel about how he can't push the hardliners too far. He has repeatedly tricked the other parties by making empty promises he had no intention of keeping. He has hoodwinked the international community once too often. Now that he sees a deadend, and perhaps stung by a stern warning from the UN this week, he has made yet another promise of an integration package to sugarcoat his party's bid to lead the government. How can we be sure he means it this time?

Yes, a consensus government would be desirable at this point if only to assure the Nepali people that our feckless rulers have now realised their folly and have decided to work together. Anything less than that (especially a Deuba-led sarkar) would be proof, if proof is still needed, that all our so-called leaders are losers.

But a much more urgent question than who gets to head the next government, whether the CA is extended and for how long, whether it is a consensus government or a majoritarian one, is that this country can't go on with one of the political parties still keeping men under arms, threatening to go back to war, and using trickery, lies and empty promises to keep its guns and guerrillas.

The bottom line should be that the Maoists demobilise their fighters and dismantle the camps not by charming some editors with yet another timetable, but with concrete action on the ground. Before any further negotiations on the constitution the Maoists must be required to transform themselves into a civilian party. You can't write a constitution with a gun to the head, especially a North Korea-style constitution the Maoists want.

What is most important in the next five days is not so much who leads what kind of government, or whether and under what conditions the CA is extended. More important is explicit, time-bound and verifiable proof from Pushpa Kamal Dahal that this time he really means what he says. He has many promises to keep.



DIWAKAR CHHETRI

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

ALL FOR ONE

Great idea, no prime minister, just ministers. ('All for one, one for all, #567').

Shree Shrestha

Can you please take down those stupid grinning faces from your website? It ruins my appetite and I feel like puking.

AK

These 12 faces are responsible for ruining Nepal. Politicians without moral ethics, hypocritical smiles who played their games in the name of democracy and destroyed Nepal. They will never come up with a new constitution, so they are of no use.

Tashi Lama

It's a great thing that these thugs have been identified and their mug shots published. Now, everyone can see the face of looters of Nepal and Nepalis and we can go after them.

Kiran Thapa

Your lies are grotesque. You want that the ruling class of great landowner and capitalists remain in power. Therefore you hate the Maoists, and distort their goals. You have the fear of losing your privileges. I am sure that the great majority of the Nepal people don't agree with your arch-reactionary ideology. China is now the second largest economic power in the world and India can't even feed itself. That itself is clear which is a better system of government. The Maoists are the future.

Mitter

DESCENT INTO DYSTOPIA

The only thing wrong with this editorial ('Descent into dystopia', #567) is that it underestimates the extent of the extortion and protection racket in the New Nepal. It is much more rampant than you say. Surya Nepal had to close because of the rivalry between factions of the Maoist union, same story with all the other industries. It's a free-for-all for the most militant union to extort money. No investor in his right mind is going to invest in Nepal, and the ones who are here are going to leave. Domestic investors are taking their money elsewhere. Who is going to create jobs? Why can't our politicians get it in their thick skulls that it's the economy they have to worry about and not this greedy race to the bottom?

Useful Idiot

Your editorial ends with: 'There is only one way to address Nepal's descent into dystopia: re-establish a stable state, eradicate impunity and decriminalize political parties by agreeing on a unity government ASAP.' Why would a unity government formed by consensus among 3-4 parties, be any less corrupt than the previous majority government of 2-3 parties? Indeed it is possible that such a government will be more corrupt due to lack of an effective opposition, and the need to divide the plunder among more parties.

Dev Batsya

This mainstream media can no longer mask its partisan coverage with mere demands for a constitution and a consensus government. The blame game against

politicians is a superficial attempt to serve the agenda of the same politicians who are being criticized. This editorial is an extension of that agenda.

Soni

LUMBINI

While the Chinese-led Lumbini proposal raises some legitimate questions as you have reported ('Lumbini as geopolitical ping pong', #567) I have a lingering suspicion that the Indians have been pulling the strings against the Chinese project this time as well. The Indian press has been going at it for more than a month. I don't want to sound reflexively anti-Indian but any neighbor that impedes in my country's development cannot have our best interests at heart. We need to look into this subject with courage and tell it like it is.

Ke Garne

Buddha was born in Lumbini, a sal grove, mostly spent his time in the forest, until the great passing away occurred in the forest, a sal grove, in Kusinara. Buddha's love of nature can be studied in the Buddhist scriptures. Buddha definitely might not favor his birthplace being turned into a commercial center.

Sayalay Bhaddamanika

Somebody wants to develop Nepal! Its a plot! Stop them!

Arthur

PADDY TO POPPY

Good work always pays (From poppies to paddy', #567) it's just a matter of time. Hats off to Rajendra Man Shrestha we are proud of you.

Yalam

Rajendra Man Shrestha for prime minister.

KiranL

Amazing story, Nepal has managed to do what has been impossible for Afghanistan and Burma to achieve, through alternative cropping and enforcement.

Hoff

Great Work SP Shrestha. Kudos to you. We need more cops like you.

Besh

THE CHINESE ARE HERE

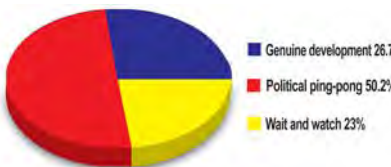
The good-for-nothing NTB loves to travel to Europe and America and spend money in the name of tourism promotion when they should be concentrating on the Indian and Chinese market right in our backyard. Bombard India and China with promo ads.

Chandra Baral



Q. What do you make out of APECF's Lumbini Development Project?

Total votes: 1,025



Weekly Internet Poll # 569. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com
Q. Who will win in Sunday's election?



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BOTH VICTIMS: Maoist CA member Devi Khadka (left) was tortured and raped in police custody during the war. But UML CA member Shanti Pakhrin (right) believes Khadka ordered her husband's execution. Both run into each other every day in the CA where two bills to set up commissions on disappearances and transitional justice are being debated.



today is defined solely in terms of the management of some 19,000 combatants and their uncertain futures. The de-humanisation of the process to a mere technicality eludes the complexity of the case. How will the state reconcile an ex-combatant, involved in abduction, torture or execution of an individual, with members of the family? How will it address the trauma of combatants and the families who have witnessed unspeakable violence? How will the state ensure reconciliation between the Nepal Army and its civilian victims?

The fact that draft bills to form commissions to look into cases of disappearances and on truth and reconciliation, has been stuck in the legislative parliament for the last four years is a proof that successive governments want to sweep the dirty past under the rug.

The public does not have much faith in commissions, anyway. Countless committees have been set up and reports submitted, but

none were ever made public or acted upon. There is a real danger that the failure to address the graveness of the injustice done and lack of political courage to uncover the truth may permanently fracture Nepali society.


On 30 August, the world observes the International Day of the Disappeared. Nearly five years after the end of our war, there are at least 1,300 Nepali families who still have no answers about relatives who vanished during the war. Nepal has

neither signed nor ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which not only requires the party states to investigate them and bring those responsible to justice, but provides for monitoring of compliance by the nations party to the convention as well as gives rights to its citizens to directly appeal to the committee for assistance in locating a disappeared person.

Both warring sides are

in the administration. Yet the healing has to start with the airing of the truth. Even inside the CA chambers, UML member Shanti Pakhrin keeps running into Maoist member Devi Khadka, who Pakhrin believes ordered her husband's execution but has never got a satisfactory answer as to why. Devi Khadka herself was a victim of torture and rape in police custody. How can both come to terms with the truth of the past, what can the state do to help them both?

These questions need serious debate among stakeholders of the peace process, particularly the major political parties. Holding the nation and constitution-writing hostage to the peace process would have made sense if the effort was genuinely geared towards addressing both manifested as well as latent conflict.

Agreement on numbers and a package deal may finally empty the cantonments and who knows, even give us a new constitution in near future. But if we keep mistaking silence for peace, who are we fooling? 



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

All signs are that the political transition will be prolonged. The war may be over but this isn't peace. Violence without bullets continues to devastate Nepali society four years and nine months after the Comprehensive Peace Accord formally ended the decade long conflict.

Few will disagree that big strides have been taken in the peace process by isolating the guns from the gunners. Yet, a state of impunity and absence of justice, intrudes upon the families of the victims. The façade of 'peace' has reduced the sacrifice of thousands who died or were simply 'lost' to bargaining chips.

Nepal's peace process

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The age of cyber patriots

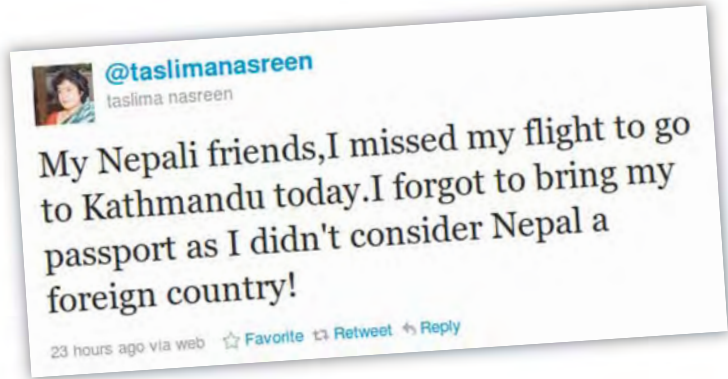
We take our nationalism too seriously and our socio-economic backwardness not seriously enough



Despite being from a country that lags behind in every development index ever devised, some of us still seem to be astonishingly thin-

skinned about what outsiders say about us. Instead of being outraged about the hundreds of thousands of young Nepali women rotting in brothels in India, we are react over forgettable remarks made by foreign actors or authors. Ten years ago, Nepal's cities were convulsed by paroxysms of violence over something Hrithik Roshan

was thought to have said. The politically-instigated riots were supposed to be against India, but six Nepalis were killed, Nepali businesses and tourism suffered, and our international image was badly dented. Things haven't changed much. Taslima Nasreen is silly enough to forget to take her passport to the airport



and misses her flight to Kathmandu. And she tries to make light of it by tweeting innocently that she didn't know she needed a passport to go to Nepal. So what? But trust our cyber pseudo-nationalists to get their knickers in a knot and flame her with hate tweets. They tweeted profanities, and a mainstream portal made things worse by misquoting Nasreen's original tweet to say she had said 'Nepal is a part of India'. If Nasreen had any plans to take next morning's flight to Kathmandu, she was advised to cancel.

The eruption of self-fanned anger on twitter's timeline later spread to the blogs, Facebook and news portals. People made fun of Nasreen, said she was ignorant not to know Nepal was a sovereign country. Why is it so important for us what Nasreen says or thinks about our political status? Even if she actually thought Nepal was "like India" as did Indian actress Madhuri Dixit few years back, just for the sake of argument, why is that an insult?

As a well-known writer, it was careless of Nasreen not to measure the repercussion of her tweet, which although said in good faith, she should have realised could translate as a political statement to many. And it would have been wiser if she just issued a simple sorry and moved on.

Instead she retorted with more tweets, and added fuel to the fire. But much more than an exiled Bangladeshi author, it was Nepal's cyberwarrior community that exposed itself as insensitive and insecure. If Nasreen is guilty of plain stupidity, why grace it with any more importance than it deserves? The way Nepalis reacted was perhaps scarier than what Nasreen said or implied.

The edifice of our nationalism seems to rest on whipped up jingoism and the faded glory of our

past. Our otherwise laid-back nationalism erupts only when some ignorant fool somewhere is quoted as saying that Buddha was born in India. Is our nationalism so fickle that we have to get worked up about this even as we know, Nepal as a nation state did not exist when Buddha was born and neither did India? Is our patriotism so brittle that we get into a frenzy when someone says Mt Everest is in China, even though half of the mountain is in China anyway?

If we were truly nationalistic, we should work towards resolving our political stalemate, taking pride in incorruptible leaders, ensuring 24-hour power and double digit growth. True nationalists would be helping create jobs at home so our compatriots wouldn't have to work for a pittance in 50 degree heat in the desert. Yet, one of our greatest source of nationalistic pride seems to be that our young men fight and die for a foreign nation.

Ultra-nationalism and politically-fanned jingoism has always been a danger in Nepal. Ten years ago it was hardcopy tabloids being used by politicians to fan the flames of street unrest over Hrithik Roshan. Today, with social networking sites on the Internet, demagogues have an even more powerful instrument to spread hate wider and faster.

Chauvinistic Facebook pages that spread racism get thousands of likes. It's time for peace-loving moderates on social networking sites to speak up to drown out the messages of hate. The core issue is, we take our nationalism too seriously and our socio-economic backwardness not seriously enough. Let's put our own house in order first, let's work to build a prosperous and peaceful Nepal that we can be truly proud of, and nationalism will take care of itself.



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Broken umbrella



STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari

Where was the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) when Surya Nepal recently closed its garment unit due to prolonged labour union disputes?

Well, let's see. They issued a boilerplate in which they worried about how the shutdown might scare other foreign investors. They requested the government and the related parties to create a favourable climate for industries. They expressed deep worries.

If this is all that FNCCI can do in times of militant labour unions, how is it ever

going to fulfill its mission of 'facilitating Nepali businesses become globally competitive', let alone execute its vision of 'leading the nation's economic progress'? Surely, boring press releases will not make this country competitive.

To be fair, last March, the FNCCI brought the three trade unions – the Maoist-backed All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF), the Nepali Congress-backed Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and the UML-backed General Federation of Trade Unions of Nepal (GeFONT) – together to sign that there would be no pay for work not done.

But just as Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal winked to bless his cadres' call for various bandas across the country, despite signing a no banda agreement, the union

affiliated with his party followed the lead, signed one thing in the spring and did just the opposite in the summer at the garment factory. This about-face was a show of force between the two factions among the Maoists – one led by the Honorable Member of

The FNCCI cannot be just a bystander when labour unions padlock private institutions

the Constituent Assembly Shalikram Jammakattel, and the other by Badri Bajgain.

This is the time for the FNCCI to stand tall on its claim that it represents the interests of all law-abiding businesses and summon

courage to call a spade a spade. It should not be lathering itself up with platitudes. It should take off the gloves, and join hands with wider civil society groups that too are tired watching a few politically-protected goons hold everyone's future hostage in their own country.

The questions that the FNCCI should put forth loudly and clearly through all forms of media are: What right do these union leaders have to play with job security of more than 600 workers, most of whom are poor women who were often paid above-the-market wages? Who are they to deprive the nation of tax revenues? And what makes them think that they can continue to portray their own country as a dangerous place to do business with, if their intention is not to

always keep it poor, hungry and chaotic?

Who, with half a brain on his head, wants to negotiate with uncompromisingly unprincipled union netas who are so cocksure in their belief that if violence got them the political power, violence will also help them make the sun rise from the west?

To be sure, hyper-educated Maoist lawmakers such as Hari Roka will leap to the comrades' defense. He will accuse, as he has, the company for not paying taxes and of myriad other violations. In that case, the FNCCI's cool answer should be: "Fine. Prove your charges in a court of law. If you can't do so, then, don't spread lies. Meantime, go draft the constitution, the job for which taxpayers have been piling you and your colleagues with money."

The FNCCI can use Surya Garment's example to play safe and be irrelevant. Or, it can make an effort to pacify the increasingly impatient public frustration that something has gone deeply wrong in this country.

Making paper while the sun shines

MAKING A CHANGE



Feel the difference

In 2008, when the Chinese were working overtime to finish the infrastructure in time for the Beijing Olympics, in Bhaisepati on Kathmandu's outskirts Lhakpa Geljen Sherpa's factory was also working overtime. Beijing's Grand Hyatt Hotel had outsourced its designer wall panels to Sherpa Everest Art Paper and that was what his workers were trying to finish.

Sherpa's love for traditional Nepali lokta paper began when he was still a boy in Solu Khumbu and his uncle used to lovingly produce the paper, drying the pulp in the sunshine. He had to come to Kathmandu often to make deliveries to customers, and the entrepreneur in him immediately saw an opportunity. After 15 years making paper, Sherpa



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

thought it was time to expand.

"Other people were using our paper and doing good business," says Sherpa. "I thought why not begin our own factory and add value to our products".

Sherpa launched his small factory in Kathmandu 15 years ago with 12 workers. Now, Everest Art Paper employees more than 100 people at its factories in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Khopasi and Solu Khumbu. Last year, the business

grossed over Rs 50 million.

Along with lokta paper Sherpa works with bamboo, hemp, corn husk and metal to create wall panels, curtains, table cloths and other materials of aesthetic value to be used by interior designers all over the world. He sources his raw materials from Jhapa, Rukum, Rolpa, Kathmandu and several other districts. A creative team at the factory then works to create innovative designs.

All products are exported to

partners in China, Australia, the Netherlands, the United States, and even Chile. "Our products reach six continents," Sherpa says proudly.

A majority of the crafts people in the factory are women, and Sherpa explains: "We give preference to women, it is about giving them financial independence which helps improve their standing in their homes," says Sherpa. The working hours are flexible so the young women can also attend colleges.

Sherpa recently began a training school at his hometown of Beni in Solu Khumbu because girls there often drop out of school SLC as their parents are unable to support them.

Sherpa has also started an organic farm in Solu Khumbu and says he intends to go back to his village after not being able to work there during the war years.

He says: "Now, I want to give back to my community what my community gave to me."

Paavan Mathema

Nepali Times begins this new fortnightly column 'Making a Change' profiling social entrepreneurs who do well by doing good.

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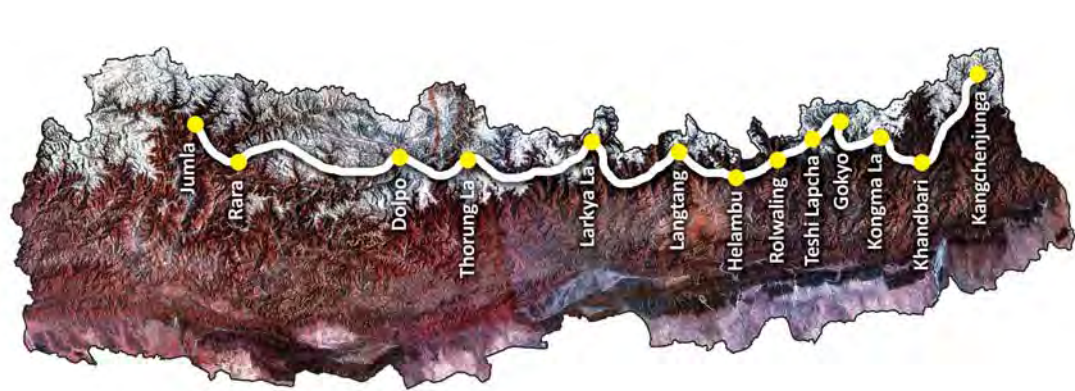
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Feel the difference



The solo trekker

In a journey of self-discovery, Sunil Tamang traverses Nepal from east to west on foot

BHRIKUTI RAI

Twentieth birthdays are milestones for many. It was no different for Sunil Tamang, the day he set off on his grand traverse of the Nepal Himalaya. Starting off from the tri-junction of the borders of Nepal, China and India behind Kangchenjunga in January this year, Tamang

took 128 days to walk right across Nepal to Rara Lake in Mugu. Sunil called it ‘Trek For Change-2011’ and says he did it to know himself and his country better. “I knew Nepal was beautiful, I knew Nepalis were friendly and helpful, but after the trip I realised Nepal is even more beautiful than I thought it was and the people are even more helpful

and generous,” says Sunil, who says he is even more impressed now about Nepal’s natural and human diversity. Sunil was bitten by the wander bug when he was eight. He ran away from his family home in Syabru to the Gosaikunda festival just to see for himself what it would be like. His love for mountains, trekking and the urge to explore nature was

further fuelled by numerous adventure stories of his father who worked as a trekking guide. As a child he was also fascinated by trekkers on the Langtang trail near his home. One American trekker was so impressed with Sunil she paid for him to go to a private

school in Kathmandu. During vacations he accompanied his father on treks to Everest, Annapurna and Langtang, and by the time he graduated from high school Sunil had already made up his mind to do a Himalayan traverse. “People said I was too

Educating children with disabilities

One of the least discussed aspects of human rights situation in Nepal is the condition of children with disabilities and their right to education despite laws guaranteeing it. They face diverse and imposing barriers to get even basic education in the country. The New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) pointed that out by releasing a report during a press conference in Kathmandu on Wednesday and emphasised that children with disabilities also have right to education. ‘Future Stolen: Barriers to Education for Children with Disabilities in Nepal’ documents the hurdles that children with disabilities face in getting quality education in the country. Some of these children experience abuse and neglect at home and in their communities, making it harder for them to gain access to schooling. In addition to this, the schools do not have ramps to allow easier passage of children with disabilities into classrooms and teachers are inadequately trained, Human Rights Watch found. All this results in low attendance and high dropout rates for children with disabilities compared with non-disabled children, the report noted.

The 76-page report was based on interviews, the rights body said, with nearly 100 disability advocates, teachers, government officials, and children or young people with disabilities and their families during a seven-month period. Although the Nepal government has an inclusive education policy which requires communities to provide education to all children without discrimination, many children with disabilities are not provided the support they need to attend community schools. “Tens of thousands of children with



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

disabilities in Nepal are being shut out from or neglected by the school system,” said Shantha Rau Barriga, of Human Rights Watch. “The Nepali education system needs to offer appropriate, quality education to all children, including those with disabilities.” Nepal has segregated, and often inferior, classes for children with disabilities, and separate schools for children who have physical, sensory, or intellectual disabilities, the rights organization said, adding that “an inclusive approach to education can boost learning for all students and combat harmful stereotypes of people with disabilities”. HRW suggested that the government needs to

rethink the use of special resource classes, which are intended as a transition to mainstream schools. It also said that international donors and United Nations agencies have not done enough to ensure that funding for education is distributed without discrimination and equitably benefits children with disabilities. In its report, HRW made recommendations as well. The government should revise teacher training materials, train all teachers about inclusive education methods, and improve monitoring of access to and the effectiveness of education for children with disabilities, it said. The government and

donors need to work together to develop awareness-raising and educational campaigns about the right to education and other rights of people with disabilities. It also urged the parliament to comprehensively review all domestic legislation and make amendments to comply fully with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Human Rights Watch said. Damakant Jayshi Slideshow: <http://www.hrw.org/features/nepal-access-education-children-disabilities>



young and weren't willing to help me with money," he recalls. While at St Xavier's college last year, he climbed the 6,169m Island Peak in the Khumbu to acclimatise for his trek. In January, with just Rs 28,000 in his pocket he set off.

"During my trek I saw the hardships that villagers in the mountains face, the poverty

and food shortages, which are being made worse by the effects of climate change," says Sunil, who has decided that he is going to take Environmental Science in college and work towards the conservation of Nepal's biodiversity.

Most of Sunil's childhood friends from Syabru have

migrated to the city or gone abroad to work or study. But Sunil says his trek has made him older and wiser, and even more attached to his homeland. "If only more young people travelled around the country they'd truly value being a Nepali," he told Nepali Times.

Sunil is off to The Netherlands, Belgium and Austria on a lecture tour in which he will try to get young Europeans to visit Nepal. He is hopeful that his adventures will inspire both Nepalis and foreigners to relish the joys of trekking, conserve Nepal's nature and help people in remote valleys with income from tourism. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Interview with Sunil Tamang

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EVENTS



9th Annual Wine Festival, taste 15 wines from six countries. 1 July to 15 September, Kilroy's, Thamel, 4250440-41

Teej Charity Event, organised by Sanu Foundation Nepal. 30 to 31 August, Old Sinamangal, 9751018792

Cine Saptaha, screening of short films: Forgive, Forget Not by Pranay Limbu and Watcher by Pranaya Rana and another undisclosed film. 21 to 27 August, 4.30 pm onwards, Docskool Film Centre, Gaurighat, 44471104

Staging of Bukhyacha, a Nepali adaptation of the Italian play About Face. Till 3 September, every day except Mondays, 5.30 pm, Arohan Theatre, Gurukul, Old Baneshwor.

Opinionated, a workshop on editorial and opinion writing. 3 to 4 September, 11am to 3pm, Rs 1000/-, apply before 1 September, 9813485716, sattya.org

Lyrics from the Junkyard, junkyard sculptures by Meena Kayastha. 19 August to 9 September, 11am to 6pm, The Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited.

Organic Farming Training, training on bio intensive farming, organised by Eco Organic Nepal. 14 August to 4 September, 10am to 4pm, EON farm at Mahankal, Fee: Rs. 4000, 9849685808, dipu_al@yahoo.com

Nepal Real State Expo 2011, organised by Nepal Land and Housing Association of Nepal. 25 to 28 August, 11am to 6pm, Bhrikuti Mandap

Nepali Mahotsab, celebrating 15 years of Film Southasia with a selection of eight Nepali documentaries. 27 to 28 August, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka



Cycle 6: Life, nature and wildlife photography by Om Yadav, 19 August to 30 September, 10am to 5pm, Galleria CUC, Maharajung

South Asia and China Trade Fair 2011, with Dasain Bazaar. Organised by the Nepal China Executive Council. 15 to 19 September, 11am onwards, Bhrikuti Mandap, Kathmandu.

Screening of Kandhahar, a 2001 Iranian film. 25 August, 6pm, free entrance, Lazimpat Gallery Café, 4428549

Tattinai Parcha, a dance party by WhatNext, Parcha Production and

We Fear Silence Events. 26 August, 5pm, Moods Lounge, Bluebird Mall, Thapathali

MUSIC

An Evening with Kutumba, fundraiser for the Namche community health clinic, a great initiative by the villagers of Namche to maintain their own health services. 3 September, 5.30 pm onwards, Shangri-La Hotel, Lazimpat



August Rush, musical performance by artists like Sabin Rai, Robin and the New Revolution and Albatross. 12 to 27 August, Attic Bar, Uttar Dhoka

Hamro Desh Promotional Gigs, launching of new Robin and the New Revolution album 'Hamro Desh'. 26 August at House of Music, Thamel, 27 August at Vesper, Jhamsikhel

DINING

Food Gala, eat everything and anything you want in the food galore. 27 to 28 August, 11am to 5pm, Little Angels' College, Hattiban

1905 Restaurant, feast on roasted delights within this converted aristocratic residence. Walled ambience and green surroundings make it an oasis within the city, Kantipath, 4215068

Black Pepper Café & Pub, cosmopolitan dining and drinking in a traditional style courtyard, try the apple sauce pork chops and enjoy the good service. Kopundole Height, Lalitpur, 5521897, 5536926



Documentary retrospective

August 27, 2011



12:30
The Spirit Doesn't Come Anymore
Tsering Rhitar, 1997, 38 min
The practice of shamans invoking spirits/protectors to ward off evil and cure disease has been a significant feature of Tibetan social life for over a millennium. Considered an inborn faculty that needs only awakening, and channeling, the shaman's art survives through his son or daughter. 78-year old spiritual medium, Pao Wangchuk, is trying to pass on this tradition to his son Karma. A deep conflict occurs when Karma refuses to carry on the line of work that has been an unbroken family tradition for thirteen generations.



13:30
A Rough Cut on the Life and Times of Lachuman Magar
Dinesh Deokota, 2001, 39 min
Lachuman Magar has led a colourful life. At the age of 58, he still has a strong affinity for the opposite sex. He has charmed them, cajoled them, and, more often than not, betrayed them. Today Lachuman's life has come full circle and he has had to forsake a great deal for one woman. This is his story as only he can tell it.

Film South Asia is staging a special screening of some of the best Nepali documentaries from the past 20 years that it has been conducting film festivals. The two-day event on 27-28 August at the Yala Maya Kendra in Patan Dhoka will include evergreen hits like Tsering Rhitar's *The Spirit Doesn't Come Anymore* to Kiran K Shrestha's *Bheda ko Oon Jasto*. All films have English subtitles. Directors will be on hand for a Q & A discussion. Tickets Rs 30.



14:30
The Living of Jogimara
Mohan Mainali, 2002, 38 min
In early 2002, 17 construction workers from Jogimara, Dhading were killed by the Nepali army while building a runway in another district, Kalikot. They were branded 'terrorists' by the state, and their families did not get their dead bodies or any compensation. Some families have conducted last rites for their loved one; others wait, hoping their relatives will return.

16:00
Behda Ko Oon Jasto (In Search of a Song)
Kiran K. Shrestha, 2003, 67 min
Narayan Wagle is one of Nepal's best-known journalists. But for eight years he would sing a folk song he'd heard in the highlands north of Kathmandu, Bhedako Oon Jasto, to his friends, to strangers, to singers and musicians. No one knew it. Wagle travelled up the Langtang Valley, from rhododendron fields in Nepal's midhills to a frozen lake, with members of the popular Nepali band Nepathya and his friend, the filmmaker, to search for the source of this song.

August 28, 2011

11:00
Itihaas Jitne Haru Ko Laagi (History for Winners)
dir. Pranay Limbu, 2003, 67 min
Itihaas Jitneharuka Laagi portrays the changes in the Nepali music scene, as represented by Kuber Rai and Dheeraj Rai. The two singers are a study in contrasts, with their diametrically opposing personalities and attitude towards music. The film invokes a Nepali adage "bolne ko pitho bikcha, na bolne ko chaamal pani bikdaina", which suggests that to succeed one has to be a good salesman.



Team Nepal
Girish Giri, 2005, 37 min
The story of a passionate team of Nepali footballers representing a youth club from the district of Birgunj. This team is given a unique opportunity not often granted to the still-growing community of Nepali football enthusiasts to travel to Sonpur, Bihar in India, to play football in a tournament taking place there. Team Nepal is the documentation of their experiences in Bihar, travelling, meeting

and mixing with other footballers, living in a foreign country, and playing the game they love.



12:45
A Life with Slate
Dipesh Kharel, 2006, 50 min
In a mountain village east of Kathmandu, the harsh lives of Thami slate-miners take on almost poetic dimensions. *A Life with Slate* emphasises how cooperation between the labouring families ultimately makes a tough life bearable, and depicts intimate scenes of the village life.



14:00
Hami Kunako Manche (We Corner People)
Kesang Tseten, 2007, 50 min
An at-times haunting look at a village in Rasuwa District, north of Kathmandu, in ravines beyond which no settlement lies. Villagers walk four hours just to buy chilli or salt, or to sell their bamboo weavings, their only means of cash income. Now, a bridge comes to the village, addressing longstanding fears about the rushing torrent below. How else will their lives change?



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

OR2K, one of the few vegetarian restaurants in the Valley, their Middle Eastern platter is delicious and their cocktails are robust. *Mandala Street, Thamel, 4422097*

Cosmopolitan Café, located in the heart of Basantapur, this cozy café offers arguably the best chicken sizzler in town. *Basantapur (along Kathmandu Darbar Square), 4225246*



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

Mike's Breakfast, huge breakfasts and a never-ending supply of coffee amidst a lush garden setting characterise this café, popular among tourists and locals alike. *Naxal, 4424303*

Yin Yang Restaurant, east meets west as you choose from a variety of Thai and continental dishes. Get a little spice in your life with their pad thai or green curry. *Thamel, 10am-10pm, 4701510*



Irish Pub, for the simple reason that the place actually feels like a bar. Don't miss out on their Irish coffee. *Lazimpat, Ananda Bhawan, 4416027*



Cafe Hessed, for those with a sweet tooth, offers a delicious range of cupcakes and doughnuts. *Jhamsikhel*

Pumpernickel Bakery, get an early breakfast or brunch with interesting choices of bread and sandwiches. Experiment with their goat cheese or yak cheese sandwiches, or have a sip of coffee in the classy indoor dining area. *Thamel, 7.30am-7pm, 4259185*

GETAWAYS



Park Village Resort, Saturdays and Sundays combo package with swimming, lunch and a bottle of beer @ NRs 990 for adults and NRs 800 for children. *Budhanilkantha, call 4375280 for reservations*

Monsoon Getaway, at Gokarna Forest Resort. *Till 31 August, Gokarna, 4451212*

Overnight Package, at The Dwarika's Himalayan Shangri- La Village Resort, for local residents, NRs. 4000/- (single), NRs. 5700/- (double). *Dhulikhel, contact 4479488 for reservations*

Monsoon Madness, at Hotel Shangri-la Pokhara. See Pokhara as never before, monsoon package at Rs 4999 for 2 nights and 3 days. *Till 30 September, Shangri-la Village, Pokhara, call 4412999 for booking*



SOMEPLACE ELSE

Despite it being Nepal's second most populous city, Biratnagar is sparse when it comes to fine dining. The city is far more an overblown industrial outpost than a metropolis beating with diversity. The only viable restaurant of choice for the finicky is the decade-old Hotel Xenial in Panchali.

Sable bow-tied waiters, white ceilings fashioned with floral moulding and festive friezes portraying a pastiche of Hindu mythology are attempts at an outdated hotel standard. But the piece de la resistance—and this is

Hotel Xenial



MARCO POLLO

no hyperbole—is its A/C, a coveted luxury in the Terai. At full frigid blast, Xenial's A/C is worth a duck-in to beat the heat and humidity.

Down to the grub, the carte comes in three (literally three laminated menus)

in a geo-culinary map of proximity: Indian, Chinese and Nepali/Continental. It's a who's whos' menu accommodating to frequent travelers to the eastern capital, mostly tradesmen from south of the border and


UN dispatches from the capital.

And so only 6 km away from Jogbani at the Nepali-Indian border, we opted for the prix fixe Indian dinner and, to balance it off, the prix fixe Chinese. The dinners at 525 Rs (per person) are generous sets that could alone feed three famished fiends: soup, two vegetarian dishes, one non-veg dish and all the trimmings.

The Chinese dishes were mediocre. The soup was baby-corn chowder heavy on cornstarch, while the chow mein reminds us why stir-fried noodles are best off street stalls and hole-in-the-wall quick stops. The mutton strips and pineapple in a sauce, which isn't sweet, sour or spicy but can only be described as 'red,' were just decent.

The Indian dinner, though predictable, was a sumptuous spread with savory spoonfuls of bindi, matar paneer, chicken curry, and dhal over plain rice and nan. With Indians making up the bulk of Xenial's clientele, you really



can't go wrong with desi. Plus VAT and service charge, Xenial's prices are typical for Kathmandu. But this isn't Kathmandu. At Hotel Xenial you're paying for a niche standard and cool air.  *Marco Pollo*

On a street parallel to Dharan Rd, the swankiest digs in town is just a two-minute rickshaw from the bus park

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Deal-icious	★★★
Rep-eat?	★★★



The Sri Lanka model



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

Medical colleges have mushroomed like English “boarding” schools in Nepal. From just one medical college 15 years ago, we now will soon have almost 20. To be sure, just like English private schools, many of the new medical colleges are also commercial ventures which were opened by savvy business people.

And there is a stampede of students trying to get into medical schools with their parents urging them on. Unfortunately, the tuition fees and deposits are so steep that for most Nepalis, a medical education is a distant dream even with requisite aptitude.

An important question is: will these new medical colleges help solve Nepal’s health problems? Most people who graduate from a medical college in Nepal will certainly want to go abroad to acquire more knowledge and

wealth and probably settle down there. You can argue this will be global gain, but it won’t help solve the health needs of the Nepali especially the ones living outside the capital. Furthermore, medical colleges are probably not the most cost- effective way of solving the health problems in a developing world.



We may have to learn from Sri Lanka. Despite the three decade civil war, Sri Lanka has the best health indicators in South Asia. Average life expectancy is 75 years and infant mortality is 9 per 1,000: incredible statistics for a developing South Asian country. Soon after independence from Britain

in 1947, Sri Lanka invested heavily in public health and women’s education, and this investment is paying them rich dividends today in health.

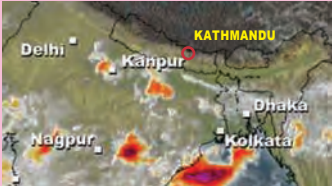
An important point in Sri Lanka has been focus on primary health care, especially maternal and child health through a multi-layered health system with adequate provisions of basic services at the community level. They have not only talked about this as is common practice, they have put their money where their mouth is. For example, Sri Lanka till 2005 did not have a single magnetic resonance scanner in the public sector, symbolising their emphasis on primary and secondary care. In sharp contrast, many poor countries (Nepal included) boast expensive tertiary care institutions with low funding of primary and rural care.

New medical colleges may satisfy our academic thirst for knowledge. But insofar as solving Nepal’s health problems are concerned, we may be better adopting the Sri Lanka model.



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Coming to the last lap of the monsoon with the big new system moving up from the Bay of Bengal pushing moisture up in the mountains. Gigantic storms almost as wide as the country. One such on Thursday night covered the whole of central Nepal and brought 50mm of rain in Pokhara. Humidity will remain high over the weekend, partly cloudy with night squalls.



FRI	SAT	SUN
25-15	26-16	29-16



RSS

NEW PLANS: Maoist Vice Chairman Mohan Baidya, Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and party leader Nara Bahadur Karmacharya at a press meet organised at the party office in Paris Danda. The Maoists rolled out a new proposal for government formation, army integration and the constitution.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

FACE LIFT: The Kalmochan Temple in Thapathali gets a new coat of paint on Saturday by Facebook activists.



BIKRAM RAI

SUMMER SPLASH: Local kids take a swim to beat the heat in a pond on the way to Rajbiraj, Saptari, on Wednesday.

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Auto-yogi

Is yoga for cheap, lazy sceptics?



KALAM
Rabi Thapa

God surely knows why Autobiography of a Yogi is as popular in Nepal as it is in the West. But it may have something to do with by now quite similar patterns of superficial spiritual questing in a world overwhelmed by material considerations, here and there. If you can't give up the ties that bind, you can at least read a book about it.

Many visitors to the East do believe that the subcontinent possesses a germ of spirituality lost elsewhere. I find this notion hard to stomach when even our festivities smack of conspicuous consumption.

If Nepalis did once exist in a state of pre-material spirituality, they have long since made the transition to a state of Obsessive Consumerist Disorder.

It's no surprise then that Nepalis reach out for copies of Yogi in an attempt to recapture the spirituality once available to them on tap. Indeed, as the atrocious cover story of the last issue of Nepal indicates, our spiritually harassed yooof are, far from rioting for a constitution while trashing the malls for free fakes, heading for a range of 'dhyaan' packages, offered by the likes of psychogurus Manokranti Matrix and the perennial refuge of the dulled, Osho. Or, as is increasingly the case, they turn to yoga.

Yoga is of course as much about physicality as spirituality. There is

a tendency in the West to strip yoga of the latter so as to focus on the corporeal benefits (while still advocating meditation in some form). Many yoga programs this side of town have the reverse emphasis. But then what's a man from the East, equally sceptical of Power Yoga and the cancer-blasting ramblings of a cock-eyed teleguru, to do?

Tired of being told that I could damage myself (as opposed to my 'Self') irreparably if I relied solely on yoga books, I decided to find a living, deep breathing guru to show me the eight-fold path. I contacted a local practitioner of the famed Bihar School of Yoga, who promised to call me to confirm sessions. The call never came, and the promise of enlightenment proved to be mere illusion; once more I lapsed into couch-slouching.

Then media coverage of the latest yoga program to hit town (cue pics of expats in yogic poses in front of Kathmandu landmarks) began to get on my nervous system in a less than yogic manner. So I followed up on an ad from the the HBMC, featuring a full course from the afore-eluding guru.

"Hello? Are you still taking people for your course of yoga?"

"Um, is this for you? This course is for bideshis."

"How much is it?"

"Mahango chha. It's 180 dollars for the week."

Nirvana don't come cheap.

Cheaper, then, was the option then floated by a friend intent on attending an Art of Living course. A full 24 hours of intensive pranayam exercises for Rs 1500 seemed reasonable, despite my aversion to folks who take on multiple honorifics, in this case, Sri Sri Sri (excuse me if I missed any) Ravi Shankar.

But once again my inbred scepticism, this time about the potential ills of a breathing course that has been accused of forcing hyperventilation upon participants, stopped me. My friend sighed, accused me of laziness, plain and simple, and signed up.

She'd be sighing ever more deeply by midweek. Not only was the heavy breathing giving her headaches, she

found Art of Living unusually keen on practices more reminiscent of corporate team-building exercises than meditative pranayam. Each attendee was part of a subgroup: she couldn't enter the building without all the group members being present. There were paper-and-pencil routines to divulge what you wanted from the course and what you thought of your fellow attendees. And if you decided to sleep in? You had to inform the group in advance. At which point the guru would take it upon himself to wheedle you (over the phone) into attending. My friend terminated her imminent induction into the One World Family with some relief.

So where did this leave me? In the beginning was the Word. For this incorrigible autodidact, it's back to book yoga (deep, relaxed sigh). 🇳🇵

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*Add half teaspoon of oil for fresh fries. Frozen fries are usually pre-cooked in oil.

PHILIPS



No refuge when refugees leave

MARCUS BENIGNO in JHAPA

News reports last week heralded the third country resettlement of the 50,000th Bhutanese refugee 20 years after being driven out of their homeland and living in camps in eastern Nepal.

The government and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are closing and consolidating the camps as the remaining 63,000 refugees prepare to leave. Locals who depend

on the camps for business and jobs now have to seek refuge elsewhere. Nearly 700 families were relocated to Beldangi and Sanischare from Goldhap in eastern Jhapa in June. Goldhap, the fifth and smallest of the camps which housed 4,600 refugees since 1990, is now a vacant lot.

The Jhapa district administration is planning to develop Goldhap into a “botanical garden” that in theory would generate tourism income. But Lilamaya Upreti, a local tenant farmer, is not optimistic.

For seven years Upreti and her family have lived off the main road leading into the Goldhap entrance. “When the camp was here, there was a market and it was good for us,” Upreti told Nepali Times. “They helped us when we had floods and we helped them when they had fires.”

A fire in March razed nearly all the refugee huts in Goldhap. Refugee Chiranjibi Rai says when the fire trucks finally came their tanks were empty. “Luckily, the locals and the Nepal Army on guard

helped,” he said.

In 1990-91 more than 100,000 refugees were driven out of Bhutan and they have lived in camps in eastern Nepal ever since. But for some 350,000 Nepalis living outside, the camps have brought jobs and business. Drivers run transport services, farmers sell crops, and shopkeepers sell wares, run money transfer systems or operate cyber cafes.

Because electricity is not available in the camps (UNHCR does not consider it a “basic need”) refugees

pay to charge their mobile phones and electronic devices at charging posts outside the camps. It is Rs 10 for a full charge on a mobile. Locals provide refugees communication, mobility and access to the world beyond the camps.

But when the final refugees left Goldhap, so did the markets and public transport. Of the remaining four camps, two others are scheduled to close: Timai by the end of the year and Khudunabari in 2012.

“We are here to take care

Those who want to stay

Bhampa Rai was a royal physician before being driven out of Bhutan. Unlike most refugees, he doesn’t want to be resettled in America or Europe.

GOPAL GARTAULA in JHAPA

It has been 20 years but Bhampa Rai still dreams every night of the orange orchard and the fields of cardamom of his ancestral farm in Banda bloc of the Samchi region of southern Bhutan.

Now 61 years old, Rai was forced out of Bhutan like 110,000 other refugees in 1990 and settled in camps run by the UNHCR in

eastern Nepal. The fact that he was a medical doctor who used to treat members of the Bhutan royal family did not save him.

“I will return to Bhutan one day, I am convinced of that, even if it is only my ashes,” says Rai. “I have lived as a refugee for 20 years, I don’t want to go any further away from my country and forget my homeland.”

Last week, the 50,000th refugee has been resettled in the

United States, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Australia and UK under a deal worked out with UNHCR. Of the 110,000 refugees, 96,000 have applied for resettlement. Most of those who are opting to stay behind are political activists, the elderly and those who are willing to wait out a return to Bhutan.

Rai did his medical degree in Bangladesh and India and was



GOPAL GARTAULA



As camps for Bhutan refugees close, locals lose business

ALL PICS: MARCUS BENIGNO

of refugees, but the government and other UN agencies are planning community development activities around the camps benefiting the remaining refugees and the host community,” said Stephane Jaquetmet, UNHCR country representative in Kathmandu.

As refugees leave and locals wait, there is doubt that the government and international donors will respond. Said Upreti: “We’re waiting but always only the local leaders benefit. For us common people, we get nothing.”

a doctor with a bright career in Bhutan when he and his family were evicted. For the past two decades he has been running a clinic at the Beldangi Camp in which he provides free consultations to fellow-refugees. On the street outside, white buses of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) go back and forth everyday carrying more refugees to homes abroad.

“The Bhutan regime evicted 18 per cent of its original population, this is the biggest ethnic cleansing exercise in modern history,” says Rai, who used to take the pulse of royal family members and listen to their heartbeats. “If it wasn’t for India propping them up, the Bhutan monarchy would have been gone.”

Karka Jung Subba was the



LEAVING THE PAST BEHIND: Refugee children peer through their bamboo home in Beldangi (left) before relocation to another camp, while their family awaits emigration.

The Beldangi camp is now a vacant lot (top) while the street outside is full of money transfer offices.

Lilamaya Upreti (above, left) and her daughter-in-law Sumitra are worried about the loss of business after the refugees leave.

A local mobile charging shop (right) will lose customers when the camp closes.



village headman in Chirang in southern Bhutan. Even in the camps, fellow refugees respectfully call him “mandal” the name in Bhutan for a village elder. Today, he lives in Beldangi 2, Sector c3 Hut Number 61. Of his 17-member clan, seven have already left for the United States.

“I’m not going anywhere,” he says firmly, “we were forced out of Bhutan from a home and farm that my ancestors built with their own sweat and blood. I don’t want to be pushed even further away from my home.”

Like Rai and Subba, Chhabi Kharel also feels third country resettlement will weaken the struggle of the refugees to return to the land of their ancestors.

Kharel lives in Beldangi 1 with his family and blames the international community for not stopping this gross violation of human rights.

He blames India and the western democracies for not leaning on the Bhutan regime when the evictions were taking place. He adds: “Third country resettlement is just a way for these countries to import cheap labour and herd us like goats and sheep.”

nepalitimes.com

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Forgotten futures

The focus on the constitution has taken attention away from the plight of the families of the disappeared



GUEST COLUMN

Ram Kumar Bhandari

Unlike other wars, neither side won Nepal’s conflict. Neither side lost, either. But the Nepali people lost. And they continue to suffer because the warring sides don’t want to address the issues of transitional justice and war crimes.

Among the victims, the plight of those whose relatives had disappeared continues to linger. They live in limbo, they have been ignored and their tears have never dried.

Their patience is also wearing thin. Frustration is giving way to a sense of vengeance. This is not good news for a society which needs to heal from the years of war. There is no meaning in discussing justice and human rights in this chaotic environment, where perpetrators lead the transition, where victims do not feel secure to speak out, and remain excluded from the justice system.

Human rights violators from both sides remain in positions of power, and talk of justice. This denial of accountability has institutionalised violence and set the stage for a resurgence of conflict. Political leaders often justify their past actions saying the atrocities were the result of “unfortunate circumstances” and we are all victims of structural violence.

This line of thinking justifies enforced disappearance and the extra-judicial killings during the war. No one is ready to take responsibility or acknowledge the past injustice. The failed transitional justice environment has created disillusionment and hopelessness among the families of the disappeared. They feel marginalised and betrayed by the state. Words like “truth” and “reconciliation” don’t carry any meaning anymore. Families of the disappeared were promised that the fate of their relatives would be made public in 60 days. They have waited 1,738 days.

Nepal’s peace process is centered in Kathmandu and led by reluctant governments in the last five years. It has failed to build a comprehensive strategy to bring parties involved in conflict to a common platform so as to determine the whereabouts of ordinary victims in rural areas.

Victims’ groups have been formed but these have, to date, been dominated by those created either by political parties in which only victims of one party to the conflict are represented, or by human rights agencies that seek to impose their understanding of the goals and in turn offer victims little agency.

As a result, the entire campaign has been fragmented and instrumentalised to serve the agenda of the few. The existing local victims’ groups, who provide financial and psychological support to the victims must adopt a non-partisan approach and stand in a united platform to prevent themselves from being manipulated for vested interests.

The government, for its part, must first commit itself towards delivery of justice. It should respect and implement the past promises it has made to address plights of the victims and their families. The recommendations made by Supreme Court, the NHRC and the international community must be respected and the Government of Nepal should ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and recognize disappearances as against humanity. It must go beyond the easily accessible urban activists and consult as broadly as possible with victims and their families.

Rulers in Kathmandu have completely forgotten one of the most painful pages in our history. To them, it is just an ‘episode’ in the struggle for power at the top. Nepal has already paid heavily for the loss of over 1,350 lives and the price will be higher if such ignorance continues.



Ram Kumar Bhandari, whose father was disappeared in 2001, is a human rights activist and chair of the National Network of Families of Disappeared and Missing (NEFAD).

nepalitimes.com

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Home away from home

Parvat Portel in Kantipur, 25 August

कान्तिपुर

The impasse in Bhutanese refugee movement has led many of its top notch leaders of the Dignified Repatriation Movement to take the route of third country settlement. The most recent example is Narad Adhikari, spokesperson of Bhutan National Democratic Party.



IN PICTURES: A photo exhibition of resettled Bhutanese refugees in refugee camps in Jhapa, in November 2010.

Many active leaders of 'Dignified repatriation' movement including Tekbir Chhetri, Subhash Acharya, Ganesh Subedi, Chhabilal Timsina have already settled in third countries. Adhikari, along with his family, headed to America on 3 August. He now lives in Hampshire.

Talking to *Kantipur*, Adhikari said that the

growing rift among Bhutanese leaders led him to take the decision. He said, "Dignified repatriation movement has lost momentum owing to the internal rift."

Adhikari asserted that the repatriation movement will still be taken forward gradually from America. United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has resettled the refugees in eight countries including America and Australia and the movement is expected to begin from all eight countries at the same time. "We have been consulting about it, but the date hasn't been fixed yet," he said.

According to UNHCR about 51,000 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled in its three-year long program. The number of refugees applying for resettlement increased sharply since 2008. 36,000 among them have been resettled in America, the highest among all countries.

Bhutan People's Party president Balaram Poudel, Bhutan National Democratic Party's DNS Dhakal, Teknath Rijal of Bhutanese repatriation movement's committee and other Bhutanese leaders had announced the repatriation movement a year ago. However, the movement has made no progress.

President of Bhutanese Refugees Repatriation Committee Bhampha Rai has said that the refugees' repatriation movement has lost momentum because of political reasons. Rai says that the leaders who once were ardent supporters of democracy in Bhutan are now working as labourers abroad. Rai says: "Nobody is interested in repatriation any more."



Quake-up call

Naya Patrika, 23 August

नयाँ पत्रिका

The official resident of the president and prime minister of Nepal are among the most vulnerable to earthquake, according to a study by the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET). The government offices in Singha Darbar, residential quarters of ministers at Harihar Bhawan, the Ministry of Education in Keshar Mahal and the three palaces of Hanuman Dhoka, Patan and Bhaktapur, listed as world heritage sites, are all prone to earthquakes.

NSET's Amod Dixit says, "There is an urgent need to make all the government buildings earthquake resistant, because we are risking the lives of prominent government officials and with them, the institutions they run."

An engineer at the Department of Urban and Housing Development says old buildings are at risk because nobody has shown interest in retrofitting them to withstand earthquakes. NSET says tectonic pressure under the Himalaya has been accumulating and could lead to an earthquake of at least 8 magnitude in the near future.

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Mobile row

Nagarik, 22 August 2011

नागरिक

The distribution of mobile service licenses worth Rs 295 million has put Minister for Information and Communications, Posta Bahadur Bogati, in a fix. His predecessors Krishna Bahadur Mahara and Agni Sapkota, also Maoists, are pushing the proposal whereas other Maoists are against the move. Bogati has now passed the buck to Nepal Telecom. Before the minister passes any such proposals, he would have to consult a ministry

level committee, but due to the absence of a prime minister, Bogati is hesitant to pass the proposal in hurry. Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and CA member Narayan Dahal reportedly met Bogati and urged him not to go through with the licenses. Dahal has said companies who had invested in providing limited services in the rural sector will not profit from the proposal. Investor Ajay Sumagri has shown urgency in dismissing the proposal. This led to a rift within the party.



Mahara in Delhi

Rajdhani, 22 August

राजधानी

Maoist party's foreign department head Krishna Bahadur Mahara has gone to Delhi to meet high level Indian leaders and win their support for the formation of a Maoist-led consensus government as per party president Pushpa Kamal Dahal's directions. The Maoists are optimistic that Mahara's visit will help create a favourable environment for them, softening the Indian stance against them. "We are hopeful that Mahara's visit will revive our faltering relationship with India," the source said. Mahara's press assistant Manoj Ghartimagar said that he was in Delhi for his wife's treatment.

Agreeing to disagree

Nepal, 28 August

नेपाल

Well past midnight on 28 May Maoist Chairman Puspa Kamal Dahal, the NC's Sushil Koirala and Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal signed the five-point agreement to extend the CA term by three months and the prime minister would step down. With less than a week to go, this is not likely to happen. From the historic twelve-point agreement, back in November 2005 to the recent extension of the CA term, Chairman Dahal has signed many agreements. Unfortunately, he is fond of disagreements as much as of agreements. There are disagreements as soon as agreements are signed. The peace process has been going round and round in circles with these agreements:

November, 2005	: 12-point Agreement
May, 2006	: Ceasefire Code of Conduct
June, 2006	: Baluwatar Agreement
November, 2006	: Three Party Agreement and CPA
March, 2007	: Commitment
December, 2007	: 23-Point Agreement
June, 2008	: Consensus on interim constitution
August, 2008	: Consensus on national unity government
November, 2008	: Dahal says he will fulfill earlier agreements
January, 2010	: 'High Level Political Mechanism' agreement between the three parties
March, 2010	: Commitment to end reactionary conspiracy
May, 2010	: Three-point agreement
September, 2010	: Three-point agreement between the Maoists and UML and four-point agreement between the Maoists and UML.
December, 2010	: Three parties reach two-point agreement
February, 2011	: Secret seven-point agreement between Khanal and Dahal
March, 2011	: Three-party agreement with MJF
May, 2011	: Five-Point Agreement



Book : Constitution

नागरिक Rajesh KC in Nagarik, 23 August

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ We are looking for a consensus within a majoritarian exercise. ”

UCPN (M) leader Barsaman Pun



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



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

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Kaun banega PM?

Before Nepal even existed as a nation state, the rajahs of Gorkha used to choose a new king by making candidates run a marathon at a place called Liglig. As the race for **PM** gets underway, it may be time to revive this ancient custom and get RCP and BRB run the race from the CA building to Singha Darbar. After all the custom originated in their neck of the woods. There could be a slight change so the contestant who can hold his breath for longer becomes **PM** because his opponent will have died. So, who will be the first to breathe his last?

~~~~~

If that doesn't work we will have to fall back on the simple arithmetic of parliament to elect a **PM**. Let's sum it up: a new coalition needs 297 votes out of the 594 CA members to form the govt. The Baddies have 237, and they need 60 more for which they have zeroed in this time on the Madhesis since they have burnt their bridges with fellow commies in the UML. Being kingmakers, the Madhesis are bargaining hard, and promising full support in return for juicy ministries. The Maoists have even dangled carrots in front of the TMLP. Meanwhile, RCP only needs NC and UML support to get him to the finishing line. The Mao-buddies have this

time sent emissaries Mahara and Ram Karki to lobby the Dilli Durbar that BRB is their man for **PM**, and to lean on the Madhesis to reach 297 in CA voting. They must have given up on Lainchour which is exhorting kangresis at nocturnal booze-ups to get off their butts and start kicking some Baddie ass.

~~~~~

Poor Chairman Awesome, he is missing the limelight and to get back in the headlines has come out with the breakthrough package he should have proposed two years ago. But one shouldn't underestimate Chhabilal Baje's cunning and penchant for backstabbing. After getting some tough talk from Samrat, who he always thought was his comrade-in-arms, as well as the stern message Mahara ComeRed brought back from Delhi, he has decided that for now he can't prevent his nemesis Laldhoj from being **PM**. He probably thinks he can always make BRB's life hell in Baluwa Water later. There has also been a rift among hardline followers of Chairman Ferociousness between moderate hardliners and harder hardliners. The moderates were of the view that the party should try to salvage the peace process by pushing through the integration package in return



for **PMship** for BRB. So, don't write off a consensus govt under BRB just yet because the Doc is one single-minded comrade.

~~~~~

It now transpires that PKD's frequent forays to Hong Kong and Malaysia were not to meet APCEF at all. In fact, APCEF was an elaborate decoy to camouflage Lotus Flower's secret meetings with his Godfather-cum-handler during the war years when

he lived in Noida. So while we all thought the Chairman was meeting the Chinese, he was getting fresh instructions from the Indians. Clever. Party insiders now think the Lumbini project has damaged the Chinese most of all, and this worked brilliantly as a smokescreen for PKD's frequent junkets out east.

~~~~~

The talk of the town, or at least of the media circles this week was the charm offensive that Chairman Supercalifragislistic unleashed on some senior editors (including at least two he'd threatened to "straighten out") at the Pistachio Palace on Wednesday. No, Comrade Donkey wasn't invited. But the Mule's mole tell us Awesome went all touchy feely and confessional, admitting to having made major blunders during his tenure as **PM**. The guy deserves an Oscar for nearly shedding a tear or two when lamenting that this was because, having come straight from the jungle, he didn't yet know the ways of "parliamentary politics". Lotus Flower said he made three Big Mistakes: sacking General Cut All, resigning from **PMship** in May 2009 and angering the Indians. If he had to do it all over again, he said, he'd do it differently. But he asked the

hacks present to understand that he was under tremendous pressure from Kiranji @ Co. But you have to give it to the man for strategic timing, he spills these beans on the day before the new Indian ambassador arrives. And then announces the new integration package in exchange for heading the govt.

~~~~~

Whatever chances Lion Brave still had to be **PM** have vanished into thin air. Not known for high wattage in the cerebral dept, SBD showed his true character by promising his Baddie mentors integration of as many as 12,000 fighters into the national army in return for an endorsement of hsi **PMship**. Further, he assured his UML backers of choice ministries after his cronies had a first stab at them. He also went around telling everyone he had turned a new leaf and was on the wagon. He is so desperate he has a fulltime astrologer and has new amulets on his fingers.

~~~~~

Bottled water manufacturers seem to be cashing in on the prime ministerial race by naming their latest brand "**PM**". Unless it is a short form for "post-mortem".





उज्यालो ९० नेटवर्कमा

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