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 Upadhya. 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

25 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER 2011 | #580

The political committee 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: outsourcing 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 idea to his cadre was to sugar-coat it with the notion 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 decade’s worth of progress, 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, without doubt it is the most fundamental paper of Nepali democracy.
- 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.
- How many of us honestly believe that having a constitution will remove all its plaques plaguing the country? (The five year cease fire Editorial, #576). Well I am 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.
- The reality is that identity politics is rampant, people want to define their place in the world, and they are not interested in anything else. To control trafﬁc one has to be involved in the trafﬁc and see the situation from the trafﬁc point of view.
- 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?

E-COMMERCE

Online business in Nepal is likely to remain #479) . There are thousands of young men and women like her all over Nepal. I am one of them. Thank you.

K K Sharma

FIVE-YEAR CEASEFIRE

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E-COMMERCE

Online business in Nepal is likely to remain

Now, the Constitution

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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 concept of a 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 hope for a comment 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 decade’s worth of progress, and we are very familiar with the attitude of our current rulers.

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E-COMMERCE

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Now, the Constitution
Divided we stand
Maoist ideologues now realise they underestimated the perils of stirring the ethnic pot

BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

T he 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 Rubeba 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, ‘iron and fire’. 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 that 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 wonder the leaders of the autonomous ethnic provinces as a ploy to garner votes in the 2008 elections. Now, they have come to see that they let the genie out of the bottle.

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.
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. The current trends in progress continue. Achievements in reducing child mortality and 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. The current trends in progress continue. Achievements in reducing child mortality and 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 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 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 short term

UNDP has been working with the government on disaster risk reduction for many years. A recent report of that work was the establishment of the Home Ministry of a National Risk Management and Response Department (NRM RD). We already see concrete results: when an earthquake struck the east of Nepal recently, the national and district level emergency response centres reacted faster than ever before. There 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 Risk Management which was approved in 2009. It signals an important shift in policy from focusing mainly on relief and response to focusing more on prevention and 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.

And, finally, impressions of your visit to Nepal this week? We were very proud to have with us Crown Prince Hakon 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 for development. We met the highest leaders in Kathmandu to women starting their 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 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 national level politicians and the other at the Prime minister’s residence. It is enormously significant that they take the job of speeding completing the peace and constitution process seriously.

Why to be more equal

The report cites Costa Rica’s enlightened 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 setting cattle 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 very well, but because others did better). The inequality-adjusted HDI is even worse, pointing to a big income gap between the rich and poor.

Equity doesn’t bring equity. Inequality is 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 global inequities, inequities within countries, and an unfair inter-generational burden on those who come after us.
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.snpl.com.np
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, like Tom, 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, sausages 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.

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 Goha, 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.”
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.
in the process of reviewing what our nation means and casting off monolithic 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 Nepalianness, 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 Ramalya in Panipokhari Monday 27 September. 3.30-6.30pm.

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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, Ramalya, Pani Pokhari

W h y 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 Gandhi]. 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 make 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 detail the peaks and troughs of his personal life, including the abusive nature of his relationships with his British wife and his Argentinian 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 milieu 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 Nepalianness, 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 Ramalya in Panipokhari Monday 27 September. 3.30-6.30pm.
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 Newa 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 tooths and takes the street out of street side fare. Indian and 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.

Your oasis in the heart of Patan, easy walk from new Bhat Bhateni Supermarket. Patan Photo, Yola 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. Lachampal, Ananda Bhawan, 4416027

**GETAWAYS**

The Amtrip Offer, be a part of the Amtrip Bungy or Swing Jump Event 160m over the Bhotekoshi 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, 444690/891 ext: 116

From the Narayan Bhuti Museum pass the Sunrise Bank in Gairdihara, cross the intersection and stay right.

| Service | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Bread ‘n water | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Space | 5 |
| Deal-icious | 5 |
| Repeat? | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

**SOMEPLACE ELSE**

**BENCH BURGER**

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

**CINNAMON GRILL AND LOUNGE**

mouth watering delicacies with live music. Try the grilled tenderloin

**MARCO Polo**

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

DHNVANTARI
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 specializes in glaucoma (appropriately named “jalbindu” in Nepali). Although not as widespread as cataract in the general population, glaucoma 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.
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

T here 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 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 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.”

www.kirtipurknitting.com
Compared to the northwestern 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 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

Disastrous response

ANURAG ACHARYA in TAPLEJUNG

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

ANURAG ACHARYA

ALL PICS: ANURAG ACHARYA

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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 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, lots 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.

are no secondary schools outside the district capital and even the primary and lower secondary schools in the VDC’s 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 Bhole 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 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 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 Fungling 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 Fungling to collect their allowances even though the government is supposed bring it to them.

Back in Fungling, 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.
The chosen 8

Profi les of members of the State Restructuring Commission in Nagarik, 21 November

Stella Tamang (UCPN-Maoist)

Alongside her involvement in the indigenous women’s movement, Tamang is the Founding Chair and currently the advisor 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 (Nepal 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 (Nepal 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 Khabaraliya, 17 November

Rupa Gandharbo, 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 Marisha and 3-month-old twins Ganga and Januma. 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 said. “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 half because of repeated deliveries and the burden of taking care of her children.

BEWARE

Editorial in Laoshakoh, 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 overlapped 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 alternative way to secure their livelihood before they are evicted from the land.

The party itself is under attack from anarchists and white militias 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 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 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 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 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 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 the party can help it play a facilitating role.
### HITS FM MUSIC AWARDS 2068

#### NOMINEES

**BEST NEW ARTIST**
1. Kristina Allen - Bagochu Mah
2. Leecum Bhuha - Kina Tazha
3. Menia Singh - Ms. Ta May Garde Thye
4. Sameen Larpa - Jinjagako Gourdoma Badae
5. Seema Sangraula - K Na Runuchha

**BEST SONG ORIGINALY RECORDED FOR A MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK**
1. Milashes Khadka - Kehi Naboli
2. Nhyuo Saracharya - Bham Jastar Shamar
3. Shambu Bhatt - Ka Phari N Ra
4. Shambu Bhat - Kena Baat Aayo Kaha Jancha Maya
5. Suresh Adhikari - Kina Baat Aayo Khaa Mero Main

**BEST VOCAL COLLABORATION**
1. Anjana Gunung / Dooj Khat - Mero Kajri
2. Anju Panta / Narendra Pray - Jaam Kayare
3. Anju Panta / Thubhan Bhatta - Pokhri Mokh Badae
4. Malika Karki / Tij Kishore Dhalak - Ra Ma Dhati
5. Morga Bhadrad / Govinda Gunung - Bar Pipako Joal Mokh

**FOLK RECORD OF THE YEAR**
1. Biru Tamang - Babako Asegiri
2. Kamli Kanta Bhat - Magama Mag
3. Raji Raymah - Barbalo Bairo
4. Pug Kumar Rai - Ram Swal
5. Tula Parajal - Pancho Chhoro

**BEST POP VOCAL PERFORMANCE**
1. Deepak Bajracharya - Nynyo Raji Raymah
2. Deepak Kinsor Bhattari - Pug Kumar Rai
3. Mingma Sherpa - Saumraya Doma
4. Komila Bhatta - Joona Jaisa
5. Kal Priti Bhatta - K Na Runuchha
6. Nhyuo Bajracharya - Bagochu Mah

**BEST POP COMPOSITION**
1. Anjju Panta - Sugasti Jharchi
2. Durga Kharel - Basta Jesto Badae
3. Nisha Deshak - Tinn Haar
4. Sabarun Gunung - Ghow Choophya
5. Sarjotee Reino Pradhan - Haasi Haasi

**BEST MALE POP VOCAL PERFORMANCE**
1. Deepak Bajracharya - Jani Jari
2. Deepak Kinsor Bhattari - Dehn Dehn
3. Mingma Sherpa - Jaama Jaisa
4. Om Brikam Bista - Galpo Purpo
5. Sarjotee Reino Pradhan - Akachhin

**BEST ROCK PERFORMANCE**
1. Alabroos - Chahta
2. Dibya Subba & the Blue Arctic - Aaskor Basta
3. 11:30 Besan - Dukha Timro
4. Nepathy - Hunchha Bnet
5. 1974 AD - Timi Bina

**BEST ARRANGEMENT**
1. Anjju Karki Dhar - Haasi Haasi
2. Ashish Adhikari - Moya O Mayo
3. Jevina Pradesh - Gharo Payo
4. 1974 AD - Timi Bina
5. Mahara Thapa - Chhuko Chhuko

**POP / ROCK ALBUM OF THE YEAR**
1. Deepak Kinhor Bhattari - Shanti
2. Dibya Subba & the Blue Artic - Dibya Subba
3. 1974 AD - Aath Aasnaa
4. Nepathy - Aino Jhaima
5. Seema Sangraula - Note

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR**
1. Ram Krishna Dhalak - Shaliqa
2. Nepathy - Aino Jhaima
3. 1974 AD - Aath Aasnaa
4. Rajesh Payal Rai - Rai Is King
5. Seema Sangraula - Note

**SONG OF THE YEAR**
1. Anand Adhikya - Eka Deshna
2. Bhumal Rai - Sustari Jhaach
3. Kali Prithi Pradhy - Nish
4. Raman Ghimire - Haasi Haasi
5. SP Koala - Paralo Jhuppo

**RECORD OF THE YEAR**
1. Narendra Pray - Moya O Mayo
2. 1974 AD - Timi Bina
3. Om Brikam Bista - Galpo Payo
4. Ram Krishna Dhalak - Chhuko Chhuko
5. Sarjotee Reino Pradhan - Haasi Haasi
Eight Points for Attention

Victory Bachelor Gachchhadar 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.

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, Daktar Saheb.

Robbing 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 Sujit.”

The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:

1. Obey orders in all your actions.
2. Pay fair for what you buy.
3. Return everything you borrow.
4. Pay for anything you damage.
5. Don’t hit or swear at people.
6. Don’t damage crops.
7. Don’t take liberties with women.
8. Don’t ill treat captives.

The only explanation as to why Hachetlu 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.

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The only explanation as to why Hachetlu 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, Daktar Saheb.

Robbing 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 Sujit.”

The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:

1. Obey orders in all your actions.
2. Pay fair for what you buy.
3. Return everything you borrow.
4. Pay for anything you damage.
5. Don’t hit or swear at people.
6. Don’t damage crops.
7. Don’t take liberties with women.
8. Don’t ill treat captives.

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