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BIKRAM RAI

Guns and nuns

Armed riot police guard a rally on Wednesday in Kathmandu by a Buddhist organisation opposed to Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal leading a committee for the development of Lumbini. Security has been tightened in Kathmandu ahead of the visit by Chinese premier Wen Jiabao on 20 December.

Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai has steered a careful path between Nepal's giant neighbours, trying to allay their security concerns. India is worried about infiltration of Islamist organisations through the open border, smuggling of fake Indian currency, and even

BY THE WAY p3
by Anurag Acharya
The rat race

the activities of northeastern militants. China, meanwhile, has always been wary of free Tibet activists based in Kathmandu.

So far, Bhattarai has assured the neighbours and the international community that his priority is to restore political stability by completing the peace and constitution process in the next few months. With Maoist camps being decommissioned, the next on his agenda is to lure the NC and UML into government, and complete the constitution by 30 May 2012. 🇳🇵

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INTERVIEW with Sushil Koriola

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THE RIGHT CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

As world leaders gather at an environment summit in Durban climate change is once more in the headlines. Nepal is there in force with a 30-member delegation. The global recession has thrown the entire Kyoto Protocol process on reducing global warming into doubt.

Developed countries say they can no longer afford to clean up the carbon they have pumped into the atmosphere since the industrial age, backing down from pledges made at Kyoto to help poorer countries mitigate the effects of climate change. Large developing countries like China, India, Brazil and Indonesia see no reason why they should sign binding cutback commitments if the rich countries won't put their money where their mouth is.

For smaller Asian countries like Nepal, the issue is different. Whether we switch to renewables or not is not going to save the planet, but it can save us. Nepal's increasing dependence on fossil fuels is certain to take this country down the path of economic ruin. With the world heading for "peak oil" in 2020, after which total global petroleum extraction will start to fall, petrol, diesel, and aviation turbine fuel will not only be scarcer, but dearer.

The queues at gas stations this week should be a dire warning of the disasters to come. Nepal's petroleum imports from India grew three-fold in the last five years, and we don't have money to pay for it anymore.



As we have argued in this space before, Nepal's balance of payments gap with India is only going to grow in future making us even more dependent on the southern neighbour.

The solution is right under our noses. Making the switch to a hydropower-based economy is both the short-and long-term solution. We can give speeches until we are blue in the face in Durban about how the western countries should compensate us for our melting glaciers, or to help us adapt and/or mitigate, but if we don't have a plan to wean this country away from fossil fuels we might as well forget about it.

We don't expect Nepali politicians to get fired up about global environmental crisis which will

start submerging coastal areas in 50 years time. They need a paradigm shift to start thinking of climate change not in ecological terms, but economic ones. We need to ensure that future generations of Nepalis (50 million of us by 2030) will inherit a country that is self-sufficient in domestically-generated renewable energy to meet their transportation, industrial and household needs.

Aside from that, there are some environmental steps we can take right away. The ICIMOD report released this week in Durban warns us of the accelerated decline in the mass balance of ice and snow in the Himalaya. As the snowline recedes and glaciers retreat, the Himalaya will be mostly rocks, and we might as well get used to that. However, this is not all caused by global emissions but from the deposits of soot from industries, biomass combustion and windblown dust on snowfields, reducing their albedo effect and accelerating melt. We can start by cleaning up our own smoke stacks and car exhausts.

In the coming years, climate change will exacerbate all other crises that Nepalis already have to cope with: flash floods, droughts, erratic monsoons, lack of irrigation, rivers going dry in summer, forest fires, to name a few. Bolstering their capacity to cope with these crises will better their resilience to climate change as well.

Maybe we should have just send the minister to Durban to deliver his speech, and the rest of the delegation should have stayed home to plan for the future.

ON THE WEB www.nepalitimes.com

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Rubeena Mahato's article is troublesome in many ways ('Unfinished business', #581). First, she uses terms such as 'ethnic federalism' and truly 'democratic federalism' without ever defining or distinguishing between these two. Second, she relies on data taken from Nepali Times surveys. What validity do NT surveys have when the questions are deliberately aimed at collecting perspectives it already advocates? Instead of dismissing the right to create new states based on ethnicities and languages, I suggest the NT and Rubeena read the CA State Restructuring Committee's report which clearly emphasises the need to balance cultural identities and economic opportunities in the new provinces. The CA along with many other agencies have been going around the country asking for recommendations for the new constitution. And outside the narrow confines of Kathmandu, ordinary Nepalis have responded overwhelmingly in favor of federalism. There is real excitement and hope amongst Nepalis that 10 to 12 states will compensate for years of historical wrongdoings, and open up economic opportunities for the most discriminated sections of society.

'Alex Tocqueville'

- In order to sustain a democratic society, we must continually ask ourselves some tough and challenging questions like Rubeena Mahato does in her article. There has to be debate but in the end, only Nepalis have the right to decide on the future of their country and not foreign intellectuals or donor agencies.
- In a free and fair referendum, most Nepalis would disagree with an ethnic-

Rabi

based federalism. However, the expatriate community in Nepal seems to think otherwise and is its most fervent advocate. I would like to remind our foreign friends that the different groups of people who reside in Nepal today have peacefully coexisted for centuries, irrespective of the rulers in their regions. This is the fabric of our nation, and it would be better if all of us focused on helping people regardless of caste, age, race, ethnicity, gender. Differentiating between groups of very poor people based on ethnicity or other identity markers will only give rise to new forms of discrimination.

Rishav

- Currently discussions on federalism are confined inside a space determined not by popular will or democratic means, but by several unseen, possibly vested and harmful interests and some visibly suspicious groups. There is an urgent need to broaden the spectrum of debate on federalism. Nepalis want services, opportunities and facilities to be rapidly and effectively decentralised. They want access and participation in governance. Some ethnic groups want greater acceptance of their cultures, languages and identities. All these goals can be achieved without federalism and even within a federal structure. Non-ethnic models are a better option.

Ushaft

For more discussion on this topic, go to www.nepalitimes.com

AWESOME CHANCE

If Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' disappeared from the face of the earth no one will miss him. And yet, your editorial says that without PKD, we are stuck, sunk and blowing in the wind ('Awesome chance, Editorial, #581). What we need is a true leader who cares about Nepalis like they are his own family and not a disgraceful person like PKD.

Ashok Rana

- I do not claim that Nepali society before the 'revolution' was anywhere near perfect, but two wrongs do not make a right. What we needed were sensible policies for economic development and integration of marginalized communities. Not violence, which only begets counter violence. The 'revolution' has left scars on our society that will take forever to heal. I have no problems with where we have arrived today as a country, but rather how we arrived here. The future will demand answers.

Manohar Budhathoki

- Who created this image of a great man fighting for the rights of the poor and downtrodden in the popular Nepali imagination? Who infused the 'awesomeness' into this biology teacher with extreme political views? Who sold the dream, an empty one, of a new Nepal with a new constitution? Who got millions of Nepalis rallying behind a party that rose to prominence through violence and empty rhetoric?
- When the history of Nepal, both pre and post 2008 is written, one hopes that historians will pay adequate attention to these questions.

SN

CORRUPT

The pace of the development when local bodies were functioning was higher, more transparent, more people-oriented, and more needs based ('Corrupt at the roots', Anurag Acharya, #581). However, the Maoists eventually dismantled local bodies and other parties continued the tradition. Let us hope that election of local bodies will take place as soon as possible so that ordinary Nepalis can be part of the democratic process once again.

Kamal Kishor

SEEING RED

Dealing with civil servants is one of the most painful and frustrating experiences ('Seeing Red', Rabi Thapa, #581). Once I went to

Rastra Bank to get a permit, the staff pretended to be busy on their computers and told me to come the next day. When I peered down to see what they were actually doing, they were playing Solitaire.

Rob

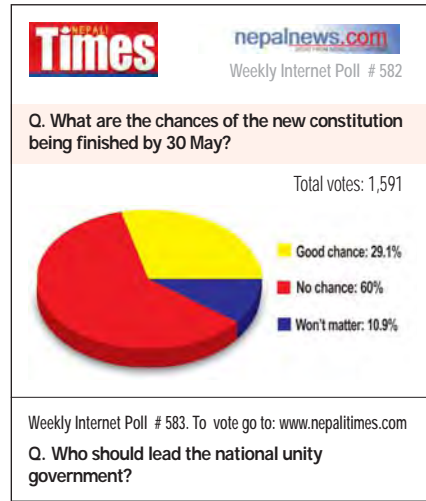
- The immigration officer at Tribhuvan Airport who stamped my visa on arrival did not give me my change back. When I asked him for it he told me to consider it a "tip". What a great way to promote Tourism Year 2011.

Michael Fox

KINGDOM WITHIN THE REPUBLIC

Progress is indeed a double edged sword, as Cailin Kearns points out in the article ('The Kingdom within the Republic', #581). However, it is good to see the locals of Mustang are aware of these delicate issues. I wish them luck and hope that they are really able to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

Daniel J Meisel



The rat race

The parties are competing for their share of credit on peace and constitution



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

From Girija Prasad Koirala to Pushpa Kamal Dahal, from Madhav Nepal to Jhal Nath Khanal, each prime minister came and went for the same reason: he wanted to be the one to take credit for concluding the peace process and constitution.

One hundred days ago, Baburam Bhattarai became the fifth prime minister in five years to lead a transitional government. Chances are he won't be the last.

The Maoist camps are being decommissioned and the peace process is entering a decisive phase. Talks about a national unity government are rife. The 20th clause in the 7-point agreement signed on 2 November states: 'The formation of the national consensus government will begin once the peace process and constitution building picks up momentum.'

Although there may be disagreement about what exactly constituted 'momentum', the agreement provides adequate incentive for the major parties to cooperate. Roadblocks in the peace and constitution are less about the process and more about what follows immediately after. In a newspaper interview this week Bhattarai admitted that the parties are competing for a larger share of credit for concluding the peace and constitution so they can reap rewards in the run up to elections. The Maoists have been forced to compromise on their agenda of 'people's constitution' and are less likely to concede the government leadership, as they feel they have given away too much for too little. Their disgruntled hardliners and ethnic constituencies will keep the Bhattarai faction on its toes, lest they relent to opposition pressure.

The Nepali Congress, on the other hand, will not allow the Maoists to run away with all the credit for the peace process. NC President Sushil Koirala feels that the party hasn't got due share of recognition for its "historic" role in the peace process. He told us on Wednesday: "The Maoists want everything under their own leadership. The peace process, the constitution declaration and maybe the elections as well. What do we get then?"

The UML will not stake its claim for the leadership, neither is it going to be third time lucky. But it is aware that a popular Maoist party will weaken its left vote bank in the next elections and will probably back NC's candidacy for the national unity government.

The Madhesi front, although still a formidable force, have been embarrassed among their constituency after recent corruption exposés. They have thrown away another great opportunity to consolidate their position as the regional power. The national unity government will limit their presence and influence in the national politics, and they will once again be tempted to use the 'One Madhes' slogan to revitalise their image.

To sum it up, we are witnessing the end of coercive politics and the beginning of realpolitik in Nepal. The parties will have less and less incentive to mobilise youth wings like they did in the last few years, in order to salvage their international image. The callback of the nation-wide strike by the Youth Association Nepal after the foreign embassies cautioned the parent party UML is a case in point.

The Supreme Court verdict will also act as an effective deterrence against 'business as usual' attitude and the parties will be forced to look for compromise. But time is of the essence. The clock is already ticking and 30 May 2012 is not that far away.

Portuguese writer Jose Maria de Eca de Queiroz once remarked, "Politicians are like diapers, often when they are changed it is for the same reason." Having a consensus government may not be a bad idea.



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Toontime in Kathmandu

“We have the talent and the infrastructure for animation, it is only matter of time.”



TUNING TOONS: An animated production developed at Incessant Rain Animation Studio (left). US-based animator Mike Merell works with animator Loojaw Manandhar who specialises in character animation at IRAS. (bottom)

PAAVAN MATHEMA

When US-based animator and film maker Mike Merell entered the doors of the animation studio, Incessant Rain Animation Studio (IRAS), in Kathmandu last month he was astounded by what he saw.

“There is an immense amount of talent here with great ideas,” says Merell, “and with the infrastructure they are using, I see a lot of potential.”

Merell was here to train the animators at Incessant Rain, which is headed by Kiran Joshi, a former Disney VFX Supervisor. Joshi had worked as Merell’s supervisor on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and had been trying to get his friend to come to Nepal to work with his animators.

With over 20 years of experience in both computer animation and live action, Merell has worked on animated films like *Atlantis*, *Chicken Little* and *Gnomeo and Juliet*. Working for 12 years at Walt



Disney Feature Animation, he has helped transition Disney’s 2D iconic characters, Ariel, Donald Duck, and Simba from *The Lion King* into the 3D for the theme park film *Mickey’s Philharmagic*.

Merell worked closely with the animators at Incessant Rain for over two weeks, helping them particularly with character animation, which involves giving a character its unique personality. “Mike gave us a different perspective and helped us apply new techniques to give our characters more gravity,” says animator Loojaw Manandhar.


Besides Merell, Joshi has invited art director Vaughn Wright, composer Phillip Broste, animator Matt Onheiber and tracking supervisor Bryan Burger to share their inputs. Joshi says the present animation curriculum is poor in Nepal and that the instructors have limited knowledge of animation software and no production experiences. “So whenever possible, I try to bring in experienced animators,” he adds, “we get inspired by them, and hopefully they get inspired by Nepal too.”

Incessant Rain has played an important role in promoting animation industry in Nepal. The company set up shop in Nepal and has outsourced animation deals from Hollywood studios, working on projects such as *Diwali with Mickey & Donald*, *Karate Kid 2*, *Zombie Land*, *Death At Funeral*, *Thirty Minutes or Less*, *Burlesque*, *Devil* and *Red*. It was responsible for Nepal’s first fully animated and indigenously-crafted commercial for Ace Development Bank’s rhino campaign.


“There has been an increase in interest in animation but the market is still not ready for the high-end animation work,” says Joshi. Quality animated products cost time as well as money and not many local companies are willing to invest. But Joshi is positive about the future, “We have the talent and the infrastructure, it is only matter of time.”

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IRAS's promo
Ace Dev Bank's commercial
Tooned in Nepal, #447
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The road ahead



STRICTLY BUSINESS
Ashutosh Tiwari

Radhesh Panth's appointment as the CEO of the newly-formed Nepal Investment Board came as a breath of fresh air for people in the business circle. However, Nepal's politically partisan environment has meant that his appointment is already embroiled in controversy.

On paper, Panth, a seasoned banker, is among a handful of Nepalis who fit the job description and his past

sometimes years of gestation period; at some point, the parliament sets up guidelines for the enterprise and the government then promises to recruit the "most qualified" person.

Problems emerge once the head of the enterprise is appointed. The government slowly starts to interfere in the functioning of the enterprise, often in blatant violation of the guidelines. Within a few years the promising CEO is forced to quit and replaced by political sycophants and the enterprise ends up becoming just another lucrative employment centre for political party cadres.

Nepal Tourism Board is a prime example of such

best suited to deliver these goals. Panth as CEO will need to pay careful attention to the hiring process. Staffs can be locals or foreigners, but their appointments should be entirely based on their qualifications, not their political affiliations. Only by controlling the type of people who work in the institution will Panth be able to deliver positive results, keep investors happy and avoid unwanted interference.

Panth must also be able to gain the confidence of investors and maintain their support for an extended period of time. His top priority should be to address the concerns that investors already have about Nepal from political instability to the enforcement of contracts to labour union disputes. However, the board alone cannot solve such serious issues and will need political and public support from the PM's office as well as the media.

As Panth gets ready to undertake his responsibilities, his peers as well as young Nepali professionals will be closely scrutinizing his performance. Here's wishing him all the success because Nepal desperately needs to attract investors and develop its power, infrastructure and agricultural sectors. 🇳🇵

CEO of Nepal Investment Board will have to walk on a very tightrope during his tenure

credentials confirm that he is capable of attracting new investors. But there is an inherent downside of being appointed the head of a government-created enterprise.

Most government-created enterprises are formed through a similar process: a multilateral donor agency comes up with a bright idea of starting a public-private enterprise; the idea then goes through months or

a convoluted process. The Investment Board and Panth are also highly susceptible to political games. Their success will depend on how Pantha goes about creating a professional culture within his organization and how well he keeps up with investors' expectations.

The investment sector relies heavily on three variables: perceptions, consistency and reliability and a diverse, competent, and professional staff is

BIZ BRIEFS

BOK Awarded

Bank of Kathmandu has received the prestigious 'Bank of the Year 2011- Nepal' award from The Banker -Financial Times London. 'Bank of the Year' is the world's longest running international banking title and tests management, sound business model and prudent risk approach of a bank.

Beyond business

International Money Express (IME) has provided Rs 1,000,01 as financial aid to Shyam Kumar Shrestha who was badly injured in a road accident while working in Malaysia. He is being treated at B & B hospital in Gwarko, Lalitpur.

New leadership

Sunil Kaushal has been appointed the new chairman of Standard Chartered Bank, Nepal. Kaushal was previously the President and Chief Executive Officer for Standard Chartered Bank, Taiwan.

Certified Excellence

CG Electronics has been awarded ISO 9001:2008 certificate. The company is first of its kind in the Nepali market to have this certificate of excellence.



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KIMFF comes to town

From 8-12 December the capital will host the ninth edition of the Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival (KIMFF). The theme of this year's festival is 'Tourism and Gender' and the 52 documentaries being screened will focus on the rewards and challenges of living in the mountainous regions of the world. The subject matter of the films include migration, human rights, environment and culture.

The 17 films in the festival are competing for top three positions judged by an international jury consisting of Helena Mieloen, John Innerdale and Sanjeev Upreti. There will be special screening of six Finnish films from the Tampere Film Festival as well as a category called Nepali Panorama which will showcase six films by Nepal's documentary directors. In between film screenings, guests can attend photo and book exhibitions, try their hand at the 'Name your Himal Quiz' or participate in interactive panel discussions on topics such as distribution and marketing of documentaries.

8-12 December
Rastriya Sabha Griha (City Hall) and
Nepal Tourism Board Auditorium
<http://www.wavemag.com.np/issue/article3883.html>

Thursday, 8 December

Rastriya Sabha Griha (City Hall)



3:00 PM Out of the Darkness (73')
Germany, 2010, dir: Stefano Levi
Sanduk Ruit takes the 'eye camp' to his remote village.

5:00 PM Collision Zone: Asia (50')
Canada, 2010, dir: Andrew Gregg
Tectonic tension and the making of a super continent.

Friday, 9 December

11:00 AM Human Planet: Mountains, Life In Thin Air (60')
UK, 2011, dir: Nicolas Brown
Adapting to life at high altitudes.

12:30 PM Enjoy Your Meal- How Food Changes the World (90')
Belgium/Netherlands, 2010, dir: Walther Grotenhuis
About the food we eat and much, much more.

2:30 PM Journey to Yarsa (55')
Nepal, 2011, dir: Dipendra Bhandari
Following a Rukum family in search of yarsagumba gold.

4:00 PM Shorts from Tampere Film Festival (113')

Kuvitettu Kaupunki (The Illustrated City) (5')
Finland, 2010, dir: Jan Andersson
The story of a wall.

Tunarit (The Duffers)-PG (31')
Finland, 2010, dir: Vesa Manninen
Comical story about the antics of petty thieves.

Elonkorjuu (Harvest) (15')
Finland, 2006, dir: Sami Korjus
A Finnish farmhouse lady has had enough...

Hanasaari A (16')
Finland, 2009, dir: Hannes Vartiainen and Pekka Veikkolainen
Short about the end of a Helsinki power plant.

Ukko ja Akka (The Old Man and the Old Lady) (15')
Finland, 2009, dir: Markku Heikkinen
Life in a remote Finnish village.

Kaupunkilaisia (Citizens) (29')
Finland, 2008, dir: Juho Kuosmanen
When two young migrants meet.



Saturday, 10 December

11:00 AM Special Screening to mark International Human Rights Day
Voice for Justice (22')
Nepal, OHCR
Screening followed by discussion.

Lamaharu Anyolma (Lamas in Dilemma) (25')
Nepal, 2011, dir: Ramesh Khadka
Young Humlis question the practice of polyandry in their community.

12:30 PM Ma Khushi Chu (I am Happy) (27')
Nepal, 2011, dir: Abinash Bikram Shah
Love is 'on' the air.

2:00 PM Buried in Tears (42')
Nepal, 2011, dir: Ashok Thapa
Struggling migrant workers in Korea share their hopes and fears.



3:30 PM Silent Snow (71')
Netherlands, 2011, dir: Jan van den Berg
An Inuit woman discovers the source of pesticides polluting her pristine habitat.

5:00 PM The Desert Eats Us (62')
Qatar/Nepal, 2010, dir: Kesang Tseten
The Gulf continues to lure migrant workers.

Sunday, 11 December



11:00 AM Erster Auf Dem Everest (First on Everest) (54')
Austria, 2010, dir: Gerald Salmina
Was Hillary really the first to conquer Mt. Everest?

Secrets of Dhaulagiri (30')
Nepal, dir: Prabesh Subedi
Dhaulagiri- far from the maddening crowd.

12:15 PM Hanuman Airlines (29')
Nepal, 2011, dir: Hamilton Pevac
Nepali paragliders take off from Everest.

2:00 PM 'Know Your Himal Quiz'
Conducted by Kunda Dixit

2:30 PM Discussion: Various aspects of film making
By Juho Kuosmanen, City Hall- Annex

3:30 PM Ritual Journeys (75')
India, 2011, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology
Intimate portrait of a Lepcha 'padim' or shaman.

5:00 PM Shambala: A Story of Paradise Lost (50')
Nepal/Germany, 2011, Dir: Fidel Devkota
Upper Mustang's Lo-pa people struggle to cope with climate change.

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ASSURED SUBSCRIPTION GIFTS

Monday, 12 December



11:00 AM Cultural Vignettes of Nepal (45')
Nepal, dir: Toni Hagen
Moving images from the 1950s.

12:00 PM Long Distance Love (58')
Sweden, 2009, dir: Magnus Gertten and Elin Jonsson
A Kyrgyz migrant is home alone in Russia.

2:00 PM Fahrt Ins Risiko: Der Manali-Leh Highway (The Manali-Leh Highway - India's Road to the Himalayas) (43')
Germany, 2010, dir: Holger Preusse
Life on a mountain highway.

3:00 PM War + Love in Kabul (86')
Germany, 2009, dir: Helga Reidemeister
A pair of star-crossed lovers in Afghanistan.

5:00 PM Award Ceremony

Secrets of Dhaulagiri (30')
Nepal, dir: Prabesh Subedi
Dhaulagiri- far from the maddening crowd.

Thursday, 8 December

Nepal Tourism Board Auditorium

3:15 PM Der Vulkan Lebt (Mount St. Helens) (51')
Austria, 2009, dir: Jörg Daniel Hissen and Heinz Leger
Cinematographic impression of a recovering volcanic landscape.

4:45 PM Au Delà Des Cimes (Beyond the Summits) (73')
France, 2009, dir: Remy Tezier
Ace woman climber shares frank and intimate moments during ascents.

Friday, 9 December

10:30 AM When the Mountain Calls- Nepal Tibet Bhutan (60')
USA, 2011, dir: Thomas Vendetti
Discovering the meaning of happiness in unexpected places.



11:45 AM Holtanna L'aventure Antarctique (Holtanna, The Antarctic adventure) (52')
France, 2011, dir: Same Beauguey and Frank Dalmat
Extreme sports in an extreme environment.

1:00 PM Discussion: Role of Film Festivals in Promoting Local Film Culture
Panelists: Helena Mielonen, Juhani Alanen, Nabin Subba, Torsten Hvas

3:00 PM Onnellisten Kaupunki (Goodwill- Short Stories of Small Town Happiness) (50')
Finland, 2010, dir: Heikki T. Partanen and Hannu-Pekka Vitikainen
Illusion of 'the good life' on the edge of Europe.

4:15 PM Land of the Painted Mountains (45')
Germany/Canada, 2010, dir: Robert Morgenstern
City kids discover a natural habitat. Miners eye the same.

5:15 PM A Life Ascending (58')
USA, 2010, dir: Stephen Grynberg
Chronicles of the life of an extreme mountain guide.

Saturday, 10 December

10:30 AM Family Instinct (58')
Latvia, 2010, dir: Andris Gauja
A young mother copes with poverty and violence in remote Latvia.

11:45 AM Âs Nutayuneân (We Still Live Here) (56')
USA, 2010, dir: Anne Makepeace
American Wampanoag Indians experience a cultural revival.

1:00 PM Impunity (85')
Switzerland/Colombia/France, 2010, dir: Juan Lozano
A look at the human rights situation in Columbia.

3:00 PM the Town of Badante Women (70')
Bulgaria, 2009, dir: Stephan Komandarev
It's the women who migrate for work.

4:30 PM Summer Pasture (86')
USA, 2010, dir: Lynn True and Nelson Walker
Chronicles of a summer for a nomadic Tibetan family.

Sunday, 11 December

10:30 AM Nanga Parbat (54')
Italy, 2010, dir: Marta Saviane
Conquering the 'man-eater mountain'.

11:45 AM Tattoo Odyssey (52')
Canada, 2010, dir: Andrew Gregg
A journey documenting the world's oldest living tattoo culture.



1:00 PM Deklaracja Niesmiertelnosci (Declaration of Immortality) (29')
Poland, 2010, dir: Marcin Koszalka
Moving reflections of an aging climber.

Tchang (28')
Spain, 2010, dir: Gonzalo Visedo and Daniel Strombeck
Two Basque mountaineers survive a climbing accident only to...

2:30 PM The Prophet (43')
UK, 2010, dir: Alastair Lee
UK's top big wall climber revisits the El Capitan.

3:30 PM Discussion: Pitching, Marketing and Distributing Films for an International Market
Torsten Hvas

5:30 PM Annapurna La Clave (Annapurna the Key) (27')
Spain, 2010, dir: Carmen Portilla
A Spanish climber's quest to conquer 8000m summits.

The Swiss Machine (19')
USA, 2010, dir: Peter Mortimer and Nick Rosen
Stunning visuals accompany a speed alpinist's record-breaking ascents.

Monday, 12 December

10:30 AM Amanhã À Mesma Hora (Tomorrow At The Same Time) (55')
Portugal, 2011, dir: Luisa Soares and Pedro Sousa Raposo
Wine processing in Portugal's Douro country.

WARdisease (8')
France, 2010, dir: Marie Magescas
About arms and men.

11:45 AM Nyarma (40')
Russia, 2009, dir: Edgar Bartenev
Candid portrait of a Russian reindeer breeder.

12:45 PM Trou De Fer- Zelezná Diera (Trou De Fer- The Iron Hole) (55')
Slovakia, 2011, dir: Pavol Barabas
Exploring the Mt. Everest among canyons.

2:15 PM Path of Roses- A Girls' Skiing Episode in Kashmir (25')
Switzerland, 2011, dir: Eva Walkner and Marcel Karp
Female freeskiers experience Gulmarg.



Chasing Water (15')
USA, 2011, dir: Pete McBride
Getting to know the Colorado River.

3:15 PM Face Au Volcan Tueur (Facing the Killer Volcano) (88')
France, 2011, dir: Jerome Cornuau
Volcanologists witness an incredible phenomenon.

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EVENTS

Kathmandu International Mountain Festival (KIMFF) 2011, attend the screening of 52 films representing 22 countries or participate in one of the many exciting workshops and discussions. *8 to 12 December, Rastriya Sabha Griha and Nepal Tourism Board, Exhibition Road*



3-On-3 B-Ball Tournament, watch teams battle it out in Fr. Donnelly Open Men's and Women's 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament. *4 December to 9 December, Godavari Alumni Association, Thamel.*



The Family Fair, enjoy an evening out with children with competitions, fairs and magic shows. *10 December, 12pm onwards, Hotel Malla, Thamel, 4418385, 4410320, 4410966*

Hamro Shorts, celebrate this December with short Indie films. *1 December to 29 December, Street side food court, Times Square mall, Durbarmarg*

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

2nd International Dance Festival, dance workshops by international instructors, shows, hip hop battles and parties. *8 December to 11 December, Shangri-la Hotel. Call 9803192370*

Life in the Sacred Himalayan Landscape, WWF presents a photo exhibition about life in the Himalayas. *11 to 17 December, 11am to 5pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery*

Oleanna, directed by Deborah Merola, this David Mamet play stars Anup Baral, Shanti Giri, Namrata Shrestha and Deeya Maskey. *9 to 11 December, 5.30 pm onwards, Moksh, Jhamsikhel*

KJC winter camp 2012, ten days winter camp for children of age 6-13 years organised by Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory. *2 January to 13 January, 5013554*

MUSIC

Nabis and the Anarchies, liven up your Saturday with a host of musical bands. *3 December, 4pm onwards, The Tantra, Chettrapati, 9841596971*

Baja Gaja, playing live every Tuesday 7.30 pm onwards at Mosksh, Pulchowk. *5526212*

Live music at Jazzabella Café, every Wednesday and Friday. *6pm onwards, Jazzabella café, Jhamsikhel, Patan. Call 2114075*

DINING

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*

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



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

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

Yak Restaurant, provides authentic Tibetan cuisine at an affordable price. *Boudha*

Yin Yang Restaurant, east meets west as you choose from a variety of Thai and continental dishes. Add a little spice in your life with their pad thai or green curry. If you can't handle the heat, try one of their western dishes instead. *Thamel, 10am to 10pm, 4701510*

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*

Manny's Eatery and Tapas Bar, scrumptious panini, sandwiches and more lunch delicacies starting at Rs 199. Manny's also offers a satisfying assembly of a unique continesian cuisine. Open for lunch and dinner and presents Tapas Bar for you to unwind and relax. *Jawalakhel Shaligram Complex, 5536919*

You get hit by statistics all the time in post-conflict Nepal: 16,000 killed in ten years, 1,387 disappeared, 19,602 ex-Maoists officially in camps, 3,000 not in camps anymore, more than 6,500 opting for integration.

Then there are the 12,648 Maoist fighters who were disqualified by UNMIN because they were either not fighters at all, did not appear for verification, or were below 18 when they joined the Maoist Army. Of these, 2,973 were minors.

After a while, these numbing numbers don't mean anything anymore. But by following one former Maoist guerrilla from the time he got 'disqualified' by UNMIN to the present, film maker Subina Shrestha has brought out the sacrifice, pain and loss to an international audience. Shrestha's documentary, 'The Disillusioned Soldier', was aired on Al Jazeera this weekend and humanises the war like no other recent television report.

Chandra Bhakta Shrestha was just 15 when he joined the Maoists in his native Gorkha. His sister was among a group of female guerrillas



No illusions anymore

captured by state security, raped and killed. Chandra left his simple farmer parents, and became a Maoist 'whole timer' taking part in the battle of Syangja and the ambush at Krishna Bhir in 2005, losing some close comrades.

The documentary traces Chandra's life in the Shaktikhor Camp after the war, his involvement in the cultural

Al Jazeera documentary humanises the statistics of the peace process

trope in which he was a flutist, how he met his wife-to-be Rupa. In one poignant scene, Chandra is leaving the camp in January 2010 after being 'disqualified' and bids a camera shy goodbye to his pregnant wife.

Chandra signs up for a UN-sponsored skill training and learns to repair mobile phones, and the return home

to his scenic village below Himalchuli feels a bit like a boy coming home from boarding school. His favourite goat doesn't recognise him, he fixes things around the house. Soon, his wife and daughter join him.

Chandra's mother recalls how during the war, her smiling son often came to her in her dream to say he was all right. But Chandra himself had nightmares of the battles he fought in. "We were confident that our vision of a new Nepal would come true, it is very disappointing that our own party abandoned us," Chandra says wistfully to the camera.

Chandra soon has to return to the city (he has joined the YCL) but gets more and more disillusioned that his party gone 'off track' and of sitting around doing nothing. His life now revolves around his family.

He says: "We wanted to build the country. But I feel I haven't even been able to help my family, how can I help my country?"

Kunda Dixit

nepalitimes.com Watch the episode

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Vesper Café, has quaint outdoor patio good for leisurely weekend brunch. Serves good salads, and steak-wraps. *Jhamsikhel*

Café Du Temple, famous for its delicious food, warm ambience and the beautiful roof top view. *Patan Durbar Square, 5527127. Boudha, 2143256*

Jazoo, a quiet place ideal for beer and relaxing conversation. Bring a friend and enjoy their special barbecue set for a mix of everything. *Jawalakhel (near the zoo), 5538321*

GETAWAYS

The Last Resort, be a part of the Bungy or Swing Jump Event over the Bhote Khosi river 160 metres below or mountain biking up to the Tibetan border. *Fees: Rs 2700 per person for one day or Rs 4500 per person for an overnight stay, valid until December, the Last Resort Sales Office, Mandala Street, Thamel, 4700525*



Holiday at Grand Norling Hotel, Gokarna. One night and two days at Rs 4500 and two nights and three days at Rs 7000. *447948*

Dreaming of the dreamer

At 22, not many are thinking about writing a book. But Rajeev Balasubramanyam not only published his first novel, he also won a Betty Trask for it.

"I started writing when I was quite young," says Rajeev. "It was my escape from reality while I was growing up." Born and raised in the UK, Rajeev has published two novels so far, *In Beautiful Disguises* and *The Dreamer*, and several short stories. He has also won Clarissa Luard Fiction Award and an Arts Council Writers' Award.

The writer is now working on a collection of short stories that delves into the change in attitudes towards South Asians after 9/11 and the 7 July bombings in England, and around the world. "I once sat down on a bench and the person next to me moved two places," explains Rajeev. "The environment became very hostile after that." Both of his books have ties to his Indian roots, but Rajeev says his future work need not be limited to what is usually expected from an Indian writer.

Rajeev will be talking to Gopal Siwakoti Chintan of the TU Centre for Human Rights at Tribhuvan University, as part of the Quixote Cove's Tavern Tales series this Friday. The two will talk about his book *The Dreamer* and about racism in the UK. He will also read from his short story titled, *The Day George Bush (Sr.) Came to Use the Bathroom*. *9 December, 3.30 pm, Ramalaya, Pani Pokhari, Kathmandu*



SOMEPLACE ELSE

Listing a menu in French and slapping on a French article to ‘Sherpa’ do not a French restaurant make. The only thing that makes Le Sherpa forcibly français is its ridiculous offering of Dom Pérignon at Rs 27,750 (sans tax). The latest tenant at Ramalaya in Lazimpat needs to revamp or is likely to face eviction.

Sherpa, *écoutez-moi*:

Tip #1. Get an egg timer. Your slatted wooden skylight and open-air court summon a perfect date for a balmy summer’s night; your heat lamps and fire pit keep us winter proof and your *garçons (et vos filles)* are eager to serve. But an inviting atmosphere and pleasant service however necessary are not sufficient. Even though we were the only patrons at the time of review, the turnaround from kitchen to table for two



PICS: MARCO POLLO




plates took half an hour. Tip #2. Say cheese. Once our order had arrived, at that point anything would have sated our appetites. Sadly, the ham and cheese crêpe was subpar and lacking in fromage. Google ‘béchamel’. Tip #3. Go fish. Save for the white wine sauce, the *gourmandises de l’ocean*

(with a title that could only tease) was a letdown. Overcooked, the sole fish and tiger prawns were rubbery. Although not listed as a pasta dish, much to our surprise, it came with a nest of plain linguini. At Rs 815, as the French would say, “*Quelle arnaque!*”

Le Sherpa

Tip #4. Burn, bébé, burn. Surely, a traditional French sweet like a *mousse au chocolat* or a *tarte au citron* would redeem Le cher Sherpa. Perhaps, we made the wrong choice. The *crème brûlée* consisted of an uneven, grainy top, a starchy custard and an unpleasant aftertaste. The ultimate litmus test to a well-torched *crème brûlée*: take a spoon and gently tap the caramelized surface. If it cracks, *parfait!* If it cuts through without a hitch, it isn’t *brûlée*.

Tip #5. ‘*Reservez’ s’il vous plaît*. Le Sherpa, do yourself

a favor and reserve a table at Délices de France in Thamel or Chez Caroline or Sol at Babar Mahal Revisited for a course or two in French.  *Marco Pollo*

North on Lazimpat pass the Shangri-la Hotel on your left, and turn right into Ramalaya

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



The Checklist



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

To avoid medical mishaps, it seems a checklist is still the best thing to do. If you are seated in front of an aircraft and can see the pilots in the cockpit, you will have noticed that they have a set of things to do which they read to each other from a checklist before they takeoff. It seems a similar checklist could help doctors better treat patients.

For the mundane task of washing hands, wearing gloves, to prevention of bedsores in patients, there is a checklist that doctors and nurses now have to follow in many hospitals. For some in the health profession this tends to be boring and unnecessary.

The person who highlighted the importance of the checklist in medicine is a Harvard surgeon and writer,

Atul Gawande. His parents, also doctors, are Indian immigrants and Gawande very cogently states that four generations after the first aviation checklist went into use, checklists are now finally used in medicine to catch mental flaws inherent in all of us: lack of memory, thoroughness and attention. He thinks checklists provide a kind of cognitive net. And



now there are even studies to back all this up.

For many people the humble checklist runs counter to our thoughts about what professionals should do. Are they so forgetful that they have to look at a checklist if they are wearing a mask for a minor procedure? The truly great are supposed to be daring with no protocol

to follow. Gawande thinks that our ideas need updating, and recalls the miraculous survival of all on board a US airliner that crashed into the Hudson River in January 2009 after flying into a flock of geese on takeoff.

The journalists who covered the story were clearly disappointed because rather than talk about the amazing landing with romantic overtones, the captain of the plane emphasised the checklist that he followed that saved the lives of the passengers.

In the world of surgery, checklists can be especially very relevant. Gawande devised a 90-second checklist that reduced deaths and complications by more than one-third in eight hospitals around the world, at essentially no extra cost and for almost any kind of operation. All of this seems too good to be true, and yet the facts speak for themselves. Checklists are clearly relevant for Nepal as well.



WEEKEND WEATHER
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL

An expansive high pressure system over northern India has truly brought Old Man Winter knocking at our door. Cold dry air from the western Tibet has sent the thermometer plunging to below 5 degree Celsius for the first time and also dried the ambient air. Pollution haze, meanwhile, is filtering the sun, capping the maximum temperature to 21 degrees. Expect foggy mornings in the Valley with a pale sun.



FRI	SAT	SUN
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ANUP PRAKASH

ONLINE INCLINE: Douglas Arellanes from Sourcefabric, an open source media support organisation, gives a talk on social media marketing to Nepali professionals at a seminar organised by Himalmedia in Kathmandu on Sunday.



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MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

RISKY REPLACEMENT: Faced by petrol shortage, a truck driver and his conductor pour kerosene into the fuel tank in urgency to move the truck stuck on the main road at Gaushala on Tuesday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

UP IN THE AIR: Air hostesses observe the winning photographs of an aviation photography competition at the Airport Hotel, Gaushala, Kathmandu, on Wednesday. The exhibition was organised to mark the International Civil Aviation Day

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Feel the difference

BHRIKUTI RAI

As hospitals go, Nepal's oldest hospital makes the news for all the wrong reasons: corruption, mismanagement and filth. However, Bir Hospital is becoming a model for recycling hospital waste not only for other hospitals in Nepal but around the world.

Each year hospitals in Nepal generate more than 365 tons of medical waste with most of it thrown into municipal garbage dumps: syringes, plastic, bandages and even some human body parts.

In the absence of proper storage, disposal facilities and sterilisation instruments like autoclave and incinerators, Bir Hospital was dumping 323 kg of infectious waste into the public garbage system every day. Not surprisingly, waste had become a major source of infection among patients and staff exposed to the polluted environment.

Last year, the Health Care Waste Management Program was launched with Healthcare Foundation-Nepal (HECAF). Today, Bir is quickly becoming a pioneer in the field of hospital waste management as the hospital now segregates waste at the source significantly reducing the toxicity. The waste is then thoroughly disinfected and passed along for recycling and reuse. "We have been following non-incineration techniques to manage medical waste because of the risks associated with burning them," says Mahesh Nakarmi, director of the Health Waste Management Program.

Organic waste is fermented in underground digesters to generate methane



PICS: BIKRAM RAI

A model hospital

Bir Hospital is recycling its hazardous waste and winning accolades

gas which is then used for cooking. Non-biodegradable waste is recycled and sold to hawkers or used to make handicrafts. The hospital has also begun vermin-composting to turn used cotton and gauge to create compost manure and hopes to sell 32 tons of fertilizer annually.

So far the hospital is recycling nearly 80 per cent of its total waste and the program has improved overall hygiene at the hospital. Ms Tulsi Malla of the surgical ward believes this has had a positive effect on the recovery of patients. "The patients are recovering faster, because the rate of infection from waste has been reduced drastically. The program should have started much earlier," she said. The centralised health waste management system has made all wards mercury-free and there is increased

injection safety in the hospital.

The program is also becoming commercially viable. With the hospital earning Rs 30,000 a month selling fertilizer the monthly cost of disposing of other waste has been considerably reduced. Even though the hospital is yet to recover the handling cost for waste management, officials believe that good recycling and responsible waste management will pay for itself in the future.

During its initial phase the program was implemented in 20 wards and the hospital aims to cover the remaining wards in the next six months. The hospital staffs are pleased with the success of Hospital Waste Management Program and believe that it has boosted their confidence and made them more committed. 🇳🇵



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Feel the difference

Songs of our past

A rare archive of folk music recorded during the 1960s returns home to Nepal

AMAR GURUNG

When Terence R Bech came to Nepal for the first time in 1964 as a Peace Corps volunteer, he may not have imagined how this country’s music and culture would move him.

In the next few years, Bech travelled 15,000 km across Nepal recording folk music, collecting musical instruments and translating lyrics. He traveled to remote districts with a backpack weighing 40 kg, and a porter carrying his Uher tape recorder and batteries.

In one such expedition, he suffered a cut above his right eye in a fall. The nearest doctor was a three week walk away, so he stitched the wound himself using a mirror and his good eye. “The locals loved my demonstration,” he recalls, “luckily they couldn’t understand the four letter words used in the absence of painkillers.”

By the time he left Nepal in 1966, Bech had collected 260 hours of recordings in 400 open-reel phonotapes, 200 musical transcripts, 120 musical instruments, 7,500 song texts, 41 life history studies of Nepali musicians, along with thousands of photographs. These were housed in the Archive of Traditional Music at Indiana University in Bloomington.

Last month, Terence Bech gave Indiana University the permission to provide copies of the Terence R Bech Collection of Nepali Music to Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya (MPP) in Patan. The collection will be available to researchers soon,

In an email interview, Bech said his collection was done “more as a hobby than an academic”. He is being modest. The collection is invaluable, a meticulous record with an index of language, name of performers,

musical instruments, cultural context or relevance, how the performer came to learn the song, occasions during which the songs are performed etc. The quality of sound in the recordings is exceptional.

Bech went on to climb K2, became a sailor and an Arctic explorer. He is now living with his wife in the Netherlands.

Once, after weeks of walking across the midhills of Nepal to record the songs of the Raute community, he arrived at a settlement only to find the men had gone off hunting and there were only women and children. They pitched their tent and later that day the headman returned. Bech remembers that his Nepali was better than the Raute’s, who agreed to sing and dance only if Bech donated a goat and become a blood brother.

The Bech Collection is a unique ethnomusical



documentation and represents the historical continuum of Nepali folk music before modern influences altered it.

Satya Mohan Joshi, who also documented Nepali music from as far back as the 1940s, is delighted that the Bech Collection is back

in Nepal. “We have to thank Bech for his contribution to the preservation of Nepali musical heritage and sharing it with us,” Joshi told us.

Joshi himself travelled across Nepal during World War II, and saw village after village devoid of men who were off fighting in Burma

A refuge from the world

A Step Away from Paradise, just out from Penguin India, tells a true story of what is usually confined to the realm of fiction: a journey to a Land of Immortality.

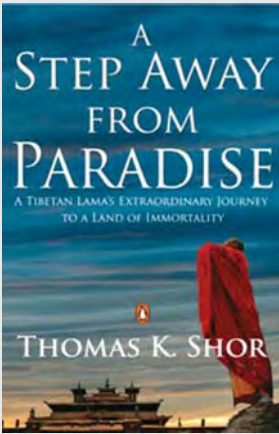
It was autumn 1962. The Cuban Missile Crisis threatened to end the world as we knew it. And in the shadows of Kanchenjunga in Nepal a visionary lama was leading over 300 followers to find a hidden land of immortality, a place of refuge and plenty that Tibetan tradition dating back to at least the 12th century declared could only be opened at the time of the most dire need, when cataclysm racked the earth and there was nowhere else to run. The lama’s name was Tulshuk Lingpa. The hidden land was called Beyul Demoshong, and it was ensconced below Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain the world.



Tulshuk Lingpa Approximately 1950

A Step Away from Paradise is the result of ten years of research and writing by the American writer and photographer Thomas K Shor (author of Windblown Clouds). He tracked down and met most surviving members of Tulshuk Lingpa’s expedition and discussed what for most was the seminal experience of their lives. Now mostly in their 70s and 80s, he met them in their monasteries and in homes located in Sikkim, India and Nepal. The book is richly illustrated with their portraits as well as photos of the places significant to the story and historical photographs of the people involved. Many of the photos will be on exhibit at the Siddhartha Art Gallery in Kathmandu 11-17 December.

The book will be launched on 11 December at 3pm at Siddhartha Art Gallery, and Thomas Shor will have a conversation with Kunda Dixit on 18 December at Cheeno Café at 4pm.



A Step Away from Paradise
Penguin Books India, 2011
ISBN : 9780143415466
296pages with 48 pages illustrations
NPR 600

Life in the Sacred Himalayan Landscape
Siddhartha Art Gallery
11-17 December (daily 11AM-5PM)

nepalitimes.com

Interview with Thomas K Shor





OFF SAILING: Terence Bech traversed 15,000 km across Nepal on foot in the 1960s recording folk music and dance, like this one of the Raute community (left). He later climbed K2, and sailed through Patagonia (below). Bech's music collection has now returned to Nepal.



or Europe. It was the women who sang songs of sorrow, of sons in faraway wars.

Lochan Rijal, lecturer of ethnomusicology at Kathmandu University is also grateful to Terence Bech's effort. "Hats off to everyone who made this possible," he says, "having Bech's

collection back in Nepal can contribute immensely to future research."

Rijal says important collections like Bech's need to be disseminated in the country of origin for its maximum benefit. It will help researchers look at the evolution of culture and

music in Nepal, and also benefit students of traditional Nepali music and dance.

Folk music is more than just songs, it expresses and captures the culture of the times: a birth in the household, flirtatious duets, the pain of betrayal or of unrequited love,

separation and longing, natural calamities. Bech's collection has music from all over Nepal and will be available to researchers as long as they are not copied or sold. Nepali ethnographers and musicologists owe Terence Bech a depth of gratitude. 🇳🇵

Amar Gurung is chief archivist at the Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya (www.madanpuraskar.org)

nepalitimes.com

Listen to two sample recording from Doti and Jumla from the Terence Bech collection 🎧

काम सानो ठुलो भन्ने हुँदैन । पसिनाको कुनै रङ र जात पनि हुँदैन । काम गरेर खान लजाउनु पनि हुँदैन । चोरेर, ढाँटेर, छलेर, लुटेर खान पो लजाउनुपर्छ । जो जहाँ रहेर जुन काम गर्छ ऊ त्यसैमा र माउनुपर्छ गौरव गर्नुपर्छ र समर्पित भएर गर्नुपर्छ । काम नै शक्ति हो, भक्ति हो र मुक्ति हो । कामको इज्जत गरौं, पसिनाको सम्मान गरौं ।

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No-men

Naya Patrika, 5 December

गर्ग्य पत्रिका

Government secretaries have accused the ministers of trying to make them ‘yes-men’ and use them for illegal operations. In a meeting held at the office of Chief Secretary Madhav Prasad Ghimire, 40 secretaries complained against the high-handedness of ministers. The officials alleged that they have not been able to work due to unnecessary interference by ministers and declared that they will not tolerate illegal activities of their bosses. Chief Secretary Ghimire instructed secretaries not to succumb to pressure from ministers. “If any problems arise, contact us at the



PMO,” he said during the meeting. Generally, important decisions pertaining to the ministry are first approved by the secretary after due process and then presented in front of the cabinet. But ministers have been bypassing the official channel and pressurising secretaries to sign the documents without proper evaluation. Lately, there have been several politically motivated transfers by the government, which has destabilised the bureaucracy and built resentment among civil servants. Acting on the demand of the secretaries, Chief Secretary Pokharel issued a halt on all transfer orders except those of first class officers approved by the cabinet.

Where are they?

Nepal Samacharpatra, 6 December

समाचारपत्र

RAMECHHAP: Roshan Giri was six years old in 2003 when his father Pushpa Kumar Giri was abducted by the state. Roshan has a fading memory about his father and still hopes that he will return. Thirteen year old Anup Tiwari does not recall his father's face. Dandu Tiwari joined the Maoists and went underground before Anup was born. He used to visit them sometimes in the dark hours before he was arrested in February 1999 by the police in Lalitpur. He has not been seen since. Although the family has lost hope of seeing him alive, they still want to know what happened to him. Many families in Ramechhap district have similar stories to tell. The grown up children ask questions about their parents, but neither the families nor the state has any answers. Pushpa Kumar's wife Bhakta Kumari laments, “What do I say to my children? During the festivals they see other children playing with their father. How do I console them?” During the conflict, 25 people in this district went missing leaving 38 children below the age of 18, who still wait for their return.



Decentralising corruption

Kantipur, December 3

कान्तिपुर

Local administrations have become a hotbed of corruption and are being held hiostage by the all-party mechanism. Local representatives of the three parties control the planning, budget allocation and financial operation at the village, district and municipal levels. In the absence of local elections, which were last held in 1999, there is a complete lack of accountability.



Instead of consulting people, plans are dictated by the parties who distribute the projects among one another and the share the benefits. Last year in Lalitpur more than 100 urban planning projects were divided among the three main parties. Local Development Minister, Top Bahadur Rayamajhi is not happy with the workings of

the all-party mechanism and agrees: “It has done more harm than good.” In Bhaktapur, local leaders have violated existing laws and regulations while fixing tax rates for land sales. Last year, Rs 1.5 million was distributed in Bhairawa among parties, their sister organisations and NGOs of questionable repute. In Dadeldhura, the UML's Birendra Shahi has openly admitted to pocketing projects up to Rs 20 million. Funds allocated for development projects are mostly hijacked and embezzled by corrupt political appointees because of which majority of them remain incomplete. A few months back, villagers in Kavre pelted stones at DDC staff and local politicians accusing them of sidetracking the district's development budget. regularities. “We had hoped local bodies would help devolve power but all they seemed to have done is decentralised corruption,” ex-secretary Khemraj Nepal said.

Lost labour

Nepal, 4 December

नेपाल

Every year 450,000 workers enter Nepal's labour force out of which 100,000 are skilled. But political instability and protracted transition has led to mass exodus of skilled and semi-skilled workers. Small businesses such as tailoring, floriculture and hair saloons have been affected by shortage of manpower, but the agriculture industry, which makes up 35 per cent of Nepal's GDP and the manufacturing sector suffer from labour shortage during the harvest season. Expensive labour is robbing small farmers of their profit. More than 1,500 Nepali workers migrate to work every day. Last year alone,

354,000 youth migrated abroad for work. The minimum monthly wage in Nepal is Rs 6,200 with a minimum daily wage of Rs 230. However, youth who show an aversion to physical labour at home are more than willing to undertake dangerous tasks in foreign countries to earn few thousand rupees more. The labour exodus in Nepal is not only about the difference in pay scales, the lack of jobs here is the main reasons why youths are fleeing the country in large numbers. In the past few years, political interference by party-backed labour unions has shut down several industries. Power cuts and high banking interest rates have increased production cost, reducing the ability of industries to pay proper wages or generate jobs.



Sack: Rehabilitation package
Road sign: Peace and constitution

नागरिक Deven in Nagarik, 7 December

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ Jhalanath Khanal and I are among few good leaders left in the country. ”

Maoist Vice-chairman Mohan Baidya quoted in Kantipur, 6 December.





BIKRAM RAI

101 states?

Budhabar, 7 December

बुधवार

The State Restructuring Committee of the CA had proposed a confederation of 14 states based on ethnicity, but in the first meeting of the Commission members were unanimously against it. They felt ethnicity should not be the basis for state restructuring. The SRC members were left speechless after member Sarbaraj Khadka pointed to the dangers of ethnicity-based federal units. "We will have to make 101 states in the country for 101 ethnic groups," he reportedly said, "you can't deny one group the right to state because it has fewer people, and give another the same because it has more people."

The members also agree that carving out 14 states would not be viable, and they felt more comfortable with a 10-province model based on geography, economic status and identity. Another member of the Commission said: "Ideally Nepal would do best with seven states. If that's not possible, we will at least try to work out a nine state plan."

Tipping point

Editorial in *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 15 December

हिमाल

Nepal's political transition is at its tipping point. Domestic and external forces are doing all they can to carve out their influence in the new constitution.

The Hindu nationalists recently held a conference in Gorakhpur, the Janjati caucus have dared to challenge traditional parliamentary practice by over-riding the party whip. Nepali society is engulfed in a fascinating debate on ethnic, linguistic, regional and gender identities along with political dialogue on rights, democracy and pluralism. International forces with various levels of interest in Nepal have joined the debate as well. The future of the country depends on how successfully we manage to find a compromise to balance all these interest groups.

Of late, attempts are being made to pit the political parties against their Janjati, Madhesi and Dalit constituencies. There is a concerted challenge against the political system of the country in the name of ethnic and regional agendas. While there is a need to reduce the trust deficit between the ruling class and traditionally marginalised ethnic and caste groups, it can never be the rationale to impose the concern of a particular group at the cost of the democratic order. The popular movements of Madhes, Janjatis and the Dalits was about rights and identity, not for ethnic or regional hegemony.



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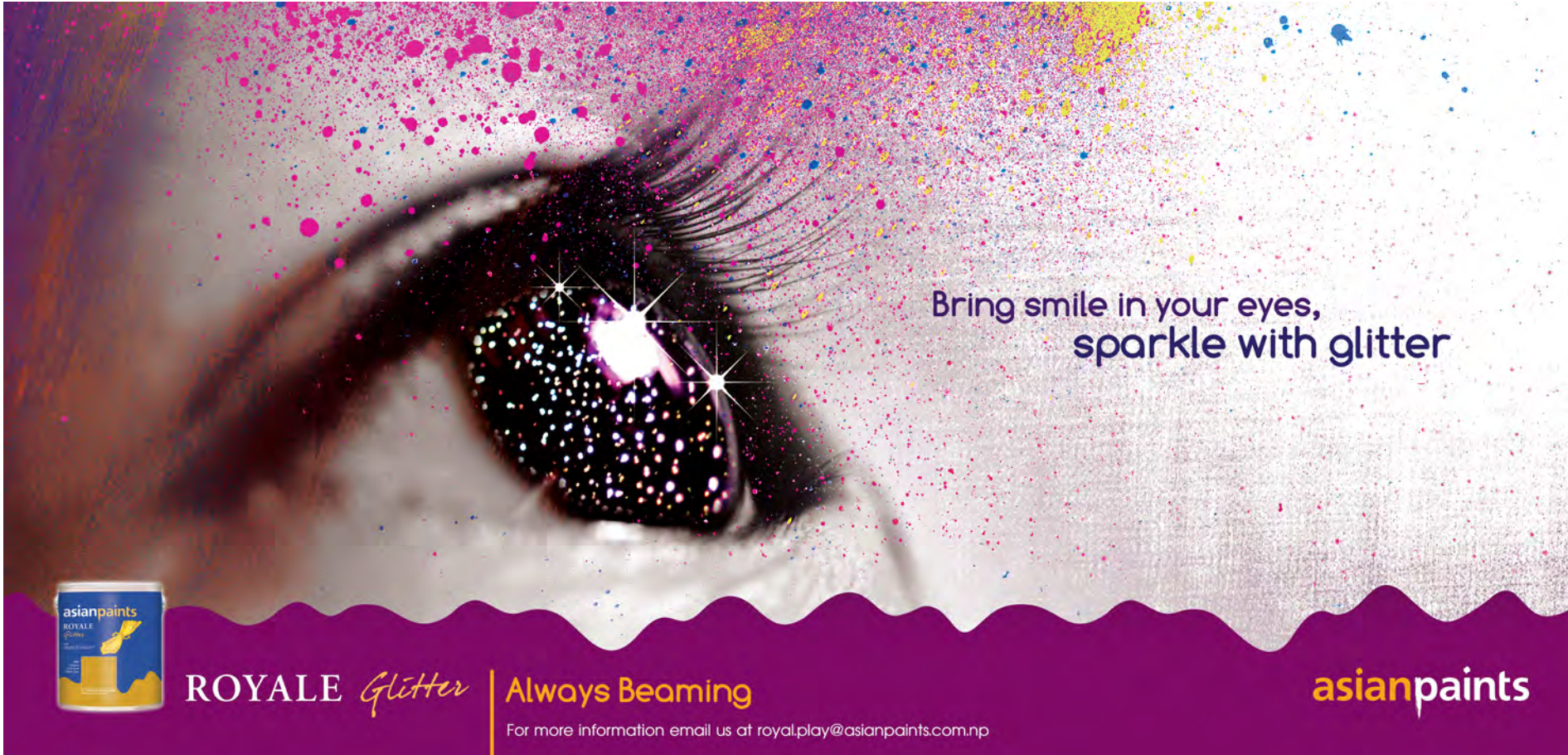
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Jewelers of the world, unite

Finally, Transparency International has recognised the capacity of our kleptocrat rulers to loot and plunder at will by upgrading us to 44th from the bottom as the world’s most corrupt country. Now, there is nowhere to go but down. Luckily for us, TI’s rankings are a bit outdated and based on the corruption situation in Nepal last year. Since then, and especially in the last 100 days, we have inducted many more oligarchs into govt. The Ass would hazard a guess that we have by now overtaken Afghanistan in the race to the bottom, and if this M’baddie-M’dhesi coalition continues for much longer we may finally have the distinction of ranking corruptest in Asia. **Bottoms up!**



We’re not just talking about

measly bribes anymore. It’s now a **eat-all-you-can buffet** from the national coffers. For the past year or so, more than 3,000 ladakus were missing from the cantonments, but the Baddies were still giving themselves allowances for the full 19,608 former fighters, filling the party war chest with billions in tax payer’s money. Now it finally becomes clear why Comrade Awestruck was boasting in the Shaktikhor Tape that he tricked the UN and everyone into thinking that there were 35,000 ex-fighters “when we all know we only have 4,000”. Ha ha ha! And he has been laughing all the way to the bank ever since. The Baddies have also taught the eh-Maleys well. The Self-Employment Scheme has reportedly been doling



out billions of roops to UML cronies in lieu of fake jobs creation. The reason for this week’s riots by the eh-Maley youth wing, YAWN, was to prevent the Baddies from getting their hands back into the Self-Employment

honeypot. And when the arson didn’t work, YAWN declared a bund on Monday. Had it not been for a prompt reminder from the Americans through Facebook that bund organisers could kiss their chances of getting US visas goodbye, the arses would probably have indulged in more arson. This was such an effective demonstration of the deterrence value of the threat of visa revocation that the Americans promptly lifted the security advisory for nationals visiting Nepal.

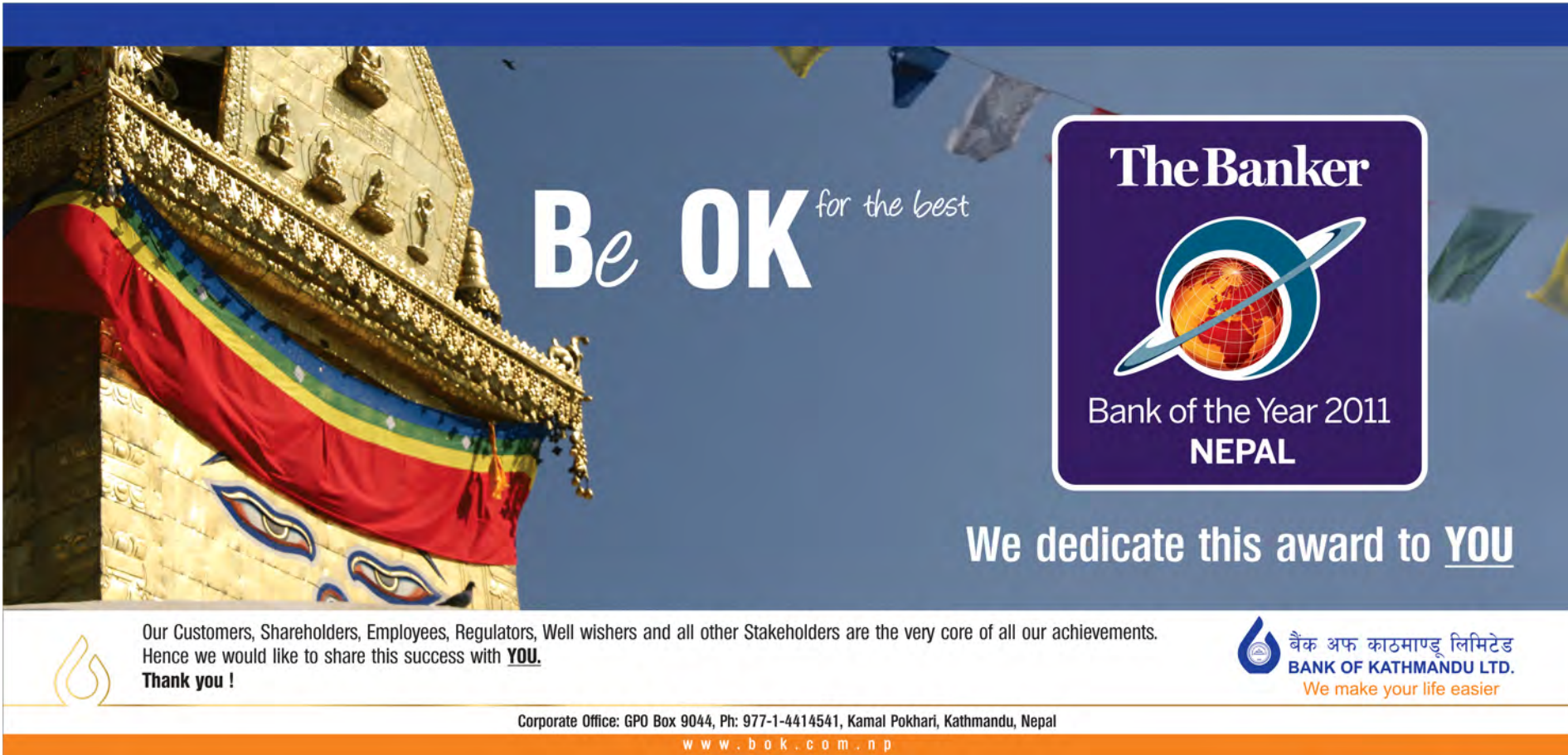


Which probably means Patan’s jewelry sows will have to pause a bit next time they apply for a visa when they come to the question in the forms that go ‘Are you or have you ever been involved in enforcing a Nepal or **Upatyaka Bund?** Tick one:


- ☐ Yes, I was the ringleader
- ☐ Yes, I smashed the windscreens of four cars
- ☐ Yes, but I will never do it again, cross my heart.’

I get the feeling office bearers of the Lalitpur Chamber of Commerce and Patan’s jewelry merchants (Motto: ‘Jewelers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your gold chains!’) will be lying low and will not be going on **warpath** anytime soon. Is this why the diamond merchants and goldsmiths have decided to sponsor traffic stands at all major intersections in the capital? And, speaking of precious stones, where did PKD get that fat 24 carat diamond ring he was sporting the other day?






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