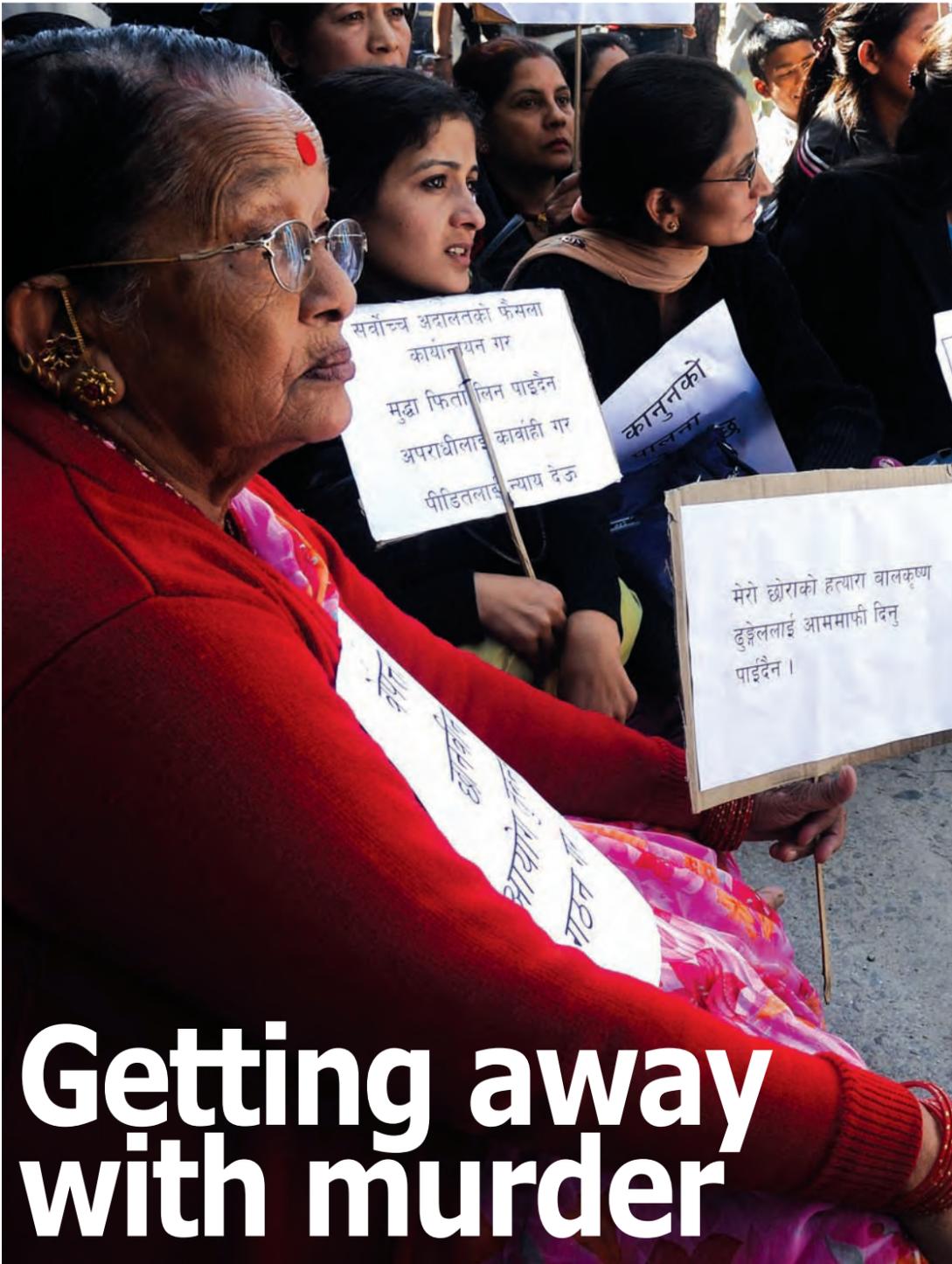


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Getting away with murder

BIKRAM RAI

A good beginning is half done, they say. But that doesn't seem to apply to Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai.

He started out well in September, confirming the public's perception of him as an upright and austere politician. He eschewed the official SUV, travelled economy to New York,

personally inspected highway restaurants and set up a complaints hotline.

But you can't rule by symbolism alone. Sooner or later the people are going to see through it. Many of the country's problems need structural solutions, not populist photo-ops.

Still, a people impatient for progress on peace and

the constitution would have given Bhattarai the benefit of doubt. They backed him in the near mutiny within his party over an investment agreement with India.

But Bhattarai is now having to deal with the aftershocks of two flawed decisions he took before flying off for the SAARC summit on Tuesday. He



NO PARDON: Ram Kumari Shrestha, 80, mother of Ujjan Shrestha (above) protests on Wednesday against the prime minister's decision to get a presidential pardon for Maoist MP Balkrishna Dhungel who was convicted for the murder.

inducted a cabinet of record-breaking girth. Then he got his bloated cabinet to ask presidential pardon for a party colleague convicted of murder and sentenced by the Supreme Court to life imprisonment. This has angered human rights groups, opposition parties and the victims' family members.

The issue also threatens to embroil the president in a controversy at a time when the country needs political unity. Prem Bahadur Khadka of the Nepal Bar Association says the prime minister's move has undermined democracy and the rule of law: "The government should take back its decision, this issue shouldn't be taken to the president at all." **Dewan Rai**

Translated editorials from the Nepali language press about the Balkrishna Dhungel pardon.

See also p15

The lords of impunity

COMMENT:

by Kanak Mani Dixit p4-5

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SOCIAL SECURITY VS MILITARY SECURITY

In the early days of the peace process back in 2006, a lot of the negotiations were around semantics.

The Maoists did not want their emergence from the jungles to look like surrender, so the UN-supervised sites were not called 'camps' but 'cantonments'. The Maoists inflated their fighting force to more than 30,000 to guarantee advantage in future negotiations and compensation. It was unacceptable to call it 'decommissioning', so guns were stored in containers even though everyone knew that the more sophisticated weapons were outside. 'Demobilisation' was a bad word, so we used 'integration' to keep everyone happy.

Neither the Maoists nor the Nepal Army lost the war, but neither side won. It was the Nepali people who lost, the country's development was pushed back decades, jobs vanished as investors and tourists got spooked. The conflict brutalised society, leaving a legacy of violence, impunity and crime.

Next week, it will be five years since the Comprehensive Peace Accord was signed. The entire process has taken twice as long as it should have, and perhaps we were too ambitious to think that everything would be sorted out in five short years.

The conflict may have ended, but the guerrilla war has been replaced by criminal violence. In the absence of a strong state, organized crime dominates not just the underworld but also above-ground politics. Those in power correlate deteriorating security with the need to enlarge the security apparatus. But that ignores the real root of insecurity: rulers setting the wrong example by blatant impunity (the prime minister, for example, getting the expanded cabinet to make the president pardon a crony convicted by the Supreme Court of murder and sentenced to life). It ignores the politicisation of crime



BIKRAM RAI

and the criminalisation of politics, protection rackets run by officials elected to protect the people, and political parties coddling crime syndicates for payoffs.

The reality is that the army and police are so bloated they are ineffective. The army doubled in size during the war to 90,000. The Armed Police Force was set up to fight the insurgency and is 40,000 strong. The Nepal Police has 60,000 personnel. Add to that another 6,500 Maoist ex-fighters to be integrated and the 10,000 people of Madhesi origin to be included in the army, and it is clear Asia's poorest can ill afford such a large military.

The first order of business will be to de-link politicians from criminal networks and address accountability and impunity. We need to remove the excuse politicians use to maintain military expenditure. Without this demonstration of political will to democratise the army and instil civilian command, security sector reform will just be a slogan.

Nepal's expenditure on security is more than 2 per cent of GDP. Defence expenditure in 2009-2010 stood at Rs 20 billion, making up nearly 14 per cent of the total budget. At a time when education, health, infrastructure are in such disarray, splurging on security is not just stupid, it is criminal. Our model should be Costa Rica, which has no army because it decided it doesn't need one. If we must have an army let's re-orient to disaster relief, rapid response and infrastructure.

The real security we should be worrying about is social security. It is poor service delivery, the lack of inclusive health care and education and job creation that are going to be the real security concerns in the coming years.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

MONSANTO

The main objective of the United States and Monsanto is to dominate world agriculture with genetically modified seeds in the absence of labeling of genetically engineered foods ('Why Monsanto?' by Sascha Fuller, #577). Countries like South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand have all passed laws requiring the labeling of GM foods. Nepal should pass such law as well. Monsanto seeds are patented and to use them, farmers must buy new seeds from Monsanto every year.

Raghu

- In the U.S. Monsanto is under the Federal Department of Agriculture watchlist (I'm not sure if that means a whole lot.) Can you imagine what they can do in Nepal where you can buy any government official for dime a dozen? This must be stopped and Nepali media needs to do its job of getting the information to the people.

Kumar Bijayananda

- Nepal should be careful to ensure that any agricultural technology it introduces is appropriate for the country. It must be equally careful not to make knee-jerk reactions on misinformation. Sascha Fuller is mistaken on many of her facts and seems to be heavily influenced by the anti-technology factions in the west. This project does not involve GM crops, simply hybrids which increase yields and have been successfully introduced in developing countries. They may not be appropriate for all areas of Nepal (particularly hilly areas where annual access to new seed is limited) but they do have great benefits. Monsanto is just conducting a trial. The trial will help to determine whether these hybrids CAN help Nepalis. No one should oppose this.

Raj

- For USAID to introduce any Monsanto products in any country is a disgrace. GM seeds have proved to be a failure, scientists

of international reputation have exposed the claims of Monsanto. But the US government has decided to encourage countries to take Monsanto seeds. Why? Within the Obama Government leading positions are held by ex-Monsanto directors. Readers can go to www.aoag.org.

Len Aldis

- Journalists should understand the science behind this issue before regurgitating environmentalist sound bites. Demands for farmers to be organic and in perfect harmony with nature ignores their day-to-day realities and is an idealistic Western bias pushed on the poor. No farmer would reject hybrid seeds if they yield profits high enough to offset their increased costs of production. Math should be applied before ideology. Monsanto is no saint, but don't confuse them with the science of hybrid seeds and GMOs.

Impartial

- To regard any big company trying to increase food production because of some knee-jerk rejection of technology will mean a lot of people in Nepal and elsewhere around the world will go hungry. I am no fan of Monsanto's past, but to reject it outright may consign millions to starvation. You may be right about GMOs (but even here the fears seem to be overblown) but hybrids? Breeding seeds so that they improve yields is what made the green revolution possible. Those opposed to it want their populations to go hungry. 90 per cent of Nepal's farms are organic, and if they remain organic they are not going to feed 50 million Nepalis by 2030.

Anti-anarchy

VAT SCAM

Some of those on the list of fake VAT bills may be cheats, but there is a tendency here to say all businessmen are thieves (Two Paisa by Paavan Mathema, 'Guilty until proven innocent', #577). When revenue

officials make it impossible for traders to be honest, it's all relative. Even the list is a way to extort money from legitimate businesses.

Yamaraj

- Anyone worried about the inflationary impact that this VAT scam might bring? It is through VAT evasion that most goods are affordable. Ask yourself one honest question, be real honest. "Would you rather pay more and make sure that the VAT is paid or would you rather give a rat's ass about the VAT and purchase the cheaper good?" You decide!

ASDF

- What about all those electronic gadget shops in New Road that never provide VAT bills? And if asked, they will charge you extra 13 per cent to be eligible for VAT Bills, so a lot of people just buy without any proof of purchase. And a lot of shops keep on changing their names every few months. Next are the Party Palaces. They too keep changing their names. They are definitely cooking something.

Independent Observer

- Re: This is It by Rubeena Mahato, 'The right to know', #577. Maybe businessmen are crooked. But show me a politician who is not crooked. Show me a civil servant who is not crooked. Why are there known criminals in the CA? Is Tarant Dahal capable of doing some investigative journalism and dig the property of any secretary or section officer? It is quite an easy job to get a list of the business houses and get some publicity. But investigative journalism is a different kettle of fish. We have a right to know from where the political parties and politicians get their money to lavishly spend it

M R Kansakar

- What everybody forgets in this debate over the right to information is that probity in public life is part of a culture that is built over

centuries. As soon as socialists in general, and their sidekicks in particular, start the destruction of that culture no amount of information will save you from erosion in public confidence.

Shivani

MOTHER OF ALL AGREEMENTS

Every reader knows that Nepali Times supported Gen Katwal and the MKN government in refusing to carry out integration of the PLA as required by the peace agreement. (Editorial, 'Mother of all agreements, #577) After wasting years on pointless obstruction you pretend that it was the Maoists who opposed integration of the PLA and that the war they fought for the new Nepal you still insist was 'unnecessary'.

Arthur

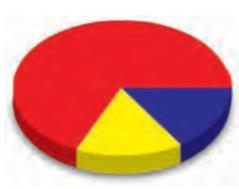
- Is that what the Maoists murdered, looted and extorted all these years for? Nine (or whatever) lakhs in cash and being housed and fed for a few years? Not very revolutionary. I wonder if we will be able to see the audited accounts of the money spent on these killers. There's a challenge for Nepali Times.

Jange

nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll # 578

Q. Will the seven-point deal put the peace process back on track?

Total votes: 1,247



- On track: 67.8%
- Off track: 15.8%
- Don't care: 16.4%

Weekly Internet Poll # 579. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Compared to last month, how has your assessment of Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai changed?

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

LIVING OFF THE FARM

What is really shameful is not that GMO industries and their products are attempting to come into Nepal, but that USAID, DFID, Gates, and many other donors, development agencies and NGOs continue to look for and rely on low hanging, silver bullet germ plasm technologies and short term projects that they claim will improve the lives, and increase food security of Nepali farmers. The improvement of agriculture in Nepal and most other developing countries will not come from easy GMO technologies and quickly implemented projects but from long term, hard work in improving farmers agronomy that close the yield gaps of the current crops/varieties, intensify agriculture and relieve the current drudgery.

If you go to the large-scale large-budget irrigation project areas like LGWP the East or West Gandak irrigation projects where irrigation, improved seeds, increased use in fertilisers are already the norm you will still find stagnated yields, low levels of productivity, diversification and intensification. A GMO seed will not change this situation.

Improved and knowledge intensive agronomies, better access to small and scale agricultural machinery (2-wheel tractors, reapers, threshers, STW and small horsepower pumpsets and even combine harvesters) will bring the benefits to the small farmers that we all want.

If activists want to encourage efficient, competitive, sustainable family farms they really need to look past GMOs and to the current Nepal Tarai farm model patterned after the Punjab of Pakistan, whose large HP machinery has limited scope for improving the life of the average small scale Nepali farmer with fragmented holdings. Instead we should be promoting models similar to Bangladesh, Thailand and Vietnam where improved ag practices and their concomitant use of small scale, small horsepower machinery have led to incredible gains in small farm productivity and intensification. Vietnam and Thailand are now the #1 and #2 exporters of rice in the world and the once 'development basket case' of Bangladesh reached food security 10 years ago.

In the west it was not seeds (GMO or otherwise) that led to corporate farming it was industrialisation, unlimited holdings, and big horsepower tractors and machinery where one farmer can farm 500+ hectares of wheat on their own. Similarly in Nepal, western style corporate farming will not come from better access to GMO seeds, it will come from continued low levels of ag production and productivity with high levels of poverty and drudgery that will continue to force Nepal's sons and daughters off the farms, looking for something better.

S Justice



HARI DEVI ROKAYA

● Agriculture in developed countries is far more productive than in countries like Nepal because it uses much more advanced technology. This includes machinery, chemicals, breeding improved plants and animals and most recently genetically modified plants and (soon) animals.

But the real problem in developing countries like Nepal is not the absence of such modern technology, but the domination of an extremely reactionary semi-feudal mentality which actively opposes any advance whatever, whether in agricultural technology or nything else.

As a result, a country like Nepal cannot feed itself, despite the overwhelming majority of the population working in agriculture, while a country like Canada exports food to the rest of the world with only 2 per cent of its labor force working in agriculture.

Of course, it is true that there is a 'backlash' and 'activists' against this in developed countries. We in developed countries can afford to put up with them. Unfortunately we are also encouraging them to leave us alone and peddle their stuff in developing countries like Nepal.

Obviously, Monsanto is not interested in Nepal because it has been rejected in the US but because it has already succeeded there. It is NGO activists that have been unsuccessful in the developed world and are therefore trying to prevent poor countries like Nepal from doing what they were unable to prevent in America. This is utterly shameful. Nepal cannot afford to live off US food donations. It has to become part of the modern world. There is a big market for this kind of 'activism' in Nepal because so many of the 'educated' are utterly cut off from the life of the large majority living on less than \$2 per day.

Arthur

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Follow the comment thread on Sascha Fuller's Guest Column, 'Why Monsanto' in #577

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COMMENT
Kanak Mani Dixit

The lords of impunity

The allegedly upright prime minister of Nepal has surrounded himself with unreformed bandits and murderers

Balkrishna Dhungel, an aspiring politico of Okhaldhunga, was angry about an inter-ethnic marriage in the family which involved Ujjan Kumar Shrestha. On 24 June 1998, he led a cohort that waylaid Ujjan on the trail to Ramechhap.

Dhungel shot Ujjan Kumar dead, and the body was dumped into the Likhu

River, never to be found. Later, Ujjan's brother Ganesh Kumar Shrestha was murdered by a Maoist group for daring to approach the court on the murder. Ganesh's daughter, Rachana, who had innocently pointed out her father working on the family terrace, committed suicide out of guilt.

Dhungel went on to fight the CA elections in April

2006 and terrorised the voters to get elected. Convicted of murder by the district court and reconfirmed on appeal by the Supreme Court in January 2010, Dhungel moved about freely as member of the CA, mocking the justice system. Today, Jagat Das and Ram Kumari, the elderly parents of the two dead brothers, and their dauntless sister Sabitri, are fighting Prime Minister

Baburam Bhattarai for having recommended a presidential pardon for Dhungel.

It is a brutal irony that the allegedly upright prime minister of Nepal has surrounded himself with unreformed bandits and murderers. Balkrishna Dhungel is on the top of that list, enjoying the cover of impunity provided by the Maoist top brass. Bhattarai

is also close to the murder-accused Prabhu Sah of Birgunj, recently forced out of the cabinet. Bhattarai also enjoys the support of many other human rights violators of the conflict era, including, it is said, the unapprehended killers of teacher Muktinath Adhikari of Lamjung. With his weak support within the party, Bhattarai obviously has had to scrape the bottom of

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BIKRAM RAI

who agreed in the four-point deal of government formation to roll back conflict era cases and give general amnesty to those convicted. There is no arguing with the Maoists, perhaps, but one must ask the Madhesi members of the cabinet: why have you accepted this attempt to derail society by destroying the very basis of rule of law, a decision of the Supreme Court on a non-political matter?

Indeed, the Maoists and the Madhesi Front seem to be at one today

in trying to weaken the structures of state. The pardon recommendation is an attempt to drag into controversy and weaken the office of the president. The rejection of this attempt must come from civil society and responsible politicians. The president can perhaps ask the prime minister to have a re-think on the cabinet recommendation, but what is required is a public opinion surge that would force Prime Minister Bhattarai to backtrack.

The National Human Rights Commission, which has stood firmly against the idea of amnesty for excesses committed during the conflict, must be backed up by the public's opinion on the Dhungel case. Above all, it is the Parliament/CA which must demand that the government uphold the Supreme Court decision against Dhungel, and that the perpetrator himself be suspended from the House. Speaker Subhas Chandra Nembang, a lawyer and constitutionalist himself,

must take the initiative and stand on the side of non-violence in politics.

If Balkrishna Dhungel is not apprehended and taken to jail as instructed by the Supreme Court in 2010 and reconfirmed by its further decision of June 2011, Nepal will be sucked into a whirlpool of impunity and depravity. No outside force can help. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

For more on the Ujjan Shrestha murder

the barrel to build his own support base.

Not that the philosophy of political violence is remote from Bhattarai's political ideology. It was his own 40-point document of February 1996 that took the Maoists underground in their armed struggle. On the visitor's book of a conflict era exhibition of photographs when it visited his home district of Gorkha, Bhattarai defended the murder and mayhem suggesting that they be understood 'in historical perspective'.

While the current prime minister may be willing to pull back on some of his party's destructive positions of the past, on the matter of murder of the citizenry by his cohort, he seems defiantly unrepentant. The accountability for the pardon recommendation is shared between Bhattarai and each and every member of his cabinet, including the Madhesi coalition partners

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PICS: NAVIN JOSHI



The extra-ordinary in the ordinary

The ever-changing globalised world has no time to catch its breath and linger over a beautiful image or a heart-touching moment. A de-localised world is de-sensitised and increasingly detached from the small, beautiful things all around us.

Nepal is no exception, and the pace of rapid urbanisation in Kathmandu sweeps everyone along in its relentless flow. The migration of people to the Valley during the conflict and people drawn in for jobs has made the capital a melting pot, heterogeneous and rootless. Our neighborhoods have changed, the people are transient, and the sense of community is gone.

Navin Joshi has been intrigued by the need to strike a visual balance between the harmonious cultural past and the chaotic, vibrant newness of Kathmandu. He was trained as an artist, and says the artist's eye sees this dramatic collision in everyday things

like architecture, the street-level activity, hoarding boards, the political and the media landscape.

"It is difficult to make

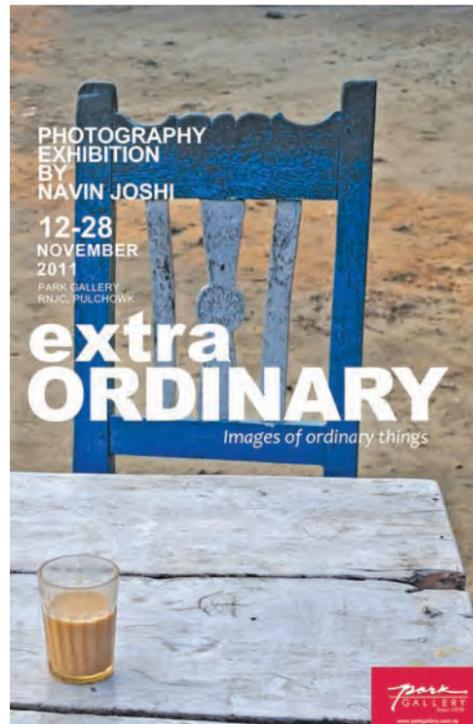
judgments about what is good in the old and bad in the new, what needs to stay and what needs to stay away," says Joshi, "our own behaviors, sensibilities and attitudes are changing. The rituals and festivals are the same but the ways they are celebrated have changed."

He says what is true is that inherent, understated beauty of our city has been covered by a banal veneer of fashionable glitter. The functional symbiosis we had with nature has been replaced with a creeping alienation.

Marshall McLuhan said we "march backwards into the future", and perhaps these images will allow us to assess our past and

preserve its presence in our futures.

And Joshi tries to do the same. He says: "As a photographer, I have tried to capture this dynamic with a non-judgmental eye." 🇳🇵



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Change is constant

There is a sort of misconception that journalism is only about newspapers, radio and tv. Even journalists suffer from this mistaken belief. Actually any medium through which we communicate, whether it is posters, pamphlets, even power-point presentations, can be a kind of journalism.

Photojournalism is more about 'journalism' than about 'photos'. And now with online journalism, the border between print, audio, video and visuals is blurring. In the age of the citizen journalist, the whole definition of who is a reporter and who is not is also gone. In essence, whoever can communicate promptly, professionally, reliably and credibly is a journalist.

Which is why the book, *The Constant Change* is such a landmark: it integrates photojournalism with in-depth reporting. And instead of a newspaper or magazine format, brings it out as a book. It proves that photojournalists don't just point and shoot, they think and shoot. The most important tool in photography is not the eyes,

but the brain.

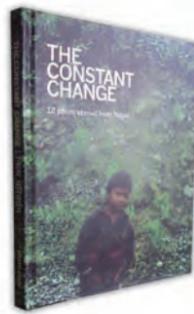
Kishor Sharma, Nayan Tara Gurung Kakshapati, Sailendra Kharel, Prasiit Sthapit, Nirman Shrestha, Shikhar Bhattarai, Gaurav Dhvaj Khadka, Phurpu Tsering Gurung, Prem Tsering Sherpa, Uma Bista, Narendra Shrestha, Nirajan Shrestha provide us a behind-the-curtains glimpse at everything from the life of Mahabir Pun to everyday struggle of HIV patients. With a profile of a wild frontier town in Rasuwa, and a dramatic glimpse at Nepal's ethnic diversity.

Everything is supposed to be 'new' in the New Nepal, and *The Constant Change* provides us a Nepali version of Tom Wolfe's *New Journalism*. The chapters in the book represent long form journalism at its best, richly complemented with brilliant photography. The two blend seamlessly, without overlap and duplication, taking the reader on a vivid bus trip across Nepal, getting us up close and personal with the gay community, or intimately introducing us to Lakshman Khadka, the 'cleaner of

Nepal'.

To be sure, it will be difficult to sustain a documentation project like this in the media marketplace. But the value of a book like this will in the long-term have an impact on mainstream mass media, hopefully making journalists even more sensitive to the extraordinary lives of ordinary Nepalis, forcing reporters to be more interactive and truthful about the society we live in. 🇳🇵

Kunda Dixit



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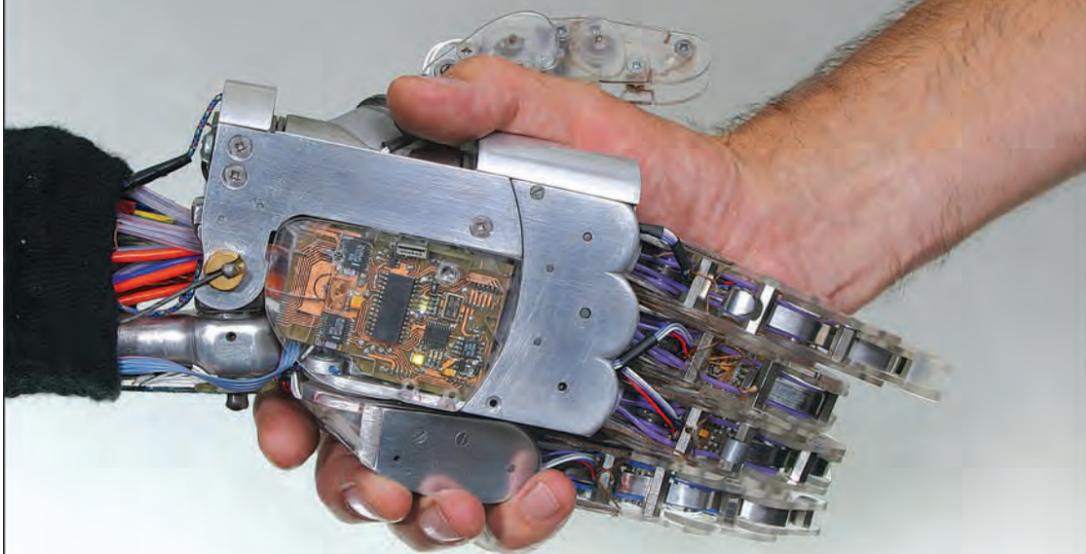
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SEE FOREVER: After weeks of poor visibility, the rain on Sunday night cleared up the air, of

EVENTS



Existence: Ashtitwa, an exhibition of paintings by Prithvi Shrestha. *Till 17 November, 11am to 6pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, 4218048, 4438979*

Pashmina Week, celebrate 18 years with Sana Hastakala by endorsing in their quality pashmina and authentic Nepali handicrafts. *13 to 20 November, Sana Hastakala, Kupondole, 5522628, 5526985*

Green Fest, go green with a street festival featuring recycled materials and solar powered music and scrumptious organic food. *13 November, 12pm to 8pm, Thamel Mall, Jyatha, masalabeads@hotmail.com, 9851034570*

Nepal Cine Symposium, a film festival and network event aimed to highlight young cinematic possibilities from South Asia. *Tickets range from Rs 1500 to Rs 3200, 18 to 22 November*

As It Happens, an exhibition of paintings by Soni Shakya. *Till 17th November, 11am to 6pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal Revisited, 4218048*



Australian Big Day Out, take a break from the cold and go outdoors for Australian wining and dining along with universities. *12 November, 11pm to 7pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel, 9851032041*

Extraordinary, bring out the extraordinary in the ordinary. This is what Navin Joshi does in his exhibition which shows a unique take on everyday life. *12 to 28 November, Park Gallery, Pulchowk*

Youth Festival, International Youth Fellowship organizes a fun filled fest for young people. *Admissions is priced at Rs 2000, 12 to 15 November, Tribhuvn Army Officer's Club, Tudikhel*

The Constant Change: 12 photo stories from Nepal, after 14 weeks, the 'Masterclass with Mads Nissen' participants share with you the stories they have produced. *4 to 13 November, 4pm on 4 November and 12pm to 7pm till November 13, Nepal Art Council Gallery, Babar Mahal*

MUSIC

Kites Band, A cosmopolitan rendezvous to unwind in the evenings presenting live music by "Kites" Band and snooker to refresh. *4pm to 11pm, Corner Bar, Radisson Hotel, 4411818 ext. 1330*

Keep Shuffling, get grooving with this "shuffling" event which will feature R n B, electronic, hip hop as well as techno music to keep all attendees dancing the night away. *Ticket is Rs. 300 or Rs. 500 for door tickets, 12 November, 1pm to 6pm, iClub, Durbar Marg, 9813906259*



Mukti and Revival VOL II, folio. music.session presents rocking tunes from mukti and revival. Tickets are priced at Rs 300 and Rs 500, *11 November, 7pm to 10pm, The Factory, Thamel, Contact: 4269927, 4254369*

DINING

Ultimate Cocktail Challenge, mix the best drink in this cocktail competition along with food and drink stalls for all to enjoy. *11 November, 4pm onwards, Moods Lounge and Bar, Tripureshwar, 2100137*



Pumpnickel 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 to 7pm, 4259185*

Hadock, big compound with ample parking space, their Western and Thakali dishes are done to perfection. *Jhamsikhel, 5546431*



BBQ Station, a place for those of you who simply can't do without meat. BBQ Station offers a chance to make your own Barbeque on coal. *Jhamsikhel*

Lazy Gringo, fail-safe Mexican restaurant. The lemonade with refills is what won us over, but the food is mighty fine. *Jawalakhel*

Bhojan Griha, traditional Nepali restaurant that serves up great local food with folk music and dance. *Dillibajar*

Chopstix, savory Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Begin your feast with the Dragon Chicken; it is one-of-a-kind. *Kumaripati, 5551118*

Milk Coffee and Cocktail Café, coffee house during the day and a cozy lounge serving cocktails at night, try their yarchagumba and molecular cocktails along with the famous Starbucks. *Woodland Complex, Durbar Marg*

Dhokaima Cafe, exquisite ambience, friendly service, cozy bar, place to see and be seen at. Your oasis in the heart of Patan, easy walk from new Bhat Bhateni Supermarket. *Patan Dhoka, Yala Maya Kendra, 5522113*

Chez Caroline, for business lunches and relaxed dinners. *Babar Mahal Revisited*



Bronco Billy, a new restaurant in town offering Tex-Mex and Indian dishes. They make their own corn tortillas, which gets a big thumbs-

up. But really, we can't wait to try their Margaritas. *Pulchowk, opposite Namaste Supermarket*

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*

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

Le Bistro Restaurant & Bar, the outdoor dining area invokes a great atmosphere for a night of drinks with friends and family. While they serve a plethora of dishes, it is the Indian food they pride themselves on. *Thamel, 4701170*

GETAWAYS

Splash Fest 2011, time to get wet as Aspadez Entertainment introduces water football. *11 to 12 November, 10pm onwards, Grand Norling Resort, Mulpani and Green Cottage Resort, Shantiban, 9841269716*



The Last Resort, one stop for Adventure Sports, bungee jump over the Bhote Khosi

river 160 metres below or mountain biking up to the Tibetan border. *The Last Resort Sales Office, Mandala Street, Thamel, 4700525*



Himalayan Blues Festival

The spirit of Nepali folklore harmonises with the rhythm of blues for the fifth annual Himalayan Blues Festival. Since its inception in 2007, the festival has brought blues far from its historical roots in the United States to Kathmandu and even India since last year. The festival offers a unique alternative to music festivals usually presented in Katmandu with its diverse assortment of blues music. With musicians traveling from the reaches of Australia to Russia, the festival this year aims to bring together aficionados of blues under the same roof. The festival kicked off on Thursday, there is still some more to get hold of through the weekend.

Friday, 11 November
Blues Big Bang at 1905, Kantipath
Rock Sitar, Bert Deivert, The Jumping Cats, Jimi's Hocking Blues Machine, Ramshackle
Ticket: Rs. 799/- (6 pm onwards)

Workshops
Nepal Music Center, Sinamangal

Saturday, 12 November
Patan Museum Sessions
Mukti and Revival, Izzy and Chris, Bert Deivert and Monkey Temple
Ticket: Rs. 999 (5.30 pm onwards)

Jam at Tamas, Thamel
The Jumping Cats
Time: 5:30pm onwards

For more details: 9841297451, 9818097880, 9841360784, 9841674738
info@himalayanblues.com, www.himalayanblues.com



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

Offering a spectacular panorama of the Himalaya (above) from the southern edge of the Valley.



SOMEPLACE ELSE



PICS: MARCO POLLO

Among the Korean options in Thamel, Korean Kitchen Picnic is the cheapest but least Korean. No tabletop grills for *kalbi* cooking action in either one of its oddly separated dining areas; no spicy, pickled napa cabbage (a standard kimchi) so essential to Korean cuisine. Its kimchi is prepared from daikon radish, cucumbers, and bean sprouts, and although filling lacked that fermented kick so gratifying of good ole cab' kimchi.

In lieu, the nine-year-old Picnic, once run by Korean expats, offers an extensive catalog (a fat album of photographs meticulously tagged with a list of ingredients for the conscientious eater) of traditional Korean intermixed with mock bentos or Japanese lunch sets.

Yes, they've got your

Picnic



standard appetizers like the Picnic *kimbap*, sushi-like rolls of rice, barbecue beef, egg and julienned vegetables, or the *bindetok*, a traditional flat cake made with sprouts and cucumbers—both equally gratifying.

The *bibimbap*, the signature Korean mixed meal of rice, pre-cooked vegetables, and choice of meat topped with a sunny-side egg, is available in its summer bowl or winter *dolsot* (hot stone pot) version. The dish was dry. A dash or two of sesame oil and a soupçon of *gochuchang* paste would have done the trick.

Picnic's *bulgogi*, barbecue beef, is served *deopbap* or over rice (though could be just a tad better with leaf of raw lettuce à la Hankook Sarang) and is by far the establishment's choice dish. The sweet, soy marinade merges through every bite.

For the more ravenous and unsophisticated diners,

look into the chicken stew, a steaming bone-in hot pot served, or opt for a bento box of barbecue pork or beef, pork cutlet, fried fish or chicken, or hamburger steak. Each set comes with an assortment of fresh and cooked sides—a packaged feast overwhelming to the eyes and palate.

Picnic stands against a growing number of Korean kitchens. But its affordable prices and heaping portions make it hard to refuse a picnic. 🇰🇷

Marco Pollo

Off a tangent on the northern side of Tridevi Marg opposite the taxi train and closed every 25th of the month

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



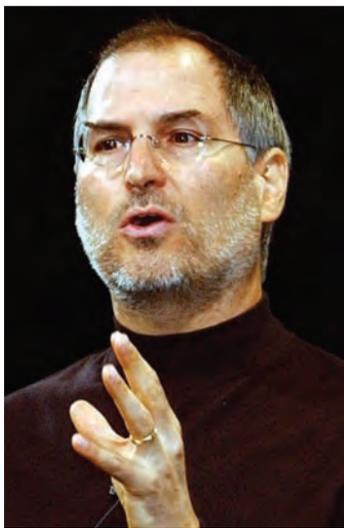
Incidental findings



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

The legendary founder of Apple Inc, Steve Jobs, died of pancreatic cancer. This diagnosis was an “incidental” finding. Jobs was being investigated for kidney stones several years ago when the radiological scan of his abdomen revealed he had a more sinister problem, a tumor in the pancreas. He had no symptoms or signs of pancreatic cancer, and yet there it was on the scan. Doctors call this kind of unexpected discovery an “incidental finding”. With the proliferation of elaborate investigative methods, this kind of a surprising discovery is all too common, which often leads to a dilemma for the physician and the patient. Do we treat the problem or not?

Of course, in Job’s case, many cancer doctors would argue to treat the problem. In reality Steve Jobs, possibly because of his life-defining trip to India prior to his stunningly- successful



entrepreneurial ventures, decided to eat more fruits, turn into a vegan and pursue acupuncture and alternative medicine after the diagnosis. Only after several months did he undergo pancreatic surgery. In many instances there may be a real confusion about what to do next after an incidental finding.

For example, a patient after a mild head injury was told by his doctor to obtain a CT scan of the head. The scan showed no adverse effects of the injury but revealed a very small benign tumor (an adenoma) in the pituitary gland in the brain. Clearly an

incidental finding. What is known in medical literature is that these unsuspected adenomas are commonly present in up to 25 per cent of all autopsies and possibly cause no harm during the lifetime of the patient. Now, does this head injury patient continue to check for the increased growth of this adenoma with expensive, annual CT scans?

Indeed, sophisticated tests these days may lead to more tests, anxiety, and unnecessary surgical procedures with their added risks. A very common finding in Nepal is when doctors order an ultrasound of the abdomen, gall stones may be detected in a patient whose symptoms may not correlate with gall stones problems. Often patients are subjected to needless gall bladder surgery based on ultrasound findings which may not address the patient’s main problems. With more sophisticated testing, diagnosis and treatment may not be as clear-cut and precise as both the patients and doctors would like to think. Sometimes the contrary is true. 🇳🇵



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

A long plume of clouds emanating from a storm system over the Arabian Sea threatens cloud cover and precipitation over the weekend. However, it will be blown by the stratospheric jet-stream and will be a relatively fast-moving system. The front of this system should arrive over western Nepal by Friday afternoon and traverse the rest of the country fairly soon after. Expect snow above 4,000m, and light rain below. The added moisture will bring dense morning fog in Kathmandu and the river valleys into next week.



FRI	SAT	SUN
27-09	24-11	26-09



BIKRAM RAI

DIVINE GLIMPSE: Members of a Chinese delegate that visited Nepal last week greet Goddess Kumari at the Kumari House in Basantapur, Kathmandu, on Sunday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

FUNDRAISING DRIVE: President Ram Baran Yadav and well wishers bid farewell to Beetle Yatra that will cover over 1700 kms through Nepal, India and Pakistan to raise funds for patients of Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre. The Beetle is being driven by the Centre’s founder Kanak Mani Dixit.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

MACHINE POWER: Farmers in Bhethari, a village between Bhairawa-Lumbini highway, use a tractor to reap the season’s harvest. Usage of tractors in the area has risen in recent years as the young manpower of the village head aboard for employment.

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PICS: BIKRAM RAI

Not just a business

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Feel the difference

Nepal's pashmina industry went into a deep slump after a boom in the late 1990s. Hundreds of companies shut down unable to compete with mass produced imitation pashmina from India and China.

One Nepali pashmina supplier, however, stood by the quality of his products and survived the slump. Anin Rajbhandari, proprietor of Tara Orientals, knew that keeping quality control yielded long-term benefits, and intelligent branding ensured the market.

The son of a businessman, Rajbhandari had always wanted to establish his own business. He quit his managerial job at a five star hotel to work with a carpet manufacturer where he learned the tricks of the trade. Few years later he joined hands with two of his friends and began weaving pashmina at a friend's garage.

Tara Orientals was set up in 1997

and was well-timed as the demand for pashmina was beginning to boom. However, exports soon took a nosedive and the new venture was left in a lurch.

"Since we didn't have to pay rent for the factory we decided not to shut down immediately," Rajbhandari recalls. He didn't lose heart and meticulously took care to ride out the downturn. Guaranteeing the quality of the products helped him find and keep buyers, who were put off by imitation and cheap pashmina.

"Initially we were only producing pashmina shawls but after the slump we felt the need to push the envelope to cater to niche markets for high quality innovative pashmina products," Rajbhandari explains.

The first attempt at reviving the company's products was experimenting with varying weaves to create unique designs. The company now boasts of an extensive product line from handkerchiefs to blankets. "We infuse contemporary designs in our products without compromising on the quality, so each detail in every single product requires more time and effort," says Rajbhandari who works closely with design team.

This has allowed Oriental to not just focus on the niche market, but take the brand international. Tara Orientals' products are now not just limited to Europe and America, they



are selling well even in markets like South Africa and Ecuador. Although the demand for pashmina products is growing, it has been tough for Nepali companies to tap the growth, says Rajbhandari, who blames lack of skilled human resource.

"We do not have enough people with a flair for design who can translate contemporary fashion trends into pashmina products," he says.

Anin and his wife, Jolly, are actively involved in promoting women with training and skills to rise up the ranks at their factory in Harisiddhi. Providing women with skills and employment empowers them and decreases the out-migration of Nepali women.

SOCIAL FABRIC: Anin Rajbhandari and his wife, Jolly, are actively involved in training the sixty women that they employ at their pashmina factory in Harisiddhi.

The company has an education program for employees under which one child of each worker receives school funding.

Says Rajbhandari: "After all education paves the path for progress, and no business in Nepal can be solely about the business. You have to look at the larger social setting." 
Bhrikuti Rai

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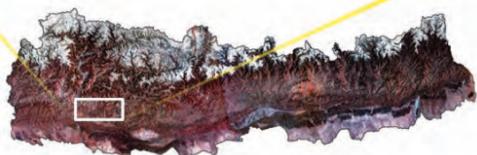
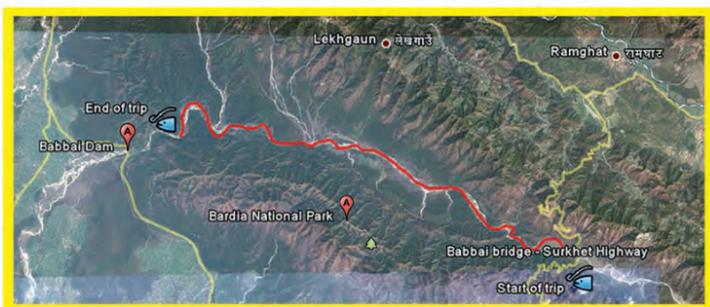


Quest for gold

It's a miracle the Golden Mahseer still swims free in our rivers



ARUN RANA



It feels like a dream already, yet it's only been a couple of weeks since we returned to the urban jungle from the Babai Valley in Bardia National Park. This is perhaps the most pristine wilderness remaining in Nepal. Regular sightings of wild elephants are guaranteed, as are the chances of seeing a Royal Bengal Tiger. But we were on another quest altogether: we were seeking the Golden Mahseer, the legendary gamefish of the Himalayan waters.

The Golden Mahseer was immortalised by Jim Corbett, the hunter-turned-conservationist, in his

classic work *'Maneaters of Kumaon'*. In the chapter titled 'The fish of my dreams', Corbett describes watching a shoal of Mahseer in a deep pool and casting his lure in front of the biggest fish. The specimen he landed weighed a whopping 22 kg – probably around five feet long. Sadly, those days are gone. Thanks to overfishing, habitat destruction, and pollution, such mammoth Mahseer are only to be seen behind the dusty frames of black and white prints from decades ago.

But absence makes the heart fonder, at least for anglers. There is always the

dream of landing the big one. Our group was doubly unusual in being composed of anglers from Kathmandu and Dharan – myself, Viplava, Denis, Upen and Bharat – dedicated to the philosophy of catch-and-release that views fishing as a sport rather than a means to dinner. Each of us has been fishing the waters of Nepal for years on end in pursuit of this magnificent fish. Trekking over rugged hills for days at a time and camping on the banks of rivers that only ghosts are thought to frequent, we harboured the dream of one day breaking the record catch



PICS: ARUN RANA



for a Golden Mahseer (*Tor putitora*), currently set at 12.25 kg.

But much bigger fish once swam in our waters. Today, the odds are stacked against the Golden Mahseer. These fish are long-distance migrants that swim from the lower stretches of our large rivers to their spawning grounds upriver, every monsoon. It's a minor miracle that they survive the mass harvesting with gill nets and hooked lines stretched across rivers in the lowlands, but even more so if they find shallow, gravel-rich streams to spawn in upriver. Destructive excavation

across Nepal means any river with road access has been stripped of spawning grounds. The lucky few that manage to spawn will lay around 20,000 eggs at a time, repeating this several times over the monsoon.

In earlier times, the hatched fry would live in these smaller streams for at least a year. These days, throngs of locals waded into the post-monsoon streams with battery packs, poking their wire-laden bamboo poles into every crevice, or using diluted pesticides. They bag all the fish there is on offer, but the harvest is indiscriminate, often wiping out all life for kilometres downstream. According to a three-year study we conducted on the Rosi Khola and Tadi Khola, each winter less than one per cent of fish sampled have been juvenile Mahseer. This is the story across Nepal and India but the gravity of the situation is hardly discussed amongst conservationists, thanks to a focus on terrestrial ecosystems.

No wonder we were elated to be camping on the banks of the Babai. It offers prime spawning ground for Mahseer and 40 km of the river flows through the national park. The conservation efforts of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation is more than evident. Over two and a half days of angling, we caught and released 38 Golden Mahseer (the biggest was 6.5 kilos, see pic), 3 Raiamas bola (a rare game fish) and a 3-kilo Giant Snakehead. This was more than we had collectively caught in the last half decade! Hats off to Chief Warden Tika Ram Adhikary, Lt Col Sudip KC, and their teams, who have ensured that this slice of wilderness is still off limits. What's more, we spent over Rs 80,000 on permits, guide services and accommodation and food over three days. There is big money in angling tourism and it is commendable to see that finally, the park authorities of Nepal have started to recognise this.

The best thing about the trip is that all the fish we caught are back in the water for another angler to enjoy some other day. I have no doubt we'll be back ourselves, and that the Babai River will be where one of us will break the current world record catch for the Golden Mahseer, the 'tiger of the waters'. 🇳🇵

The author is a member of Save Himalayan Aquatic Resources (SAHAR), an NGO dedicated to protecting Nepal's fish.

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BIKRAM RAI

New ministers

Budhabar, 9 November

बुधवार

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai has set a new record by forming the biggest cabinet in the history of Republican Nepal. The 46-member cabinet is only two less than the jumbo cabinet of Sher Bahadur Deuba, and the place for defence minister is still vacant. It is ironical that this is coming from a prime minister who boasted that austerity was his motto. He has shown himself to be like everyone else.

Ministers:

- Dinanath Sharma (UCPN-M), Minister for Education
- Lokendra Bista Magar (UCPN-M): Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation
- Satya Pahadi (UCPN-M): Minister for Peace and Reconstruction
- Kalpna Dhamala (UCPN-M), Minister for Science and Technology
- Bhim Prasad Gautam (UCPN-M): Minister for Land Reforms
- Ram Kumar Yadav (UCPN-M): Minister for General Administration
- Sarita Giri (Sadbhawana Party, Anandi Devi), Minister for Labour and Transport Management

State ministers (all Maoists):

- Ram Bachchan Yadav: Defence
- Saroj Kumar Yadav: Health
- Dilip Maharjan: Tourism
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- Durga Devi Mahato Dhanuk: Environment
- Kansi Devi Jha: Law and Justice
- Ishwar Dayal Mishra: Physical Planning and Works
- Arabinda Sah: Women and Children
- Ramani Ram: Irrigation

Eyewash

Letter to Editor in *Nagarik*, 10 November

नागरिक

PM Baburam Bhattarai is in a race to set new records, from choosing a Mustang car to pardoning a colleague convicted of murder. It has been proved that the Mustang was just an eyewash in the name of austerity which he himself violated by forming an expensive jumbo cabinet.

Bhattarai made the decision to promote a culture of impunity by pardoning Balkrishna Dhungel, something even his predecessors hadn't dared do. The decision has made a mockery of the independent judiciary and the rule of law. Who is Balkrishna to be granted amnesty for murder? Why is Bhattarai trying to turn Nepal into a country of criminals? Is it justifiable that a person gets acquitted of his crime just because he happens to be affiliated with the Maoist party?

If Balkrishna gets acquitted, every prisoner serving a term for murder will try to get a membership of the Maoist party. Why should Chiranjibi Wagle rot in jail? Why should Khum Bahadur Khadka and Gobinda Raj Joshi be tried in court? Why shouldn't the CA members involved in misusing red passports be pardoned? Why can't the dons of organised crime have their sentences commuted? Why is the prime minister protecting criminals? The prime minister says the right things, but his actions speak louder than his words. History may prove him to be the most incapable PM in the eyes of his domestic constituency and the international community. History will never forgive him.

Uttam Pudasaini, Jorpati

Non-returnable

Nepal, 6 November

नेपाल



Even after 11 months Umakanth Chowdhary, the Health Minister during Madhav Kumar Nepal led government hasn't returned a Mitsubishi Pajero and five motorbikes taken from the ministry during his tenure. This has further worsened his already controversial image. A source from the Health Ministry claims that Chowdhary has been using the four wheeler and his party workers have been using the motorbikes. Instead of returning government vehicles within 15 days after leaving the office which is the rule, Chowdhary has been using them as private vehicles. Can there be more misuse of the state treasury by a person who claims to be people's representative?



नेपाल Rabindra in Nepal, 13 November

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ I will create Kharels (SP Ramesh Kharel) in all 75 districts. ”

Home Minister Bijay Kumar Gachchhedhar in Birgunj , on 5 November



Flying smugglers

Nepal Samacharpatra, 9 November

नेपाल समाचारपत्र

Rasuwa: Just when the local administration found that smugglers use the new transit point to Tibet in Rasuwagadi Pass to smuggle red sandalwood to China, it has also been discovered that helicopters have been used to ferry the contraband timber to villages near the China border during Dasain.

The local administration has made it mandatory to get permission before flying to any destination in Rasuwa district. We want to prevent smuggling by air," said district SP Achyut Pudasaini. Police has



strengthened its presence in Syabru and Timure to monitor flights.

Even so, locals say that choppers loaded with sandalwood were landed in the Malaghadhi forest of Thumman village during Dasai. "When we went to see the helicopter, we noticed they were unloading sandalwood," said a local who wished not to be named.

The government recalled SP Om Rana, Colonel Ramji Thapa

of the Nepal Army and the CDO for helping the sandalwood smugglers in May. The army has since sacked Col Thapa.

I beg your pardon

Editorial in *Kantipur*, 9 November

कान्तिपुर

Despite widespread criticism, the Baburam Bhattarai government has decided to get the president to pardon Maoist MP Balkrishna Dhungel who was convicted for the murder of Ujjan Kumar Shrestha of Okhaldhunga and was sentenced to life imprisonment by the Supreme Court.

It is true that the government can revoke, pardon or shorten the punishments given by the Supreme Court as per the provision of the Interim Constitution. But during the transition period that we are in, giving mass amnesty to all implicated in cases of human right abuse goes against the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA). This is not to say that all buried corpses should be dug out. The government should, however, immediately set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to deal with such cases. It is sad that calls for setting up the commission have been limited to sloganeering, but even after five years of signing the CPA, nothing concrete has been done to this end.

There is a lot of hope resting on Prime Minister Bhattarai. But he is letting down people by encouraging amnesty and withdrawing cases when he should be working to set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



BIKRAM RAI

Editorial in *Nagarik*, 10 November

नागरिक

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai has pushed what previous governments hadn't dared do: get a presidential pardon to Maoist CA member Balkrishna Dhungel even though he has been convicted in a murder that was not political in nature.

This decision falls under one of the agreements with the Madhesi front that made Bhattarai prime minister. Civil society, political parties and even the National Human Rights Commission had criticised the move to get a presidential pardon for a convicted murderer and warned that it would sanction impunity. The prime minister risks plunging the country into a vortex of anarchy. The cabinet has tried to cloak in political garb a clear criminal homicide case, and tried to draw the president himself into the

controversy. If this pushes through, it will send the wrong message to the public that murderers can go scot free, it will erode the rule of law and the spirit of the constitution. The cabinet has tried to use a provision in the interim constitution under which the president is allowed to act on a government recommendation of pardon to anyone found guilty in a court of law. However, the president's duty is also to protect the constitution.

Defending the constitution means upholding a Supreme Court conviction, not overturning it. If the executive fails to act on the judiciary's decision on a murder, the entire justice system will have failed. If the government doesn't send the cabinet decision to the president, the issue will not come up. In order to safeguard the political unity necessary at this time, it will be best if the cabinet decision is not forwarded to the president at this time.

Editorial in *Annapurna Post*, 9 November

अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट

PM Baburam Bhattarai's decision to recommend to the president to grant pardon to his colleague Balkrishna Dhungel will promote impunity. The decision has tainted the image he had earned by riding a Mustang car and initiating reforms. People had expectations from him but his cabinet took the decision in favour of a criminal just because he was one of their colleagues. The decision has even disregarded the verdict of the Supreme Court which had sentenced Balkrishna Dhungel to life imprisonment for the murder of Ujjan Kumar Shrestha. The court had instructed the government to put him behind bars, but Dhungel walked freely. By seeking a pardon for a convicted murderer the government has set an example that the law doesn't apply to the politically connected.

The government has exhibited the height of irresponsibility by deciding to recommend to the president to grant Dhungel pardon. The president must not accept the recommendation from the government. This time, the state apparatus has been mobilised to protect a criminal. Civil society and human rights activists should strongly oppose this move.

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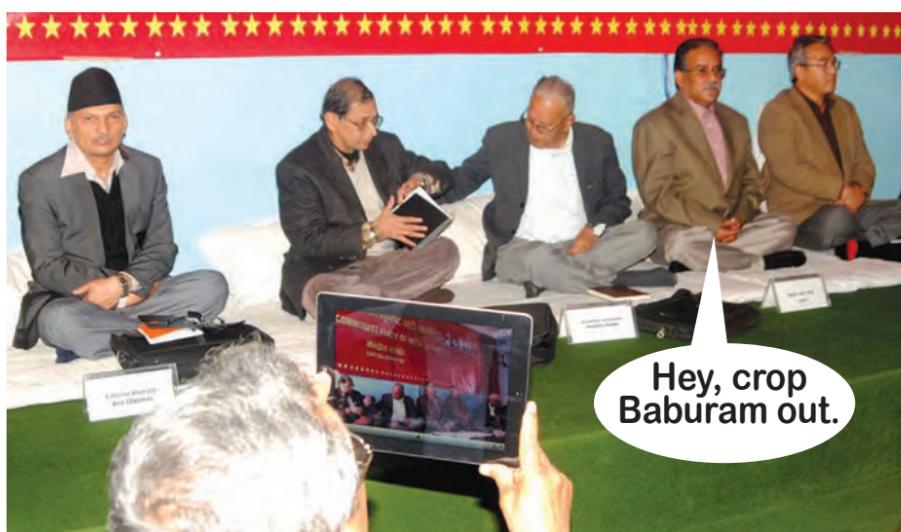
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PKD upgrades to iPad 2

The last person to reprimand everyone about junketeering would be Auntie Suzie, but there she was this week poking fun at all the netas who are currently flying around to various corners of the world. But she has a point. The prime minister gave a deadline for implementing the agreed integration package, but special committee members Ram Saran Mahat, Ishwor Pokhrel and others are all on jaunts. There is an urgent need to steer the peace process after the seven-point agreement, but the prime minister himself scoots off with the deputy prime minister to the southern hemisphere for a SAARC Summit. His chairman himself takes his nephew, son, a noted businessman and Comrade Minendra to meet Uncle Ban in New York. First they all sit around twiddling their thumbs over Dasain and Tihar, and when it is time to get to work they are all earning air miles.



Of all the trips, Comrade Awesome's delegation to the UN is perhaps the most intriguing. Here is a guy who admits to having told his party members to execute class enemies with a bullet to the temple now posing as an apostle of the Buddha to "develop" Lumbini. After running into strong opposition first time around with the mouth-watering proposal to get the Chinese to invest three billion smackeroos to turn Lumbini into a Disney theme park, Chairman Supercalifragilistic has managed this time to give his group cross-party membership, included a banker, used



the connection of Ban's mum in Korea to get a \$2 million seed money and himself an appointment at UNHQ.

Besides upgrading to iPad 2, PKD's plan was also to meet US officials to charm them into thinking he is no longer a terrorist. But the mule's mole has it that until the Baddies cross their hearts and say they no longer believe political power flows out of the barrel of the gun, the Yanks are not going to bite the bullet, as it were. On the way back, PKD is supposed to stop by in the UK on a fundraiser among Non-returning Nepalis. But poor Prakash ("Son Also Rises") Dahal is not going to be accompanying Dad since Awesome Jr messed up his visa application.



Rumour has it BRB agreed to let PKD to officially head the Lumbini project (and even sanctioned payment for his delegation trip out of state coffers)

to get his party chairman off his hair for the next week or so. He seems to know something we don't: that the APECF is just another name for as asset management consultancy that advises the Supreme Leader about his investment portfolio. BRB's prime agenda now is to hold on to the reins by hook or by crook, mostly by crook. Give the man a break, he is keeping himself busy personally inspecting toilets in Mugling. By the way, most incoming calls on the PM's 1111 hotline are apparently hoax, including a guy who calls repeatedly and barks like a dog.



It takes murderers to pardon a murderer. Now that the newly-expanded cabinet has decided to give amnesty to Balkrishna Dhungel (the guy to bumped off a neighbour for having an inter-ethnic affair with one of his female relatives in

Okhaldhunga) it looks like all human rights violators are going to go scot free under the CPA provision that political manslaughter is kosher. So that was why BRB and his attorney general were in such a hurry to meet the prez last week, to make sure the prez realises he has to approve the pardon if the cabinet so decides. Moral of the story: it's ok to murder someone you don't like and retroactively justify it by saying he was a class enemy. Erstwhile royal military types are awfully quiet about Dhungel's pardon because this would make them eligible for similar amnesty. What? Did I hear someone at the back say "transitional justice"?



Of the 19,000 or so ladakus in the camps, there are only 14,000 left, and the party is trying to round up everyone so they can collect their 7 lacs. It's turned out to be more difficult than they thought: many are in Malaysia, some have gone to India, and the remaining have gone from being underground to joining the underworld and are more interested in karods than lacs.



Wassup? There is no load-shedding these days? Turns out the Energetic Minister is draining Kulekhani because he doesn't know how long he will be minister, and he wants to heap the blame on his successor who will inherit an empty reservoir.



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