

NEPALI Times

#580

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Newar women offer rice to
Seto Machendranath on
Sunday at Keltole in the
hope that it brings health,
happiness and prosperity.

Hand-picked

MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

So it has come down to this: the fourth extension of the Constituent Assembly. The people's elected representatives have agreed to buy themselves more time to finish writing the constitution because their leaders have been too busy preventing each other from getting to power.

The passage of the 11th amendment to the interim constitution tabled by the government on Thursday is delayed because the parties haven't yet decided by how long to extend the CA. The first extension was for a year in 2009, then it was extended


for six months and then in August by three months.

The NC is embroiled in an internal dispute and couldn't decide on the length of the extension this time. Meanwhile, the UML central committee meeting decided to consult other parties about the extension period. The party is divided over whether to ask for Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai's resignation to pave the way for a consensus government.

"The CA term extension depends on progress made on the peace and constitution and government performance," said the

NC's Deep Kumar Upadhyaya.

There has been progress on the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist fighters, and a State Restructuring Commission was formed this week to address the most contentious issue about the kind of federalism the country should have.

Put together, these moves give the parties the fig leaf with which to allay public opposition to another extension. With another extension by Wednesday, the term of the CA will have been four years although it was elected initially for a two year mandate. 

Dewan Rai

Editorial p2
Now, the constitution

Eyewitness p12-13
Two months after the earthquake, eastern Nepal picks up the pieces



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Now, THE CONSTITUTION

To give him his due, Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai promised us progress on the peace process, and he is delivering. He has rammed through an integration and rehabilitation package to dismantle the Maoist fighting force despite strong resistance from a rabble-rousing faction within his own party.

The only way he was able to sell this idea to his cadre was to sugar-coat it with a generous golden handshake. It turned out to be very expensive, it was grossly unfair to the innocent victims of the conflict, but it was a price we had to pay to conclude the process.

Now, comes an even greater challenge: finishing the new constitution. We have saved the hardest part (state restructuring) for last. Let's assume for a moment that we actually need a new constitution. Let's ignore for now the argument that all we need to do is change the wording in some of the clauses in the 1990 constitution, with an emphasis on inclusion and verifiable implementation. A new constitution is the other price we have to pay for peace: to give the Maoist party an "honourable" exit so that they can convince their followers that the sacrifices they made and the suffering they caused was "worth it". Their decision to wage war in 1996 wrecked a working democracy that was putting accountable



BIKRAM RAI

local leaders into VDCs and DDCs who were beginning to "trickle up" into national politics. Here we are 15 years later, trying to reinvent the wheel by finding an effective way to devolve power to the grassroots again. The model we seem to have chosen this time in the name of addressing the grievances of marginalised communities is to tear the country apart. So, a panel of eight party appointed "experts" in a High Level State Restructuring Commission is supposed to do what

the political committees of the CA couldn't for the past four years: come up with a new federal state structure acceptable to all.

The parties have once more taken the easy way out when they come up with a deadlock: outsource the problem to another commission. Trouble is, this is not a panel of objective experts, it is a panel of political appointees. This is deliberate.

The reality is that identity politics is now so radicalised in this country that it has gone out of control of the politically bankrupt leadership of the parties. The agenda is now set by NGO pressure groups and militant ethno-separatists who are pushing federal options that the parties, including the Maoist mainstream, now find politically untenable. This is probably the reason why the parties haven't got the top academic sociologists, political scientists and demographers but opted for yes-men and women who will do as they say in the commission. It is a last desperate attempt by the parties, led by the Maoists, to put the ethnic genie back into the bottle.

So, don't expect much from this commission. The reaction of the NGO pressure groups will be predictable. The CA term will be extended again by midnight on 30 November, and it won't really matter by how long.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

FIVE-YEAR CEASEFIRE

How many of us honestly believe that having a constitution will remove all ills plaguing the country? ('The five year cease fire' Editorial, #579). Well I'm not advocating that we should not have a constitution but having a constitution alone will not create a better society or nation. It is the attitude of the majority of the ruling elites and the civil society that makes or breaks a country. And we are very familiar with the attitude of our current rulers.

Different view

- To resolve the difficulties facing Nepali politics we'll have to write the constitution at the earliest, because without doubt it is the most fundamental paper of Nepali democracy.

Nirmal

Maoists are getting richer, at tax payer's expense, for holding peace for ransom. Other insurgent groups may also learn from the success of the Maoists. Especially when the Western countries and Nepali intellectuals have exonerated such crimes.

K K Sharma

WAR DURING PEACE

Really heart-touching piece by Ms Dhana on her war experience ('War during peace', Dhana Laxmi Hamal, #479). There are thousands of young men and women like her all over Nepal. I am one of them. Thank you.

Sujan

- What is the "compensation" for the psychological trauma endured by people like Dhana Laxmi Hamal? The government is rewarding its Maoist cadres for killing and torturing people. What about the victims?

KiranL

E-COMMERCE

Online business in Nepal is likely to remain

in its infant stage for at least a few decades ('The .com generation', Paavan Mathema, #579). For e-commerce to flourish, people need to spend a lot of time on the internet, but the electricity problem is not likely to be solved any time soon. People are also unaware of how debit/credit cards work. Also when I purchase products online I expect them to be delivered to my door. But our postal and courier systems are inefficient and unreliable and postal insurance is faulty.

Mahendra Thapa

- I agree completely with the writer about the obstacles to e-commerce. Whenever I have tried to buy products online I have faced similar inconveniences. If banks and online companies work together to figure out this problem, online businesses would boom enormously and this would eventually benefit consumers.

Sudeep Shrestha

TOURISM APARTHEID

Being one of the trekkers of the G4G to EBC, I empathise with Mr Alok's sadness and disgust with the discrimination that some of our guides and porters are subjected to ('Second- class citizens', #579). I strongly agree with Alok that it is the local people that should be looked after.

Kamal Rizk

- Malpi School in Kavre has been going to Lukla and trekking around Namche for the past six years, we have not faced such discrimination as yet.

Mahendra Sakya

Nepalis ourselves are responsible for this situation. Naturally, businessmen will give preference to people who pay the most. None of the airlines or shuttles in the US or UK or any other developed nations charge on the basis of nationality. But in Nepal bus fares and airfares for tourists are almost 2 to 3 times higher than the fares for locals. Why don't we

Nepalis have the courage to demand that fares be based on the quality of services rather than on nationalities?

Mahendra Thapa

- Around 1997-98, when the tourism industry was at its peak and Maoist insurgency had not yet taken over, Nepalis hanging out in Thamel faced similar discrimination. Restaurant owners were reluctant to welcome locals and waiters did not bother to take orders, because they were busy serving *bidheshi* guests. But it all changed when the bidheshis stopped coming and the ones who came had lesser purchasing power than the Nepalis. These days Thamel is full of Nepalis. It is all about economics and if I were a lodge owner in Khumbu, I would want a customer a) who pays more, b) who does not get drunk and start a fight or cause other customers to run away, c) is clean and does not damage property. Teaching bathroom and other etiquette to porters, herders and other Nepali brothers (and sisters) is a great idea but who is going to do it? The government?

Dhedu Badar

CYCLE CITY

Besides saving petroleum, time, and national wealth, bicycles contribute to public health ('Cyclists and the city', #579) by reducing obesity and related diseases such diabetes, both of which are becoming epidemic. Furthermore, the motor vehicle industry is destroying the economy of countries around the world. North American and European countries are spending billions of dollars in petroleum import and their debt is accumulating. Even China's balance of trade became unfavorable for the first time several years ago due to import of petroleum. The situation must be even worse for Nepal, and furthermore it is a cost that generally is being transferred from the urban elites to Nepal's rural population, the major productive sector of the country.

Stephen Mikesell

- Kathmandu feels congested with the massive flow of newer vehicles and an immediate response is to build more roads. However, sustainability wise, investing in public transportation is a better option than building roads. It is not shameful to ride a bicycle or bus or safa tempo. Cars should not be a status symbol but must be taken as a means to achieve a practical end. Buy cars if and only if you have an immediate need for them and not because your next door neighbor got one recently.

De Nepa

ROAD ACCIDENTS

Excellent reporting on the appalling situation ('Dead on arrival', #579). I knew that there were a lot of traffic accident-related-deaths in Kathmandu, but seeing those numbers is unbelievable.

Mia

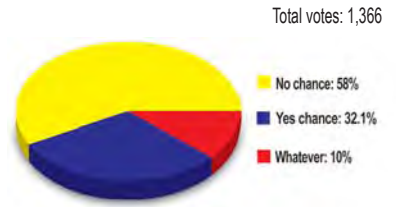
- Newspapers report accidents daily, but the government has turned a deaf ear. To control traffic accidents, one does not need PhD, the only requirement is to focus on the road at all times and 'follow traffic rules'.

AMj



nepalnews.com Weekly Internet Poll # 580

Q. Will the Maoist camps be dismantled by 30 November?



Weekly Internet Poll # 581. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Baburam Bhattarai's performance into the second month in office has been:



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Divided we stand

Maoist ideologues now realise they underestimated the perils of stirring the ethnic pot



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

The Maoist party today is as near to splitting as it has ever got. But it doesn't quite seem to be able to get around to dividing.

The leadership has tried to give the internal rifts a positive spin, by characterising it as a normal two-line struggle, and portraying it as proof of a vibrant internal democracy within the party. Furthermore, at negotiations with other parties the Maoists have exploited the hardline pressure for concessions they would perhaps not get.

The party establishment is under immense pressure from the NC and UML to implement past agreements, including the issue of the return of property. They have convinced the Maoist chairman to accompany them to Bardiya district where the cadre of hardline faction of Mohan Baidya have refused to return seized property. Baidya has also instructed loyalists within the PLA rank not to take part in the integration process and instead choose rehabilitation package which fetches them an average of Rs 650,000 each. The Baidya faction reportedly is banking on this funding to launch an even more decisive struggle in the future.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal and his supporters have rubbished the possibility of another 'People's War' and instructed Maoist fighters to participate in the integration process. Dahal is right. There might not be another 'People's War' not because he says so but because even within the PLA ranks, people are thoroughly disillusioned with war as a means to liberate Nepali society (see 'A war of words', #579 by Rubeena Mahato).

When the Maoists launched their armed insurrection 15 years ago, they looked for a cause to add "iron and fire" to their revolution. Objective conditions were ripe from Mechi to Mahakali, from the Himal to the Tarai with the excluded, the disenfranchised and the disowned. But there was no common enemy, as there was in the Russian Revolution. The Maoists had declared the "feudal monarchy" as their target, but it was hard for them to convince people to take up arms against a popular constitutional monarch in the mid-1990s.



Which is why the call for autonomous ethnic states was a desperate move by the Maoists to galvanise their revolution and give it focus. As Marxists, they argued that Brahminical hegemony manifested as class in Nepal's predominantly Hindu society which was protected by the institution of monarchy. This was, at best, only half true. The leadership failed to take Nepal's demographic complexities into consideration before setting out to dismantle the superstructure of the state. During the war, they used ethnic liberation as a slogan to recruit fighters, and later pushed the autonomous ethnic provinces as a ploy to garner votes in the 2008 elections. Now, they have come to see they let the genie out of the bottle.

Yes, Brahminical caste oppression in a Hindu society was responsible for discrimination against Dalits and Janajatis. But when it came to geographical remoteness and poverty, Nepal suffered as a nation. Muslims are the most impoverished community in Nepal and surveys show that many Brahmin and Chhetri communities in the hills are as poor as others.

Neither was the political elite in Kathmandu and other urban areas, an exclusive club of Brahmins and Chhetris. It is not surprising that inspite of conspicuous Brahminical dominance of the political leadership, the lists of powerful Janajati and Madhesi leaders in all the mainstream parties are quite long. No matter how revolutionary the parties claim to be, they have all undermined Dalit and women representation at decision-making levels.

The people's movement of 1990 did not usher in the kind of change that the people had hoped for, which is why the Maoists managed to mobilise popular support for their movement in the countryside. But although the 'people's war' thrived on the ethnic agenda, Maoist ideologues realise today that they underestimated the dangers of abusing an ethnic debate in a country where no single community dominates any geographic area.

Last week's protest by the indigenous caucus in the CA forced the party leadership to backtrack on a tabled resolution to form a technical committee on state restructuring. The group of 119 CA members from across the political spectrum warned their party leadership of dire consequences if their demands are not addressed in state restructuring. The indigenous caucus of CA members has a declared agenda of establishing ethnic federal states with rights to self determination.

The ethnic agenda used to be carried by Limbuwan and Madhesi militants, now it is CA members from Janajati backgrounds who have stepped up. This is an indication of which way the nation is going if the ethnic debate spills over in politics. We don't want to go there. 🚫

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“Encouraging progress”

Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and former prime minister of New Zealand is in Nepal this week to inspect development projects. Clark spoke to *Nepali Times* about Nepal's progress in meeting Millennium Development Goals and the challenges ahead.

***Nepali Times:* With only four years to go for the MDG target date, how would you rate the chances of developing countries to meet the goals?**

Helen Clark: Over the past decade, notable progress has been made on each individual MDG, including in many least

happy to note that one-third of the seats in the Constituent Assembly are now held by women. Nepal has had the foresight to integrate the MDGs into its national development strategies, as reflected in its Three Year Plan, and I have confidence that Nepal will continue its MDG progress.

A lot of the problems in the developing world need long-term structural and governance solutions, but aren't the needs are so immediate.

Development is a long term process. UNDP works for decades in countries and helps them build the capacity to lift human development. Some face greater challenges than others, but all can succeed. It is important to align meeting short term

UNDP has been working with the government on disaster risk reduction for many years. A recent result of that work was the establishment with the Home Ministry of a National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC). We already see concrete results: when an earthquake struck the east of Nepal recently, the national and district level emergency operation centres reacted within one hour. That was a huge improvement compared to the level of preparedness only one year ago. UNDP and a range of partners also helped the government develop a new National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management which was approved in 2009. It signals an important shift in policy from focusing mainly on relief and response to a more balanced approach to risk reduction overall. The key challenge now is to implement this ambitious new strategy with a sense of urgency.

A Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium came into being in 2009 under government leadership, bringing together the UN system, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, the Red Cross Movement, the European Commission, and the governments of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia, to accelerate and expand risk reduction measures in Nepal. The Consortium has already raised more than \$60 million for school and hospital retrofitting, emergency preparedness, building code enforcement, community preparedness, and many other measures. The Consortium is seen as a model of how to get organised to tackle disaster risk more effectively in countries like Nepal.



developed countries and under very challenging circumstances. Business as usual, however, won't get the world all the way to achieve the MDG targets. The right mix of policies, targeted technical assistance, institutional capacity, adequate funding, and strong political commitment are necessary to accelerate progress. UNDP supports country-led development based on inclusive growth strategies which benefit the poorest and most vulnerable.

And how does Nepal's performance compare with the others?

Despite political and economic challenges, Nepal has made MDG progress over the past decade. According to the 2010 MDG progress report, Nepal is on track to achieve most targets, with a few exceptions, if the current trends in progress continue. Achievements in reducing child mortality and improving maternal health are particularly encouraging. Poverty has gone down significantly, and Nepal is close to reaching the 2015 MDG poverty target. Nepal has already achieved gender parity in primary school enrollments, but the gender gap remains high at secondary and tertiary education levels. As a former political leader in my own country, I am particularly

needs with the longer term direction established, in other words, each step taken should be in support of the goals to be achieved over time.

UN staff were among the thousands who died in the Haiti earthquake last year. What lessons has the UN learnt about disaster preparedness and response from that event?

Haiti was a tragic reminder of the importance of building resilience to disaster. Disaster risk reduction measures, ensuring that humanitarian response systems are ready, and imagining the unimaginable all need to be undertaken. Effective governance is needed to achieve this, of the kind which ensures building codes are in place and enforced, land use plans are carefully thought through, and creates a clear sense of duty of care among elected and appointed public officials. International support is needed for both the humanitarian and development aspects of this work.

Any particular effect this has had in helping Nepal prepare for a disaster that one day is sure to come?

Given the high earthquake risk and other hazards in Nepal,

And, finally, impressions of your visit to Nepal this week?

We were very proud to have with us Crown Prince Haakon of Norway, who is the UNDP Goodwill Ambassador with us on our trip to Nepal this week. We have very vivid impressions of our visit here. It is an imposing landscape, and a challenge in development. We met the highest leaders in Kathmandu to women starting their own micro businesses in a village in western Nepal. It was very inspiring to see how much they could do with so little, and how giving young people skills can better the livelihoods of their families. In our visit to a maternity clinic we saw the role played by Nepal's female health volunteers and what was most significant to me was that that it was an example of a community that could articulate what they wanted from local leaders, and they said they wanted better maternity clinics. Back in Kathmandu we had two very significant meetings on Wednesday, one with CA members and a meeting with senior political leaders at the Prime minister's residence. It is enormously significant that they take the job of speedily completing the peace and constitution process seriously.

Why to be more equal

UNDP's annual Human Development Reports are much anticipated for their thematic stress. Last year's report almost prophetically looked at democracy deficit, and seemed to predict the Arab Spring. Earlier reports have looked at the linkages of population migration on the economies of labour-exporting countries, as well as the political and social impact of large numbers of able-bodied young people working abroad.

The 2011 report tries to connect the dots between sustainable development, environmental degradation and equity. Climate change and a worsening ecological crisis are seen to accentuate existing inequities in society, and an increase in poverty in turn affects the environment.

The report, therefore, goes to the heart of the matter: why and how to give the poor more choices so that they have more say in the sustainable use of natural resources. The experts conclude that unless sustainable development and equity go hand-in-hand the quality of life of the world's poor is not going to get better and the global environment will suffer.

Some have criticised UNDP's annual reports as academic navel-gazing where an enormous amount of money is spent to state the obvious. In a way this is true: who would argue that societies don't have to be more equal? Or that the poor need to be given choices so they don't unsustainably cut down forests or overfish?

What this year's report does is widen the scope of the environment not just to the global and national, but at the individual level as well. It includes people in the future who will suffer from environmental degradation carried out today. The poorest of the poor and the marginalised will continue to bear the consequences of environmental deterioration, be it from erratic rains caused by climate change to smokey home fires that kill children from lung infection.

'The most disadvantaged people carry a double burden of deprivation,' the report says. 'More vulnerable to the wider effects of environmental degradation, they must also cope with threats to their immediate environment posed by indoor air pollution, dirty water and unimproved sanitation.'


The report cites Costa Rica's enlightened



**Human Development Report 2011
Sustainability and Equity:
A Better Future for All
UNDP, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011**

policies in 1955 to safeguard equity and the environment as being exemplary for a developing nation. The country was way ahead of its time, and in the 1990s became the first country to enshrine environmental rights in the constitution and a pioneer in selling carbon credits.

The tables at the back of the book on Nepal's poor ranking is shocking, and should be required reading for our PhD prime minister. Nepal is 157th in the Human Development Index (one down from last year not because we didn't do well, but because others did better). The inequality-adjusted HDI is even worse, pointing to a big income gap between rich and poor.

Equality doesn't bring equity. Improving the people's capability and providing equal opportunities for all boats to rise together with the tide is more important. The report helps us better understand glaring global inequities, inequities within countries, and an unfair inter-generational burden on people who come after us. 
Kunda Dixit



Surya Nepal awards

The Surya Nepal Asha Social Entrepreneurship Award (SNASEA) has recognised five people this year for their extraordinary contribution to add social, environmental and economic value to their businesses.

The five were selected from a shortlist of 66 applicants and include:

Ram Sapkota of Mountain Delights Treks and Expedition and Tukee Nepal, Jyamrung for the impact he has made in Jyamrung, Dhading, to build eco-toilets, micro-hydro, and in health and education projects.

Sabita Maharjan of Kirtipur Hosiery for empowering women through her knitting business and a cooperative with 375 members. (See: p11).

Shyam Badan Yadav of Kalash Milk Industry in Dhorey of Parsa district for economically empowering farmers through a milk collection scheme and distributing free livestock.

Vijaya Development Resource Centre of Nawalparasi for having successfully mainstreamed various dimensions of development under one umbrella encompassing education, media and microfinance to build a more equitable, prosperous and self-reliant society.

Chhahari Services in Kathmandu for the skill trainings they provide to women for income generation. The women return to their communities and use their new skills to be economically independent.

At a ceremony this week, the winners received cash prizes of Rs 100,000 each and an opportunity to network through ChangeFusion Nepal initiative under which each winner can propose further expansion of their work.

Surya Nepal Asha Social Entrepreneurship Award 2011 is sponsored by Surya Nepal, organised by ChangeFusion Nepal and supported by the NBI.

www.changefusionnepal.org
www.snpl.com.np



BIZ BRIEFS

Award winning

Hyundai Motor's 2012 Tucson received the 2012 Best Resale Value Awards by Kelly Blue Book's kbb.com while its 2012 Elantra was honoured for the second consecutive year as Best Compact Car in ALG's Residual Value Award. Hyundai Motors has been named the fastest growing automotive brand for second straight year in the Interbrand Best Global Brands 100.



New handsets

Orion mobile has launched two new models E210 and 925. The E210 model has dual sim GSM, digital camera, Bluetooth, FM, GPRS and is available in white and grey colours. The 925 model has additional features of Java applications and supports all video formats.

High on energy

Chowdhary Group's trading unit CG Exim has introduced alcohol free Matrix energy drink in the market. It is produced by an ISO 9001 certified company.



The face off



Sherpa Adventure Outlet, authorised dealer of The North Face in Nepal has started 'The Face of the North Face' contest from November. Contestants have to send their pictures in original The North Face apparels and the picture with the highest number of likes on North Face's facebook page will win a gift hamper.

Standing tall

Everest bank has recently published its 1st quarter operating results for the FY 2010/2011. Operating profit has grown by 18.30 percent.



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NEPALI PAN

Balázs Szász

In the 19th century, my country Hungary was the breadbasket of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Very good soil and expertise went hand-in-hand with immense breakthroughs in engineering. Agro revenues were funnelled into education: it has the largest number of Nobel Prize winners per capita of any country in the world, prompting Nature to famously declare that 'the 20th century was made in Budapest'. (The fact that 10 out of the 11 Hungarian Nobel laureates were Jewish and that they were forced to leave, is another story). The 20th century forced industrialisation, then Communist mass-production destroyed all that. Hungary only became a poor copy, a failed economy.

Nepal has been hurtling towards 'development', which is often used synonymously with 'Western'. Actually most of Western society, as we can see from the way it treats nature and animals and the quagmire it is in today, is in dire need of a 'Nepali approach'.

To change something, first we have to understand what it is. That takes patience, a slow approach, a clean slate, not seeing what was, nor what should be, but what is. These are things that are sorely lacking in the approach of the educated towards their own countries. Understandably so, since my feelings towards my own country are also such a jumble.

And maybe that leap forward will mean just as much a leap backward. Like going back to age-old farming techniques coupled with modern eco-friendly appliances like solar drying chambers.

Most countries are doing that what Tom did running from the telephone pole felled by Jerry. He ran forwards, or backwards, but was always in the trajectory of the falling log. And blam, he got hit in the head. As a kid, I never understood why he couldn't just make a step sideways.

Difficulties can be blessings in disguise. Lack of industrialisation could mean pure produce, isolated valleys could become micro-greenhouses for unique species of rice, the Himalaya could serve as natural protection against all the chemical use of the plains. With simple processing, drying, jobs would be created for premium prices. Whoever said industry is the only way forward, and who ever believed it?

Along with the Amazon, the Himalaya are the world's number one biodiversity treasure trove for medicinal plants. It is great that now we can buy Parma ham at a deli in Babar Mahal, even though only half a percent of society can regularly afford to shop there. But what if one day a Newari deli opened, with just-as-high quality produce, for a fraction of the price?

Nepal should leap neither backwards, nor forwards. It should combine the two and leap sideways.

In Hungary today, there is a small revolution taking place: cottage industries are springing up and finding a great resonance with European tourists who have always known of the high quality paprika, wine, salami and fruit brandy the country has offered. These produce are also sold to discerning customers in the best food halls and delis of Europe for decent prices. There is even a small Hungarian section at Harrods.

What if Nepal was brave enough once more, and said: this is what we are. Whenever I talk to Nepalis they ask me what I like here. And whatever I say, they say: but Nepal is a poor, dirty country, the politics is terrible. I agree with the last two. But looking at the people, nature, the cultural heritage of the Valley, the community forestry models, religious and ethnic tolerance, and looking into the eyes of Chiri Bhai (see alongside) my answer is: hell it ain't poor. 🇳🇵

Balázs Szász is a Hungarian writer dividing his time between his home and Nepal.

Chiri Bhai,



ALL PICS: SALLY BIERMAN

An organic farmer who doesn't know what that term means

There are very few people with the sparkling, alive eyes of Chiri Bhai, the 82-year-old six feet tall farmer extraordinaire. There are legends about his magic touch at the Leprosy Center Shanti Sewa Griha, how he grows cauliflowers

as big as basketballs, and carrots as long as your forearm.

Once a gardener at the royal palace, he became a consultant at Shanti's eco-village, teaching his way through what others call 'organic farming'. He himself

has never heard of the term.

"We don't need another engineer or doctor who will take away that knowledge to work abroad," says the shelter's founder Marianne Grosspietsch, "we need good, sound farmers, craftsmen, aware of their heritage."

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superstar



Chiri Bhai looks at US factory farming poultry, the way 99 per cent of chicken are raised in that country: dark, immense halls with stacks to the ceiling, non-stop artificial light for the first weeks to induce overeating, bones unable to keep up with growth hormones, beaks cut off to

stop the chicken tearing at each other in madness, no sunlight.

"This is wrong," he says, "if we sit in one place we get aches too. Back then our chicken used to jump high to peck at hanging pumpkins, range freely, eat insects."

The old way of farming meant replenishing the

soil's nutrients. Chiri Bhai remembers keeping lots of animals and using their waste, as well as night soil, for the fields. They used to dig down through the clay layers to bring out the nutrient-rich 'kalimati' and apply the black earth to fertilise the crops. Chiri Bhai says there is an organic solution for everything, even against insect pests. Soot scraped from walls of the house are the best insecticide, he says.


As someone who can make anything grow and has lived his life planting food, Chiri Bhai is puzzled by today's Nepali youth. "They study, study, but they'll never find a job," he laughs wholeheartedly, "but if they farmed, they wouldn't need to wear fancy clothes they can't afford, and they'd be healthy and they'd earn money."

Chiri Bhai is ambivalent about foreigners coming to help Nepal. "They come, they help, but they stay a short time," he says, "they don't see the long-term, how could they? Like kings they live in their own world. Nepali people are just a bit too devoted to them."

I ask Chiri Bhai what he has learnt from nature. For the first time there is silence, then he says: "That in the cold season it is the turn of cauli, methi, tori and other oil plants, garlic, turnip..."

Chiri Bhai has heard of hybrid corn, and doesn't approve. "Corn only for eating, not for planting, is not corn," he says matter-of-factly, "we treat all things as our friends. We cannot just eat-eat-eat. Maybe this year you get good harvest but who knows, there may be a shortage, the company will be unable to supply seeds, then what do you do?"

Asked why food should not be grown in this way, Chiri Bhai's simplicity cuts through all the moralising: "It just doesn't taste good."

Here is an organic farmer who is now also looking after lepers because he loves them. He helps them hang up the washing, does tasks they can't do because of their gnarled fingers. With his feet firmly on the ground, earth under his fingernails, and the sun constantly in his eyes, Chiri Bhai's existence is an extension of nature itself.  *Balázs Szász*



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EVENTS



In Conversation with Patrick French, don't miss out Patrick French and Rabi Thapa's discussion on the art of biography, brought to you by Quixote's Cove. *Free entry, 27 November, 3.30pm to 6.30pm, Ramalaya, Pani Pokhari*

Standing Up for Burn Violence Survivors, join the activism for gender based violence now. *25 November to 10 December, musical program on 4 December, 1905 restaurant, Kantipath*

Baaja and Bazaar, attend a fund-raising event organized by LAMPS (Literature, Art and Architecture, Music and Movies, Photography and Performing Arts, Style and Sculpture) in support of disadvantaged Nepali artists. Enjoy the music of Shreya Sotang, Abhaya Subba and others while shopping for clothes and trinkets on the side. *Fees: Rs 500 per person with a*

complimentary drink 25 November, 7pm onwards, Blue Room Lounge, Jhamsikhel

National Designer's Cut, fashion designers bring out their creativity to present dresses made out of Nepali fabric featuring musical performances, salsa sessions and B-boying. *25 November, 7.30 pm onwards, Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat, 4247167*

Comedy Night at Delices de France, a group of stand up comedians, 'Oops, We Did it Again' is coming to town to tickle your funny bones as you enjoy a special meal at Delices de France. *25 November, 7pm onwards, Delices de France, Thamel, 4260326*

Silent Protest, do what you can to help 'Stop Monsanto in Nepal', both the cause and the activist group. *25 November, 3.30pm to 5.30pm, TU Teaching Hospital, Maharajgunj*



9th Handicraft Trade Fair, an opportunity to browse through authentic Nepali handicrafts. *24 to 28 November, Bhrikuti Mandap*



Expressions with Etegami, make special Japanese postcards for near and dear ones this festive season. *25 November, 10am to 3pm, Cosmopolitan Training Centre, Jhamsikhel, ctcnepal@gmail.com, 016217752, 9841410609*

2nd Mandala International Youth Theatre Festival, immerse yourself in the theatrical performances of both foreign and national groups. *25 November, 3pm, Russian Centre of Science & Culture, Kamal Pokhari, 9851044977*

A Changing Nepal, Maki Gurung's first exhibition in Nepal which shows ever-changing Nepali faces painted on Lokta paper. *11 November to 25 November, Cosmopolitan Training Centre, Jhamsikhel, 016217752*

Extraordinary, bring out the extraordinary in the ordinary. This is what Navin Joshi does in his art exhibition which shows a unique

take on everyday life. *12 to 28 November, Park Gallery, Pulchowk*

Kathmandu International Mountain Festival (KIMFF), attend the screening of 52 films representing 22 countries or participate in one of the many exciting workshops and discussions on offer. *8 to 12 December*

MUSIC

International Folk Music Film Festival, enjoy English and Nepali movies and music under one roof. *Tickets are priced at Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 1000, 25 to 27 November, Nepal Tourism Board, 4242741, www.nepalfolkmusicfestival.com*



Songs with Sabin Rai, tune into Sabin Rai's melodious performances while relishing a scrumptious dinner at Buzz Cafe. *25 November, 6pm onwards, Buzz Cafe, Baluwatar, 9841249081*

Arabian Night, listen to Middle Eastern music by the band 'Mazzika', which means 'music' in Egyptian. *Tickets are priced at Rs 200 and Rs 500 (includes a drink), 26 November, 7.30pm onwards, Delices de France, Thamel, 4260326*

DINING



Just Baked, a cozy café with amazing pastries and friendly ambience. *Old Baneshwor*

The Ghangri Café, a quiet and relaxing place with delicious food. Although known for their open momos, their Chef Salad is equally delicious. *Pulchowk, 5528703, ghangricafe@hotmail.com*

Him Thai Restaurant and Bar, for the most authentic Thai cuisines in town. *Lazimpat, 4418683*

Attic, newly transformed lounge/bar ideal for Friday night drinking before hitting the dance spots. *Uttar Dhoka, Lazimpat, 984161476*

Why do people read? A Tehelka poll from 2010 suggested that at least in India, reading is less the leisurely pursuit it is for many in the West. Even the modern Nepali may feel uncomfortable if she happens to touch a book with her feet, books are still venerated as a means to access wisdom. Reading is a part of our continuing education – whether it is to build better business relationships, learn a language, or simply be inspired.

Biographies feature strongly in this last category in Nepal. In every book fair biographies enjoy pride of place in all stalls, and their subjects run the gamut of humanity from Gandhi to Mao. Given this strong interest, one might wonder why there are so few quality biographers working in Nepal. This week, that lack will be temporarily remedied by British writer Patrick French, who will be featuring in a session on the art of biography.

French is the author of five books, all in a sense biographies national or individual. If he was widely praised for his study of V S Naipaul, *The World Is What It Is*, the reactions to his latest 'intimate biography of 1.2 billion people', *India: A Portrait*, have been mixed (as they were for his 1997 work on that country). But then even Naipaul, seen by some as the world's greatest living writer, didn't escape censure for daring to sum up the cauldron of contradictions that makes up our giant southern neighbour.

What French brings to the art of biography is quite the opposite of the hagiographic representations of political figures Nepali readers are accustomed to. Ian Buruma has in fact credited French with pioneering the genre of the 'confessional biography'. In Naipaul's case this approach is obvious. Thanks to the subject's extraordinary candour, French is able to not only chart the writer's path to literary glory but also

Art of biography

Visiting writer Patrick French gets to the very heart of his subjects, be they individuals or billion-strong nations



detail the peaks and troughs of his personal life, including the abusive nature of his relationships with his British wife and his Argentinean mistress.

But French applies the personal approach to the art of biography to entire nations, too. Combining travelogue style reportage and a long view of history, French unabashedly inserts himself into the milieux he is describing. In his 'personal history' of Tibet, for instance, the way the author comes to terms with his own 'Tibet of the mind' after surveying ground realities is central to the reader's understanding of this unfortunate country.

The intimacy of French's individual and national biographies does not distract or titillate, ultimately. Quite the contrary. By delving as deep as possible into the personal, French offers his readers the opportunity to better understand his subjects. In the case of a public figure, the confessional approach humanises the subject and grants us a fuller understanding of his life's work. With nations, the personal approach reminds us of the extent to which national representations are social and political constructions, never set in stone.

Here in Nepal we are now at a stage where we can intuitively sense the value of such an approach to individual and national biography. We are not only in the process of reviewing what our nation means and casting off monolithic notions of Nepaliness, we are also ready to discard dynastic hagiography. For the new generation of Nepali biographers and historians, French's deeply human mission may be worth pursuing. The rewards will accrue to us all. 🇳🇵

Patrick French will be in conversation with Rabi Thapa at Ramalaya in Panipokhari Monday 27 September, 3.30-6.30pm.



Buddha Bar, offers a warm and cozy space for intimate conversations over a large selection of drinks. *Thamel, 9851053235*

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



Bench Burger, be it a fish or a steak burger, Bench Burger offers many types and tastes for your palate. *Krishnagalli, Patan*

Cinnamon Grill and Lounge, mouth watering delicacies with live music. Try the grilled tenderloin



steak and quiche lorraine with fresh fruit salad. *Jhamsikhel, 5521339*

The Factory, a trendy restobar for a refreshing stopover in the chaos that is Thamel. Great food and drinks, with zesty music. Don't miss out on their cheesecake, it's a must. *Mandala Street, Thamel*



Upstairs Cafe, a delicious range of Vietnamese cuisine to sample. *Maharajgunj, near the US embassy*



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*

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*

GETAWAYS

The Amtrip Offer, be a part of the Amtrip Bungy or Swing Jump Event 160m over the Bhote Koshi river or the Adventure Tour Trip. *Fees: Rs 2700 per person for one day or Rs 4500 per person for an overnight stay (includes lunch and transportation on scheduled dates), valid until December, Naxal Narayan Chaur, 4444690/691 ext: 116*

SOMEPLACE ELSE



TAMA

After sampling Tama's menu and gnawing on leftovers the next morning, I am surprised to meet foodies in the valley unacquainted with the four-year-old canteen in Gairdihara. Its traditional comforts are done so well that I forked right into the day-old helpings of tandoori chicken without reheating. While Nawa de Café in Thamel 'elevates the local', Tama has it streamlined. The casual, clean-cut joint does fast food without the in-and-out pacing typical of fast food chains. Black tied waiters are at your beck and call, and a glass divide reveals an orderly kitchen of white toques in full gear. Comfortable booths are available for seating as well as the Nepali convention of floor style dining. Tama's menu conjures a candy shop for savory tooth and takes the street out of street side fare. Indian and



MARCO POLLO

Nepali snacks are easily at the top of its list among its tandoori and taas sets. Pakoras are usually disappointing or average. The batter is often too doughy like a fritter or too light like tempura. But Tama's pakoras, particularly its cheese variation, strike the perfect balance. The chicken tandoori is impeccably cooked and matches well with an order of sweet Peshwari naan. For vegetarians the palak paneer may seem ordinary. But Tama isn't about nouvelle cuisine; it's about quality. Unlike standard palak paneer, Tama's paneer is thinly sliced and seared for flavour. Its most popular offering is its taas lunch set. Tender pieces of fried goat meat come with crispy *bhuja*, puffed rice, and spicy pickled vegetable *achar*. For beverages, a glass of real juice like mango, guava

or lychee seals the deal. For dessert, head elsewhere. Remarkably, prices are as local as the cuisine and are not affected by the packaging. The only possible drawback makes for a more or less 'authentic experience' and could only bother an illiterate expat or tourist. Tama spells out half (arguably the more interesting half) of its menu in Nepali, which a waiter would be more than happy to translate. 🇳🇵 *Marco Pollo*

From the Narayanhiti Museum pass the Sunrise Bank in Gairdihara, cross the intersection and stay right

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Deal-icious	★★★★
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Eye health



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD


The treatment of eye problems in Nepal is head and shoulders above medical treatment in other fields in this country. Common eye diseases like cataract (clouding of the lens in the eye, called “motibindu” in Nepali) lend themselves to prompt and effective treatment by a simple surgical procedure. Compare this with trying to treat a patient with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), another common Nepali ailment. In treatment of COPD patients, the physician can try to offer some useful medicines to help the patient, but the clinical outcome is never as dramatic as restoring vision. In addition, ophthalmology in Nepal has been blessed with the likes of Sanduk Ruit, the eye surgeon with impressive dexterity who has stunned the ophthalmological world and brought lasting impact on eye health in Nepal and

neighbouring countries. A younger star in ophthalmology is Suman Thapa who especialises in glaucoma (appropriately named “jalbindu” in Nepali). Although not as widespread as cataract in the general population, glaucuma can be devastating if left untreated without proper eye checks which involves measuring




pressure of the fluid in the eye. Excessive fluid pressure can lead to permanent optic nerve damage with loss of vision. Thapa recently completed comprehensive, scientific research on glaucoma in Bhaktapur district.




A wide sampling (4,800 people above 40) of the Newar ethnic group in Bhaktapur followed by comprehensive eye exams at Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology in Kathmandu revealed that about 6 per cent blindness resulted from glaucoma. This was higher than what was originally thought to be the case. Another important achievement of the study was establishment of normal Nepali parameters in a glaucoma survey. Prior to this, dubious, unsubstantiated reference values were used for glaucoma tests in Nepal. The researchers were able to create greater awareness of this preventable problem and the study. Hopefully this study and subsequent awareness of the disease and its prevention (timely measurement of eye pressure) will spread far and wide in Nepal under Suman Thapa’s enthusiastic leadership. For his impressive body of work from Bhaktapur, Thapa was awarded a PhD from the Vrije University in Amsterdam. We wish more young doctors will follow in this both academic and practical pursuit of ophthalmological problems in Nepal.



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

Enjoy the crisp, clear weather while it lasts. The reason is the prevailing westerly wind which brings cold dry (and clean) air. The downside is the cold mornings with minimum dropping to 6 Celsius this weekend, but that is compensated by unfiltered sunshine during the afternoons which takes the temperature up to 23 Celsius. By early next week, the inversion smog in Kathmandu Valley should get thicker as the temperature drops below 5 degrees. We are now going into winter, but any day now the wind direction will shift to southwest, and the thick Indo-Gangetic haze will be back. No sign of that yet, so expect the clear weather to last into next week.



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KRISHNA SINJALI

TAKE NOTICE: A doctor checks a Bhutanese woman on the ninth day of her hunger strike at the Bhutanese refugee camp in Beldagi II, Jhapa on Wednesday. Twelve women have been fasting unto death, demanding to be recognised as refugees.



BIKRAM RAI

LET’S TALK: Helen Clark, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Chair of the UN Development Group meets PM Baburam Bhattarai and other top political leaders at the PM’s residence in Baluwatar on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

AID FOR AIDS: Norwegian Ambassador to Nepal, Alf Arne Ramslien, Norway’s Crown Prince Haakon Magnus and the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Nepal, Robert Piper (L-R), visit Cruise AIDS, a community-based organisation affiliated with the Blue Diamond Society on Monday.



Vatika

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Loop by loop

Sabita Maharjan is transforming the lives of local women one knitted item at a time

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Feel the difference

There are few women in Kirtipur who do not recognise 34-year-old Sabita Maharjan. She is the founder of a local women's cooperative, teaches adult literacy classes and runs cleaning campaigns throughout Kirtipur.

But what makes Sabita a prominent figure in the community is Kirtipur Hosiery, a knitting business she established, which has trained more than 500 women and currently employs over 70. On Tuesday she was presented with the Surya Nepal Asha Social Entrepreneurship Award in recognition of her significant contribution towards empowering women in Kirtipur. Sponsored by Surya Nepal, the award was organised by ChangeFusion Nepal and supported by National Business Initiative.

"This award means a lot to me and the women I work with," says Sabita. "It recognises our efforts and provides us with resources which will help us improve our work."

Sabita was interested in knitting from an early age and started attending formal training classes at the Department of Cottage and Small Industries. Her first job was at Kalanki Knitwear, a manufacturer and exporter of woolen wear. A fiercely independent woman, Sabita used

KNIT RIGHT: Sabita Maharjan (right) teaches a new design to a woman at her workshop.



BIKRAM RAI

her first earnings to fund her college education.

She quit her job after marriage, but her family's unstable financial condition meant that she had to resume her knitting work. The birth of her first child

cut short her work life yet again. However, this time Sabita was determined to earn a living and be self-sufficient; so she set up her own knitting company in Kirtipur with 10 women.

Now Kirtipur Hosiery, which produces a range of knitted products

including sweaters and jackets, has become a key employer for many women in Kirtipur and surrounding areas. Currently, a worker at the hosiery earns about Rs 3,500 a month. Since a majority of women in the company are housewives, Sabita doesn't demand a full-time commitment from them. Twenty-two women work full-time while others complete their assignments from home.

Over the years, Kirtipur Hosiery has partnered with several organisations such as Business Service Centre, and Educational Resource and Development Centre

Nepal in an effort to train the women workers in vital life skills other than knitting. "Right now we are focusing on learning basic computer skills so that we can explore new designs and market our products to a wider audience," says Sabita. She has also taught her staff money management skills and makes it a point to stress on the importance of economic independence.

"Women have to be economically independent," claims Sabita as she recounts her own story. Sabita's husband had a history of drug and alcohol abuse and would often beat her. "If I wasn't financially independent, I would have never had the courage to stand up to my husband and leave his house."

Sabita's experiences with domestic violence and her understanding of



Nepali women's vulnerable position have prompted her to open a shelter for single women where she will provide training courses in knitting and making handicrafts.

In the future, Sabita hopes to improve her company's reach in the market. Currently, a cap that Kirtipur Hosiery sells for Rs 60 is sold for over Rs 200 in stores of Thamel and for more in the international market. She says that if her company is able to directly access the market instead of relying on intermediaries, the women workers could earn three times their current income and the profits would rise.

Despite her impressive achievements Sabita remains humble and maintains, "This award is not mine alone, and I want to use it to make life better for my sisters who work with me." 🇳🇵

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Feel the difference



ALL PICS: ANURAG ACHARYA

Disastrous response

ANURAG ACHARYA in TAPLEJUNG

Compared to the north-western corner of Nepal, the capital of the far-eastern district of Taplejung in Fungling doesn't feel as remote. There are neat black topped roads, busy markets, private schools and colleges,

satellite cable operators and FM stations. However, a half-hour outside Fungling, you begin to understand why there is seething anger against the state for its apathy and neglect following the 25 September earthquake. The epicenter of the

The people of eastern Nepal cope with the aftermath of the earthquake

6.8 magnitude quake was right underneath Mt. Kanchanjunga, the third highest mountain in the world on Nepal's border with India's Sikkim state. Two months after the earthquake, there is still devastation everywhere. Trails wiped out

by massive rockfalls, schools and homes in ruins. We met families living in plastic tents provided by the Red Cross but as the winter approaches, the families fear the worst. The festivals over, children were returning to schools in Fungling. There



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are no secondary schools outside the district capital and even the primary and lower secondary schools in the VDCs have mostly been damaged by the earthquake. Locals are forced to risk their lives on dangerous trails for everyday needs. “What do we do? This is all fate. Even our gods are angry with us, it seems”, says 73 year old Lobsang Bhote from remote

village of Pholey. The chairman of the Kangchenjunga Conservation Management Committee (KCMC), Khagendra Limbu, says trails damaged by the earthquake need to be repaired before the next rainy season, otherwise it will be inaccessible for trekkers going up to base camp. But Lobsang is more concerned about his own community. “Tourists

LEFT: Students play in front of their destroyed school building in Jorpokhari.

ABOVE: Newly built concrete school building in Pholey is destroyed. Less than hundred meters away old mud houses remain unaffected by the earthquake.

LEFT: Huge landslide between Pholey and Ghunsa. The earthquake has damaged trails and bridges on the Kangchenjunga Trail.

can choose not to walk on these dangerous landslides,” he says, “but we don’t have a choice.” For people from remote areas like Pholey, Ghunsa and Khampachen the earthquake has affected transportation of basic goods carried mostly by local porters or yaks. Underaged children, some as young as 11, carry up to 50 kg sacks

Beyond repair

The earthquake completely destroyed 1369 houses in Taplejung displacing as many families. The official record also shows 56 school buildings, 7 police posts, 5 health posts and 9 other government buildings were damaged in the district. The locals say many destroyed school buildings including the ones that were constructed under the community supervision were of low quality and if the earthquake had struck during the school hours, lot of children would have died. Although reports say 86 people lost their lives in the adjoining Indian state of Sikkim and 11 people died in other parts of Nepal it’s a miracle that there was no casualty in the district. The government has distributed relief worth Rs. 6.7 million but Local Development Officer Prem Kumar Shrestha admits the amount is too little, given the extent of damage. The local authorities are hopeful that KCMC along with The Great Himalayan Trail Program are working to raise funds to repair the damaged trails and broken bridges, locals are hopeful.

of cardamom along precarious trails. Underneath the fatalism and acceptance, there is lingering anger over the lack of response by the government. Penji Sherpa of Ghunsa and others like her make fun of the “relief package” sent by the government. The Taplejung CDO and a bureaucrat from the home ministry landed in a helicopter with Rs 60,000, handed it to a local police officer and left within minutes. They didn’t even bother to go and see how the people whose houses were destroyed are living. “Forget about these people from Funling and Kathmandu, our own village secretaries are not around when we need them most. They left when the war started and never came back,” complained Machindra Limbu, a Grade 12 student from Lelep. He was accompanying four widows

from his village who were walking to Funling to collect their allowances even though the government is supposed bring it to them. Back in Funling, the Local Development Officer says he has 29 secretaries looking after 50 villages, the others have refused to work in remote areas. Most VDC buildings in Taplejung that were not bombed during the conflict have been illegally occupied. The earthquake was just the latest in a series of disasters that has afflicted Taplejung: state neglect, poverty and the war. The people here, like Nepalis in other remote regions, cope the best they can. They have learnt to live with disasters, and they don’t expect anything from the state. They will survive the aftermath of the the terrible night of 25 September as well, long after its memories fade. 🇳🇵

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The chosen 8

Profiles of members of the State Restructuring Commission in *Nagarik*, 23 November



Stella Tamang (UCPN–Maoist)
Alongside her involvement in the indigenous women’s movement, Tamang is the Founding Chair and currently the adviser of the National Indigenous Women Federation of Nepal. An adviser to Private and Boarding Schools’ Organisation (PABSON), she has experience in running a school as a principal. Tamang is an advocate of federalism based on ethnicity.



Malla K Sundar (UCPN–Maoist)
Before joining the Maoist Party, Sundar was active in the Newari Language Movement. After the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006, the Maoists made him a member of the Interim Parliament. Although he was included in the candidate lists for proportional representation in Constituent Assembly election, the Maoists did not make him a CA member. Currently, he is working in the indigenous people’s movement.



Krishna Hachhethu (United Madhesi Democratic Front)
Hachhethu is with the Political Science Department at Tribhuvan University. He wrote his PhD thesis on ‘Party Building in Nepal’. He is also involved with the Centre for Nepal and South Asian Studies and works as a consultant for numerous NGOs and INGOs. Hachhethu is a strong supporter of ethnic federalism and he is researching on the subject at the moment



Sabitra Gurung (Nepali Congress)
Gurung is currently pursuing her PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi and her research focuses on ‘Ethnicity and Inclusion: A Study of Nepal’s Major Political Parties’. Alongside her PhD, she is a lecturer in political science at Ratna Rajya Campus. Till date she has published on topics such as ethnicity, inclusion, equality, women’s rights and South Asian politics.



Ramesh Dhungel (Nepali Congress)
Dhungel obtained his PhD on Asian Languages and Cultures from George Mason University in the USA. He is opposed to federalism based exclusively on ethnicity and instead seeks to promote mixed model of federalism.



Surendra Mahato (United Madhesi Democratic Front)
Mahato, Vice president of Nepal Bar Association’s Central Region, has been a practicing lawyer for the past two decades. He is known to be a strong proponent of federalism.



Sarbaraj Khadka (CPN-UML)
Khadka has a PhD on natural resources management and is currently the director of an NGO called Village Redevelopment.



Bhogendra Jha (CPN-UML)
Jha attained his PhD in Economics from Bihar and is a lecturer at Janakpur Rara Campus. He claims to have done in-depth studies of the Madhes Uprising and federalism.



Help Rupa

Himal Khabaratrika, 17 November



Rupa Gandarbha, 30, of Rukum gave birth to ten children in a span of eight years after she was married. Four are alive: 7-year-old Ganesh, 2-year-old Manisha and 3-month-old twins Ganga and Jamuna. Sadly, all of them are blind due to cataract. A poor Dalit woman, Rupa does not have money for their treatment although cataract can be treated. Doctors at the district hospital have told her they can’t be treated in Rukum.
Rupa’s six children who died were aged between a month and a year and were also blind. “Every time a blind baby was born, I hoped the next one would have healthy eyes,” she says. “What did the God punish me for?” Rupa’s husband has married another woman and she has to raise her four blind children herself. Her husband has two healthy children from his second wife. Rupa is frail because of repeated deliveries and the burden of taking care of her children.

Beware

Editorial in *Laalrakshak*, 20 November



The aspiration of the People’s War was not the destitution of the tillers of the land. But the seven-point agreement threatens to alienate farmers from the land they have been tilling for generations. It is true that the seven point agreement has opened an unprecedented opportunity for peace and cooperation among the political parties but the agreement has overlooked the problems of landless farmers who had been living in land they seized. We do not expect much from NC and UML, but people expected UCPN-M to find an alternate ways to secure their livelihood before they are evicted from the land.
The party itself is under attack from anarchists and while misfits within the party are exploiting the opportunity to cripple the leadership, the spirit of revolution and class consciousness must be held high even at the time of great crisis. The problem of the landless is a national issue and the solution must be found through national consensus but a unity within the party can help it play a facilitating role. Creating an unnecessary fuss over the issue will not help. The PLA is in the process of integration and although it is as per the agreement, there are complicated issues that need to be sorted out. If the party remains divided within, effective dialogue with the other political parties on the issue is not possible. The PLA which has always been committed to the leadership awaits clear guidance as well as united and positive role in the integration process.

Madhesi millionaires

Gokarna Gautam in *Deshantar*, 20 November



The property declaration report submitted by ministers in the present cabinet reveals that although the national economy is in shambles and the poverty gap is widening, our leaders own stacks of gold, silver, and land worth millions. In a nation with per capita of less than USD 250, it is surprising how politicians have managed to accumulate that kind of wealth.
Although ministers claim family inheritance as the source of their wealth, it is not difficult to see the linkage between the humongous amount of wealth they possess and the corruption charges they face. The frontrunners are the Madhesi leaders who have always managed to remain close to the

centres of power.
Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Planning Hridayesh Tripathi has declared gold and silver worth over Rs 15 million, not to mention vast properties in Kathmandu and Nawalparasi, his share investments, and a fleet of luxury vehicles. Similarly Minister for Home Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister Bijay Kumar Gachhedar also owns gold and silver worth millions along with properties in Morang and Sunsari. Minister for Health and Population Rajendra Mahato is not far behind when it comes to owning fixed and movable assets worth millions. Mahato also owns luxurious mansions in Kathmandu and Sarlahi. Among others, Jayprakash Prasad Gupta, Nandan Kumar Dutt and Dan Bhahadur Kurmi own large amounts of property, land and cash in the bank.



PM Baburam Bhattarai: “It’s not jumbo yet friends, we are just eight percent.”
Cart: Cabinet

कान्तिपुर Batsyayan in *Kantipur*, 21 November

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ What do I do, nobody listens to me. People are corrupt and things are getting out of my control. What can I do? ”

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai, quoted in *Jana Astha* weekly, expressing his helplessness on Monday’s three party meeting.



closeup

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MUSIC AWARDS

NOMINEES

2068

BEST NEW ARTIST

1. Kristina Allen - Bagchhu Mah
2. Leezum Bhutia - Kina Tadha
3. Meena Singh - Ma Ta Maya Gardai Thiye
4. Santosh Lama - Jindagiko Goretoma (Batuwa)
5. Seema Sangraula - K Nai Runuchha

BEST MALE POP VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Deepak Bajracharya - Jani Jani
2. Deepesh Kishor Bhattarai - Dekhi Dekhi
3. Mingma Sherpa - Jaama Jaama
4. Om Bikram Bista - Gahro Paryo
5. Sanjay Kishore Shrestha - Akaichhin

BEST ROCK COMPOSITION

1. Albatross - Chaina
2. Dibya Subba - Aakash Baata
3. 11:30 Basan - Dukha Timro
4. Amrit Gurung - Jogalay Hunchha Bhet
5. Nirakar Yakthumba - Timi Bina

BEST MALE VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Deepak Limbu - Timro Mero
2. Narendra Pyasi - Maya O Maya
3. Ram Krishna Dhakal - Chhuk Chhuke Rail
4. Rajesh Payal Rai - Dharti Aakash
5. Rajesh Payal Rai - Aafno Chaina

BEST SONG ORIGINALLY RECORDED FOR A MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

1. Mahesh Khadka - Kehi Naboli
2. Nhyoo Bajracharya - Bihani Jastai Jhalmal
3. Shambhujit Baskota - Ke Rahryo Ra
4. Shambhujit Baskota - Kaha Baat Aayo Kaha Jancha Maya
5. Suresh Adhikari - Kasle Choryo Mero Maan

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A GROUP OR DUO WITH VOCAL

1. Albatross - Chaina
2. Dibya Subba & the Blue Acidz - Aakash Baata
3. 11:30 Basan - Dukha Timro
4. Nepathya - Jogale Huncha Bhet
5. 1974 AD - Timi Bina

BEST ARRANGEMENT

1. Amul Karki Dhali - Haasi Haasi
2. Ashish Abiral - Maya O Maya
3. Jems Pradhan - Gahro Paryo
4. 1974 AD - Timi Bina
5. Maharaj Thapa - Chhuk Chhuke Rail

POP / ROCK ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. Deepesh Kishor Bhattarai - Smriti
2. Dibya Subba & the Blue Acidz - Dibya Subba the Blue Acidz
3. Nepathya - Aaina Jhyaal
4. 1974 AD - Aath Aathaara
5. Seema Sangraula - Note

BEST VOCAL COLLABORATION

1. Anjana Gurung / Deepak Limbu - Mero Kalpanako
2. Anju Panta / Narendra Pyasi - Jaam Kyare
3. Anju Panta / Thupten Bhutia - Phuleko Phool Hau Ki?
4. Mallika Karki / Ram Krishna Dhakal - Kati Kura
5. Mandavi Tripathi / Govinda Gurung - Bar Pipalko Jodi Milai

FOLK RECORD OF THE YEAR

1. Binu Tamang - Babako Aangani
2. Kamali Kanta Bhetwal - Magama Mag
3. Rajan Rayamajhi - Barshaako Belani
4. Rup Kumar Rai - Ram Sailli
5. Tulsi Parajuli - Patanko Paatalo Chiura

BEST COMPOSITION

1. Ashish Abiral - Maya O Maya
2. Jems Pradhan - Gahro Paryo
3. Nirakar Yakthumba - Timi Bina
4. Shikhar Santosh - Chhuk Chhuke Rail
5. Suresh Adhikari - Haasi Haasi

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. Ram Krishna Dhakal - Shailee
2. Nepathya - Aaina Jhyaal
3. 1974 AD - Aath Aathaara
4. Rajesh Payal Rai - Rai is King
5. Seema Sangraula - Note

FOLK ALBUM OF THE YEAR

1. Binu Tamang - Maiti
2. Rajan Rayamajhi - Barshaa
3. Raju Aangdembe - Katha Zindagiko
4. Rup Kumar Rai - Ram Sailli
5. Shirish Devkota - Najaraiko Bhar

BEST ROCK VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Albatross - Chaina
2. Dibya Subba & the Blue Acidz - Aakash Baata
3. 11:30 Basan - Dukha Timro
4. Nepathya - Jogale Huncha Bhet
5. 1974 AD - Timi Bina

SONG OF THE YEAR

1. Anand Adhikari - Eka Deshma
2. Bhupal Rai - Sustari Jharchu
3. Kali Prasad Rijal - Nadi Tarera
4. Raman Ghimire - Haasi Haasi
5. SP Koirala - Parale Jhupro

BEST FEMALE POP VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Kristina Allen - Bagchhu Mah
2. Leezum Bhutia - Kina Tadha
3. Puspha Gurung - Rog Ho Ki Yo Dosh Ho
4. Seema Sangraula - K Nai Runuchha
5. Shreya Sotang - Pugayna Malai

BEST POP COMPOSITION

1. Deepesh Kishor Bhattarai - Dekhi Dekhi
2. Jems Pradhan - Gahro Paryo
3. Kaami Doma - Jaama Jaama
4. Kali Prasad Baskota - K Nai Runuchha
5. Nhyoo Bajracharya - Bagchhu Mah

BEST FEMALE VOCAL PERFORMANCE

1. Anju Panta - Sustari Jharchu
2. Durga Kharel - Baisha Jasto Baadal
3. Nisha Deshar - Timro Mero
4. Sabnam Gurung - Malai Ta Ghau Chhopnay
5. Sangeeta Rana Pradhan - Haasi Haasi

RECORD OF THE YEAR

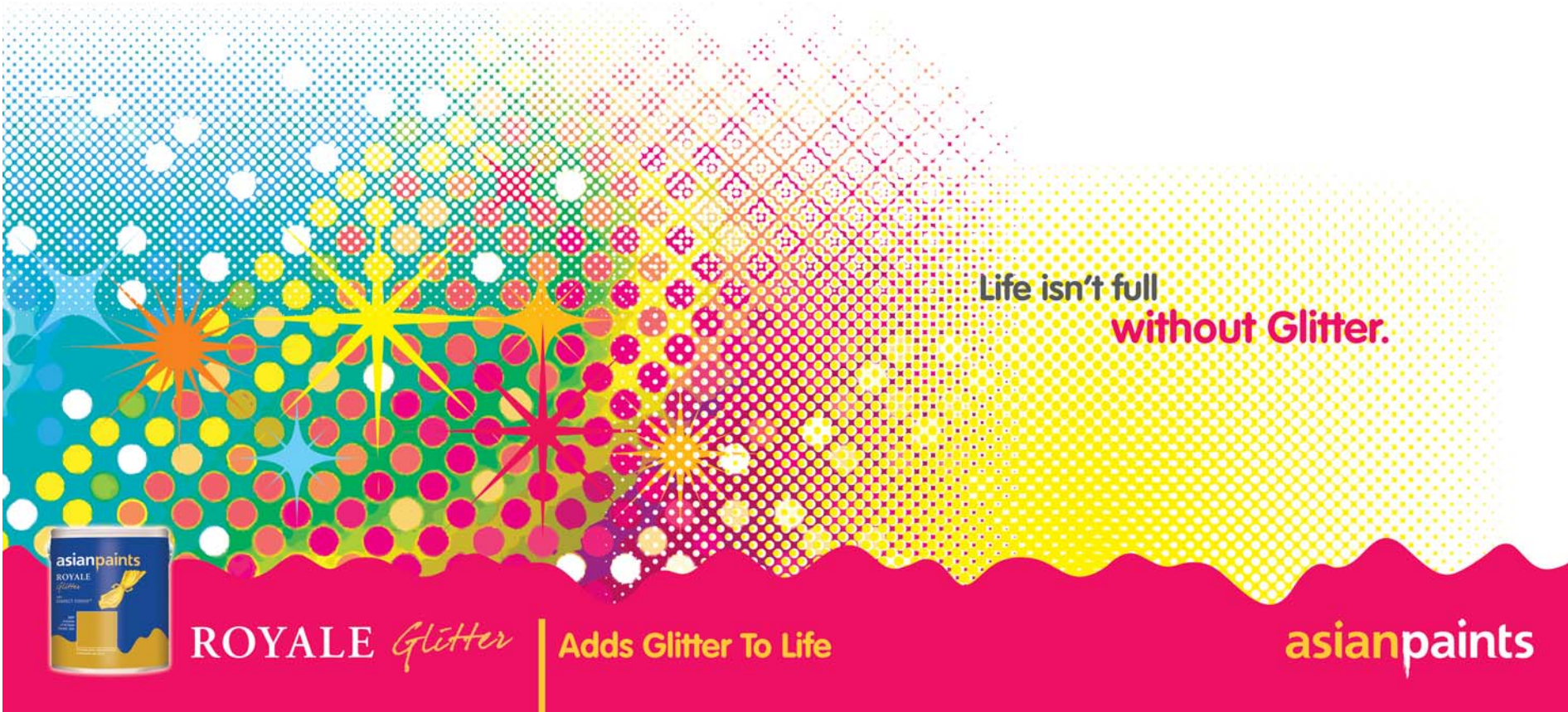
1. Narendra Pyasi - Maya O Maya
2. 1974 AD - Timi Bina
3. Om Bikram Bista - Gahro Paryo
4. Ram Krishna Dhakal - Chhuk Chhuke Rail
5. Sangeeta Rana Pradhan - Haasi Haasi

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Eight Points for Attention

Good to see an erstwhile revolutionary who brought down Nepal's monarchy, Financial Minister **Comrade Monsoon Man** not skipping a beat to refer to the visiting Norwegian Crown Prince the other day as "His Royal Highness".



But it must be much more awkward for Comrade Awesome who used to like calling class enemies "revisionists" to be labeled "revisionist" by his own camaraderies. After piling his Chairman with awesome adjectives like "judsutrabadi", "deviationist", "distortionist" and "raw agent" (among others) **Comrade Big Flop** has decided to keep it simple this time by referring to Comrades Prime Minister and Chairman "both stupid". The worst cut for all for Chairman Fearsomeness must be when his erstwhile protégé, Comrade Cloud, publicly called him "a lackey of feudals and expansionists".



Hridesh Tree Party is not happy about the way media misrepresented his property

self-declaration in which he disclosed that he virtually owns a gold mine. Shri Tea Party insists that the gold is a dowry gift and belongs to his wife, and besides, it's all going to be given away for his dotter's wedding next week.



The Ass has just been perusing *The Collected Works of Mao Tse Tung* (4th Volume, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1970, 155 pages) where the Great Helmsman reiterates the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention. For anyone who wants to know when our own Baddies deviated from Mao's straight and narrow, they just have to read this section (with Ass' asides in brackets):

Instruction of the General Headquarters of the Chinese People's Liberation Army October 10 ,1947

The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:
1. Obey orders in all your actions (hmmm...)
2. Don't take a single needle from the masses (poke them with it)



3. Turn in everything captured (har-de-har-har!)
The Eight Points for Attention are as follows:
1. Speak politely (yeah, sure)
2. Pay fair for what you buy (hee-haw)
3. Return everything you borrow (don't steal, just "borrow")
4. Pay for anything you damage (yeah, whatever)
5. Don't hit or swear at people (take that, you \$#@%&*)
6. Don't damage crops (loot them)
7. Don't take liberties with women (liberate 'em)
8. Don't ill treat captives (eliminate them)



The only explanation as to why **Hachethu** made it to the State Restructuring Committee and **Bhattachan** didn't is that the political parties are now getting cold feet about the ethnic federation agenda. They need people in the committee who are yes-men. The **anti-Caucasian caucus** in parliament that voted against the amendment to set up the supercommittee spooked the scheiße out of the party leadership. No, it's not a fear that the country will disintegrate, it's the fear that they will lose the 40 per cent Bahun-Chhetri vote bank.



The infamous Gone Ace Rai who built up a well-deserved reputation for kickbacks while in the KMC was sacked by the prime minister himself. But guess what, the fellow flew off to Ecuador on a municipality junket. When asked about this, the PM was endearingly candid: "They just don't obey my orders, what am I supposed to do?" Sack him again, Doktor Saheb.



Victory Bachelor Gachhedar has transferred nearly 300 policemen in the past two weeks, making this the biggest transfer ever in Nepal's history. Cops who got reassigned to "juicy" postings had to pay through their noses, resulting in a huge improvement in the **Home-sweet-home Minister's** cash flow situation. Then 16 other honest revenue officials chasing VAT scammers and tax evaders get transferred to clerical jobs at the behest of the First Lady. Whenever the prime minister raises these issues at cabinet meetings, ministers in question blackmail him and threaten to pull out of the coalition. Maybe Prime Minister Red Flag should call his bluff once and for all.



Rubbing his hands in glee at BRB's discomfiture is none other than PKD, who was overheard telling the faithful at the Pistachio Palace the other day: "Now, let's see how popular he really is." And, amidst cackling laughter: "Comrade Hisila is turning out to be even greedier than Comrade Sujata."





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