

# NEPALI Times

#585

30 December 2011 - 5 January 2012

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MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

## Soaring confidence

After declaring Nepal Investment Year 2012-13, the government has set up the Nepal Investment Board as a "one window" office to attract foreign investors in hydropower, infrastructure and the service industry.

Investors like Pokhara's Avia Club Nepal (*above*) have persevered and kept flying for 15 years despite all odds.

Those with staying power are well placed to reap the benefits of growth that will follow political stability.

The CEO of the newly-formed Nepal Investment Board, Radhesh Pant, however has his work cut out.

Militant labour, extortion, local opposition, arbitrary government policies, red tape, corruption, power cuts, bandas are just some of the

factors deterring investors. Hydropower, where the need for investment is most acute, faces extortion, strikes and violent local opposition.

According to a recent UNCTAD survey, Nepal is eighth from the bottom in investment climate. The good news, perhaps, is that there is nowhere to go but up.

**Radhesh Pant interview p4**

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**Why Invest in Nepal Year 2012?**


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**Bye-bye NTY, hello NIY**  
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WHY INVEST IN NEPAL YEAR 2012 ?

There are a lot of things us Nepalis can be criticised for, but no one can fault us for not having good intentions. We mean well. We say we want democratic freedoms, we desperately want to rescue this country from grinding poverty, we have grandiose plans to exploit hydropower, and we moan and groan about corruption. But, as they say, the road to hell is lined with good intentions.

Take corruption. Perhaps at no other time in our history has this country seen mass malfeasance as has been unleashed by this Maoist-Madhesi coalition. In fact, to call it "corruption" would be a gross understatement. Corruption usually signifies petty graft, kickbacks, payoffs ten per cent here or ten per cent there. And there is still some shame involved in committing a crime.

But what is happening today is blatant daylight robbery of epic proportions. The treasury is being systematically ransacked, the party leading the coalition has been found to have looted billions for phantom guerrillas, Madhesi ministers have honed the notion of "pre-paid" bribes for appointments and transfers to a level of refinement and pervasiveness never seen before.

Secretaries who have dared to complain to the

Chief Secretary have been threatened by ministers, and honest civil servants are thoroughly demoralised. Personal assistants of ministers wield more power than the secretaries. Health Secretary Sudha Sharma, known for her competence and integrity, couldn't stand it anymore and resigned on Tuesday. Her boss was caught red-handed bribing journalists. The Minister of Forests seems to think it is his job to log what is left of Nepal's forests. An overpowering stench of greed and rot hangs in the air. The prime minister admitted to editors recently that he knew this was going on, but that he was powerless because his Madhesi partners threatened to pull out of the coalition. That is a breathtaking admission of helplessness by a supposedly upright leader.

The impunity starts right at the top. There is no fear of reprisal for looting the public coffers, no fear of what others say, the shamelessness is astounding. In fact, incumbent ministers take stealing as part of the TOR and SOP of their jobs.

Nepalis expect so little from their kleptocrats that they have become thick-skinned about all this. But it is at the local level where the loot has become a question of life-or-death as money for health posts and medicines are pocketed. The all-party mechanism at the VDC and DDC level has now

become a mechanism for plunder: the four main political parties just divide up contracts and the development budget and pocket it all.

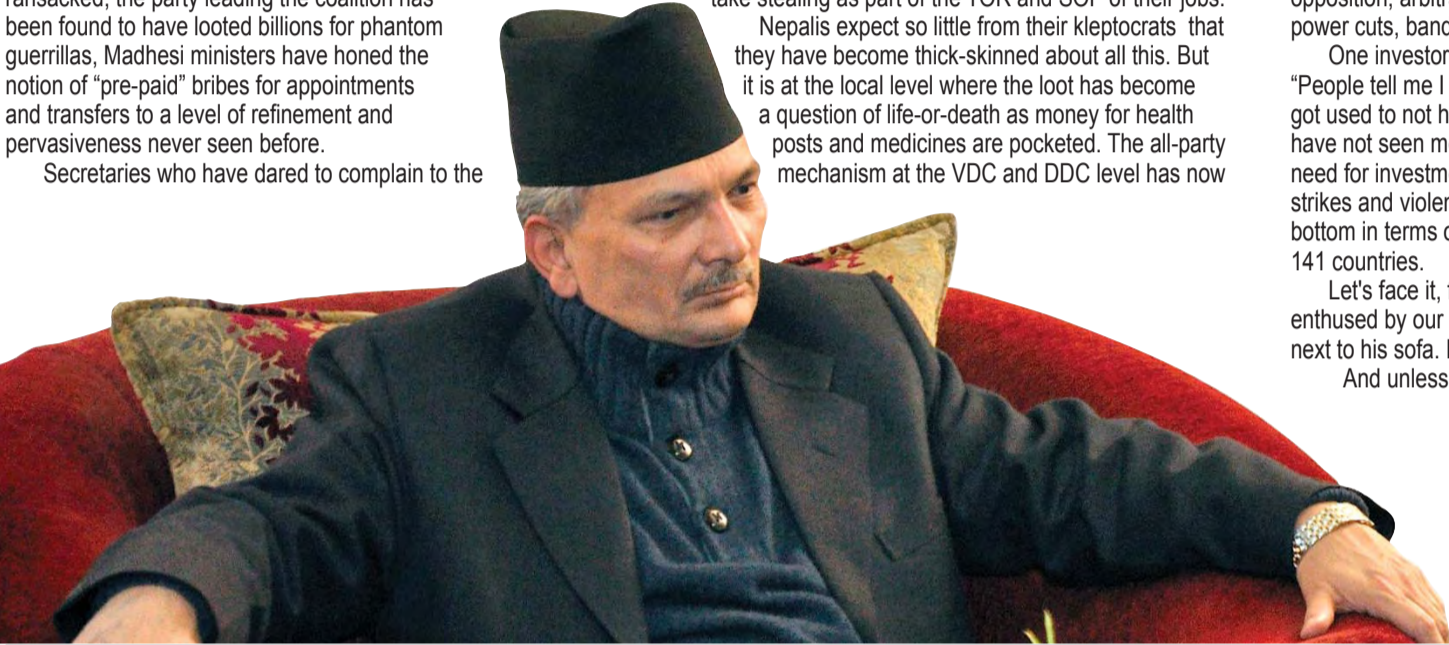
A minor scuffle between two bus syndicates closed down Dolakha for five days this week in a district where four major hydropower projects are located. Doctors are still on strike in a foreign joint venture hospital in Pokhara because doctors are sick of being physically assaulted by relatives every time a patient dies.

At a time like this, we are about to embark on Nepal Investment Year 2012-2013. The government has set up a one-window Nepal Investment Board with respected banker, Radhes Pant as its head (see interview, p4). We wish Pant well, but he has his work cut out. To convince foreign and domestic companies to want to invest money in Nepal at present will be a hard sell with militant labour, extortion, local opposition, arbitrary government policies, red tape, corruption, power cuts, bandas...and the list of woes goes on.

One investor in the service industry told us this week: "People tell me I must be mad to want to invest in Nepal. We got used to not having electricity, now there is no diesel. I have not seen more unruly workers." Hydropower, where the need for investment is most acute, is having to face extortion, strikes and violent local opposition. Nepal is now 7th from the bottom in terms of investment climate on an UNCTAD list of 141 countries.

Let's face it, foreign investors may not be particularly enthused by our prime minister sporting Mao Zedong's bust next to his sofa. Even the Chinese don't do that anymore.

And unless the politicians curb their insatiable self-destructive greed the coming year does not bode well for job creation, economic growth and stability.



BIKRAM RAI

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

WORST SYSTEM

As an ex-student leader of the NC's sister organisation, I'm deeply shocked by the current attitude of Congress leaders ('Worst system except for the rest', Editorial, #584). The NC today is severely disconnected from its founding principle which was to be the voice of the most disadvantaged and has relinquished its firm belief in non-violent politics. If BP Koirala revisited us, he would be disgusted to see the party he helped found in its current mess.

Nirmal

The NC was never truly a 'democratic' party, either during the Panchayat era or after its collapse. Yes, the party was based on social democratic principles, but it has always been led by dictatorial personalities such as BP Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Girija Koirala. BP was the most successful leader among them all but failed to fully democratise the party's structure. Today, the UML and RPP are more democratic than the NC.

Kamal Kishor

Although having free and fair elections is a key part of democracy, it is not enough. Pakistan is a classic example: it has had elections since 1947, but remains perilously close to turning into an anarchic failed state. Democracy in its essence means the empowerment of common citizens of the country, where no citizen has to live in fear of rights being trampled by the state, politicians or criminals. However, in the absence of a strong state and lack of a mechanism to enforce laws, no country can be democratic. Might becomes right and society is in danger

of becoming more anarchic and barbaric, where no one's right is protected and the big fish eats the little fish.

Rabi

What we have in Nepal today is certainly not democracy. Rather than strengthening democracy, the current set-up has usurped it. I would label our system an oligarchy, where few powerful autocrats reach an agreement by negotiating deals wherever they find leverage.

Soni

Your page 1 image of a huge column of black smoke from burning tyres is very saddening ('Up in smoke', #584). This practice has become a favourite tradition among political hooligans. However, neither they nor their party bosses seem concerned that tyre smoke is a serious health hazard. The mindless act of burning tires should be made illegal.

Tashi Lama

Forget democracy, let's have justice, let's have jobs, let's have water, let's have electricity, let's have security, let's have peace. If a dictator can provide that, I am ready for that Junga Bahadur once again to rise in Nepal.

Birendra Thapa

I found the picture accompanying the column by Anurag Acaharya ('Lumpen Gandhians', #584) proved the stupidity of the Congress and the eunuch state. Look at that kid waving the party flag accosting a harmless man on a bicycle, who looks bemused to say the least. And look at the posture and attitude of the riot police standing by allowing this to happen. Shame on the Nepali Congress. Shame on the

shameless police force. What are they there for?

Joker

SOCIAL MEDIA

It is mostly young, urban Nepalis who are internet savvy and use social media ('Social media as political player', Ashutosh Tiwari, #584). However, the NC's constituency is largely made up of older people with families who value traditions. They support the NC not because it represents them, but because they don't have any other viable option. To appeal to this population, all NC has to do is read a few national dailies and have minimal knowledge about the economy, society, and technology. So the NC will continue to ignore social media as long as its vote banks are secure.

Gyarel

Social media has indeed become a powerful tool which is not centrally controlled like traditional mainstream media. People can easily deliver their messages without worrying about being censored by editors. And the US ambassador is using Facebook to his advantage. However, we must understand that Scott DeLisi's Facebook page is not his 'personal' page, rather a personalised page of the US Embassy in Kathmandu, and Nepalis would do well if they are respectful while posting comments.

Ujjwal Acharya

VACLAV HAVEL

After visiting places like the border town between South and North Korea, Cambodia, Vietnam and Eastern Europe and interacting with the people, I have come to the conclusion that communism is a disgrace to human civilization ('In the name of children: Remembering Vaclav Havel', Kul

Chandra Gautam, #584). And what is more embarrassing is that we are being led by people who follow the same outdated and useless principles and who are determined to establish 'Democratic People's Republic of Nepal'. Vaclav Havel will surely be missed, but never forgotten.

Chyangba

BIR BAHADUR

Peace Corps is one of the best programs launched by the US to assist developing countries with education and community development ('Barry aka Bir Bahadur', #584). However, we should remember Nepal also had wonderful programs in the past like National Development Service (NDS) under which students were assigned to teach at schools in remote villages prior to their graduation. Another one was the 'Back to the Village Campaign' during the Panchayat era where government employees had to visit villages for development activities. It's time we worked on reviving these.

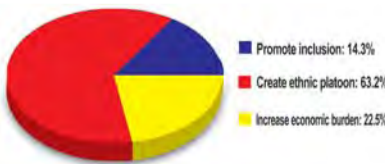
Hari Doz



Weekly Internet Poll # 585

Q. The government's decision on mass recruitment of Madhesis into the army is:

Total votes: 1,067



Weekly Internet Poll # 586. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Is 2012 going to be better than 2011?



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30 DECEMBER 2011 - 5 JANUARY 2012 #585

# Between laughter and forgetting

Let's hope 2012 doesn't turn out to be another "interesting" year



BY THE WAY

Anurag Acharya

The year 2011 will probably go down as the most forgettable year in recent Nepali history. We changed a few prime ministers, but nothing happened. We sat around wasting time.

For the last three years, people have been looking forward to a new year with hope and enthusiasm. Unless something really dramatic happens, 2012 is not going to be an exception. Here are some admittedly cynical predictions:



Those who support the Supreme Court's decision not to extend the CA beyond 31 May will most likely be disappointed. We have wasted precious two years making and breaking governments. From the short lived romance between the Maoists and the NC in 2008 to the 16 months wasted under the UML-NC and Maoist-UDMF coalitions successive governments came to power riding high on expectations, but descended into dystopia.

We in the media try to look for silver linings, doing the best we can to keep public faith in the institution of politics alive. But if the work and word of those at the center stage are not consistent, what we say hardly matters.

The chairman of the constitutional committee, Nilambar Acharya, is worried that

the parties are backtracking on issues they have collectively agreed to in the dispute resolution sub-committee. "The parties know they don't have any other option but to compromise if they want the constitution in time, but other factors are getting in the way," he told me this week. As long as the peace process is incomplete, he says, it will impinge upon statute writing.

And the only thing that stands between the peace process and constitution drafting today is one man's ambition: Pushpa Kamal Dahal. The future of Nepali politics is being held hostage by one man's ego and insecurity.

Dahal has been the commander of the PLA for over a decade and no matter what stage of integration

it is in, he will command its loyalty. It is this feeling that has kept Dahal secure so far. The nightmare of an uncertain political future which lies beyond integration is giving Dahal sleepless nights. However, the Maoist Chairman knows there is no turning back, and even the incentive to delay the peace process will eventually run out.

His latest political document presented to the Central Committee this week is aimed not just at the mutineers within his own party but also to the political opposition and the international community regarding his commitment to peace and constitution.

Down south, New Delhi knows things have changed and it needs to change too. It will have to do all it can to send positive signals and salvage whatever influence it can

in Kathmandu. The Chinese don't have much to complain about. Their influence in Kathmandu has remained consistent no matter what conspiracy theory does rounds in Kathmandu. They just don't want Kathmandu datelined Tibetan protests to be grabbing international headlines.

After Baburam Bhattarai

returned from New Delhi in October, the integration process gained momentum and the State Restructuring Committee took final shape. This was an encouraging sign. But the way NC went around calling for immediate change in the government, the debate was once again diverted away from peace and constitution. The NC leaders

may now give statements in support of the Baburam government, even indicate they might join it, but the Maoists have moved on.

There is no reason not to be hopeful about the coming year. After all, politics is the art of the possible. For now, like the famous Chinese curse, 2012 looks like an "interesting" year.

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**SUBISU CABLENET**

# One window for investors

After working for ten years in the financial sector in the United States Radhesh Pant returned to Nepal in 1999 to hold senior positions in private banks and was the president of the Nepal Bankers' Association. He was recently appointed to head the newly formed Nepal Investment Board as a part of the government's effort to spur foreign investment. *Nepali Times* spoke to him this week about prospects for Nepal Investment Year 2012.

***Nepali Times:* After a successful career in the private sector you switched to a government job in the Investment Board. Most people go in the opposite direction, why did you take up what looks like a thankless job?**

Well, I see a lot of opportunities for Nepal with the enactment of the Investment Board Act, 2068. I firmly believe that this country can prosper and take off if we can only realise the potential that we have. This job is also going to be professional even though it is under the government. And as for attracting investment, the government has to play a key role. So, it's a great challenge but at the same time I see it as a huge accomplishment if the board can contribute to increasing investment and enhancing Nepal's economy.

**How exactly is the investment board going to work?**

The Investment Board was established in accordance with the Investment Board Act, 2068 enacted a couple of months ago. It has full authority to carry out economic development of the country by creating an investment-friendly climate through the mobilisation and management of public-private



partnerships, and domestic and foreign private investments. It will also strategise to make industrialisation orderly and rapid. And it will play a pivotal role in the development of infrastructure and other sectors to create jobs and alleviate poverty.

**But is there going to be the political will to back you?**

The Board is chaired by the Prime Minister. Three ministers, finance, industry and forest, are also members. In addition, the Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission, the Rastra Bank Governor, and the Chief Secretary are also permanent members of the board. I am the Member-Secretary. The Board will select four members from the private sector who will be experts in industry, tourism, infrastructure development, commercial law and finance sectors as per the act.

**Which areas will the Board be focusing on?**

I would like it to function in a professional and transparent manner which would eventually yield results, attract investment and successfully allow the completion of investment projects in Nepal. The board will primarily focus on creating an environment for investments in Nepal, be it domestic or international by providing 'one-window' services. This would mean streamlining various acts and policies, identifying and resolving investment deterrents for projects and selecting and promoting projects that will provide most value for the country. The Board will provide all relevant information to prospective investors, analyse and make proper incentives available for projects. Once a project takes off, we will be closely monitoring progress right up to its completion and operation.

**Isn't it easier said than done in the present climate of political instability with red tape, corruption and bureaucratic delays?**

I think the role the Board is going to play will be very critical if we really want a prosperous Nepal. As you can see, conclusion of the peace process and completion of new constitution is around the corner. The economic agendas of political parties are converging. Economically, we have remained stagnant for the past five years or so. Nepal's don't have much patience anymore. Young people are migrating overseas. So, this is the right moment to focus on high and sustainable growth which is not possible without massive investment in hydropower, infrastructure, agriculture, tourism, export industries and services and of course education and health. Making all this happen will be the role of the Investment Board.

**What will be your major challenges and opportunities?**

I think the opportunities are enormous if we get it right. We are one of the richest countries in terms of natural resources. We really haven't done much. We have two of the largest markets surrounding us. However, we are net importers and really haven't been able to access them. Something is really wrong. We must capitalise on this and this is where the Investment Board will play a pivotal role. It must create a conducive environment for investment, be professional and transparent and put the interest of Nepal first rather than any vested interest groups. We must protect investments, be it domestic or foreign. We would have to resolve labour issues, insecurity and be more competitive than other countries so that investors choose to come to Nepal.

## Investing in the future

Foreign direct investment is essential next year and beyond to boost economy and create jobs



**GUEST COLUMN**

**Siddhant Raj Pandey**

Well functioning financial systems are central to generating foreign direct investment (FDI) which in turn accelerates economic growth. The success of any economy is judged by the free flow of capital and the extent of openness of the financial market.

Globalisation of the financial sector has led to the integration of emerging economies to international capital markets. South Asian countries all commenced reforms in the 1990s and while some nations are ahead of others, all are undergoing similar problems or are in the process of solving them.

India has been notable in developing capital markets since the mid-1990s, and its external sector development has been marked by strong capital flows. Although Nepal's liberalisation drive commenced in the mid-1990s capital flows have not played a major role. Besieged by unstable political regimes, lower growth rate of macroeconomic indicators, unskilled and militant labour, Nepal has not been

able to attract significant FDI compared to other South Asian countries. It is losing its competitive advantage for foreign investments due to lack of clear policies and implementation factors.

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) mandated that Nepal open up its financial sector to wholesale banking to international players from January 2010. Opening up should have theoretically boosted the economy by injecting foreign funds for investment. A year later, nothing has happened.

Although the Nepali Rupee was made fully convertible in current account transactions in 1993, Nepal has not yet adopted a capital account convertible policy, except for the repatriation of income. While FDI inflows are encouraged, debt flows in the form of external borrowings and portfolio investment in government securities, corporate bonds, and in the

stock market are subject to restrictions. The non-financial sector is not allowed to invest abroad or acquire companies.

According to a 2010 Central Bureau of Statistics survey, there were 1,897 firms operating with foreign investment from 139 countries. India had the largest investment in Nepal with 393 companies, followed by China with 179, Japan 132, South Korea 94, UK 94, Germany 61 and Switzerland 27.

Manufacturing has most FDI investments, which stood at 565 companies followed by the hotel and resort sector with 370 firms. Textile and garments had 210 investors

and energy, water and gas sector had 32 companies. The total capital outlay of these industries was nearly Rs 120 billion.

Tourism dominates FDI inflow in Nepal with nearly one-third of all investment followed by the service industry and manufacturing. Energy and the mineral sectors constitute only six per cent. Most FDI are small and medium scale. The largest numbers of investors are from India followed by the United States, China, South Korea, Norway, Japan and the British Virgin Islands.

The advent of international partnered banks in the 1990s added enormous value to the banking system in Nepal, which was otherwise dominated by poorly managed state sponsored banks. Joint venture banks improved the quality and efficiency of the financial systems by introducing best practices and standards, where consumers are the main beneficiaries. However, capital injection as investment from abroad was nominal. If higher integration to world capital markets was pursued with sound domestic systems in place, that would have enhanced the development of domestic financial markets by raising

bank credit, total assets of the banking system, reducing net interest rate margins and increasing stock market capitalisation.

The recent volatility of capital flows in emerging Asian economies has had a negative impact on the exchange rate, overheating of the economy and asset price bubbles. Large capital flows can stress economies through exchange rate appreciation and sterilisation.

However, a continued focus on financial market development can mitigate the challenges of capital flows. The need for FDI in Nepal is enormous since resource mobilisation capacity is limited, and in recent years the economy has faced a liquidity crisis which has led to lack of credit flows in the economy. Without total capital account convertibility, the prospect of capital inflows will be incomplete. A lack of domestic factors, such as strong macroeconomic fundamentals, a resilient financial sector, deep and liquid capital market compounded by political instability have been the main reasons for dismal FDI investments. 🇳🇵

Siddhant Raj Pandey is the CEO of Ace Development Bank.



# Bye-bye NTY, hello NIY

Happy Nepal Investment Year 2012-13



MY TWO PAISA

Paavan Mathema

Our politicians are so busy with political backstabbing, they haven't had much time to think about stagnant economy. Even the PhD prime minister is too busy trying to juggle a potential mutiny within his party and handling the opposition.

Meanwhile, investment has gone down to zero and economic growth is not even keeping up with population growth. The Economic Survey 2010-11 showed that private sector investment declined to 14.2 per cent against GDP from 17.8 per cent in 2007-08. A recent World Investment Report has ranked Nepal eighth in ability to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Eighth from the bottom.

Nepal received only \$39 million as FDI in 2010, whereas Nepalis working abroad sent home nearly \$2 billion. But by declaring Nepal Investment Year, the economy will hopefully come back to centre stage in 2012. Of course, just calling it "investment year" will not open the FDI floodgates, a lot needs to be done to assuage potential investors.

Unstable politics, militant labour and a crippling power shortage, among other things, have been driving away the money. The biggest blow was the closure of Surya Nepal's garment factory in Biratnagar because of the relentless politicisation of labour.



The government is getting the laws in place. It has started amending a dozen industrial laws including the Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Act, Industrial Enterprises Act, Company Act and Labour Act to ensure a hassle-free process for prospective investors. It also plans to introduce the Intellectual Property Act and new quality standards. Similarly, the Ministry of Industry plans to introduce an Industrial Enterprises Promotion Policy and is amending the existing Industrial Enterprises Promotion Act. A feasibility study of potential investment in agriculture, tourism, energy, infrastructure and medical and educational institutions will be carried out.

The build-up for Nepal Investment Year sounds encouraging, but the government has to walk the talk. Unlike tourism, Nepal is not a hotspot for investment. International tourist arrivals increased by over 20 per cent in Nepal Tourism Year 2011. We cannot expect the same for investment, there is a longer lag phase.

The proposed amendments in the Acts should not be left to collect dust, they should be discussed and ratified without delay. Investment incentives can be targeted to countries from where capital inflow has been high, such as India, China, the US and Japan. Investors in the NRN community should be wooed.

Domestic investors should not be ignored, and should also have a supportive environment. An integrated approach should be taken to deal with militant labour unions that have hindered businesses lately. Politics has no place in business. Last but not least, there must be coordination between ministries. Most investors are spooked by Nepal's formidable bureaucracy, a euphemism these days for shakedowns by officials.

The financial sector has recovered from its liquidity crisis, and is now attracting deposits. In the last five months, commercial banks alone have collected an additional Rs 56 billion, but only Rs 21 billion have been invested in this period. This bodes well for interest rate reduction for future investors.

We have been wise to announce a two-year long campaign for investment. If we can at least set the stage in 2012, then we can look forward to a more vibrant economic year in 2013. But, the politics first needs to settle down. ■

## BIZ BRIEFS



**Bring in the fun**  
Dish Home has started Christmas and New Year 2012 scheme. Customers who buy Dish Home sets are provided with free 45 days TV viewing experience. This offer is given for all the packages of Dish Home.

### Stains no more

Him Electronics, Samsung's authorised distributor, has introduced its new series of front-loading, top-loading and semi-automatic washing machines. The ten new models from this series are featured with diamond drum, voltage control, eco-drum clean, air turbo drying system, magic filter, silver nano technology and other safety features.



### Up in the air

For Christmas and New Year, Simrik Air is setting a helicopter base in Pokhara and offering sight-seeing tours of major tourist destinations in the city. Simrik Air's Pokhara City Heli Sightseeing begins on 26 December 2011 and will go on till 1 January 2012.

### Winner announced



Syakar Trading Company, the sole distributor of Honda Motorcycle in Nepal, declared Roshni Maharjan from Naradevi as the winner of its festive schemes for Dashain and Tihar. Roshni Maharjan has won a Honda Brio Car.

### Safety first

Go Ford, the authorised dealer of Ford in Nepal, has begun ferrying vehicles from four transit points in the Nepal-India border in state-of-the-art trucks. The initiative is aimed at preventing possible damage to new vehicles while delivering them to showrooms.

### Thar in Nepal

Agni Incorporated has launched Thar CRDe, in Nepal. The 4x4 off-road vehicle is targeted at adventure seekers & car enthusiasts who want to make a unique style statement.



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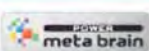


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## Little HONG KONG

PHOTOS by **BIKRAM RAI**

The largest shopping mall in Kathmandu is not the high-rise glass boxes that have sprung up in the city in the past few years, it is still the Khula Bazar in Bhrikuti Mandap.

Also known as 'Hong Kong Bazar' because of the preponderance of

cheap Chinese goods, the makeshift shops with blue plastic roofing form an indoor semi-circle around the exhibition grounds. The shopping area has expanded organically without any planning or government regulation, but since it fulfils such an important need it has continued to thrive.



**Times**

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Venue: Nepal Academy Premises,  
Kamladi Kathmandu  
Time: 1000 Hours until 1700 Hours

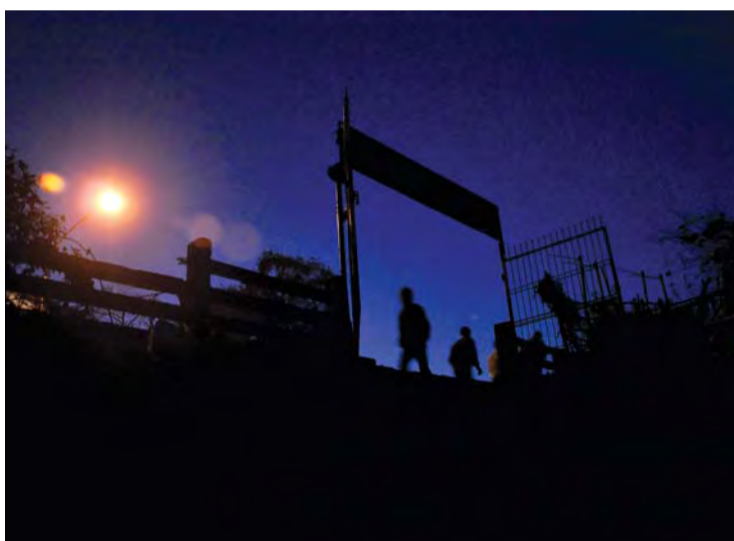
Extending from one end of Bhrikuti Mandap to another, it houses 1,351 stalls selling everything from Chinese thermos flasks, blankets to electrical goods and books.

Before 1991, the shops were scattered in the Khula Manch. But the political parties needed the open-air theatre for their frequent rallies so the shopkeepers were evicted to Bhrikuti Mandap. Which is why Hong Kong Bazar is also called Khula Bazar. For the next two decades, the market has served as a one-stop shop for Kathmandu's middle class and for travelers going back to the districts from the nearby bus terminal.

Despite the competition, Khula Bazar is always packed. Vendors open from six in the morning till after eight each night seven days a week. On the weekends and around festival season the market sees a tremendous increase in customers in search of unbeatable bargains.

Despite the obvious fire hazard and stiff competition from new malls and streetside vendors elsewhere, Khula Bazar continues to grow because customers are convinced there are good bargains here. 🇳🇵

*Bhrikuti Rai*



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# Fashionably identified

Lawa Prashad Mally is the chairman of U.F.O Clothing Store, which has grown from a single outlet to a chain of stores, with presence in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Pokhara, Butwal, Birganj, and Narayanghat. Mally talked to *Nepali Times* about the market and his future plans.

**Nepali Times:** UFO is one of the first established stores for ready-made garments in Nepal. How has the market changed since you began?  
When we opened our first store in 1996 in Ranjana Galli, Kathmandu, there were very few fashion retailers. Today, competition has increased tremendously and other stores have replicated our open display system. The customers have also matured, they easily accept the concept of self service and fixed price and are well informed about the products and latest trends before they enter the stores.

**So would you say Nepali consumers are brand conscious now?**  
Yes, I would say Nepali customers are increasingly brand conscious. Our tie-up with brands like Yishion, YCMD and 183SX has shown positive results.

**How is your promotional strategy working out?**  
UFO takes special care in building its brand to become the first choice for its customers. Our slogan 'Express Your Attitude' speaks to our consumers who want to be unique and seek products that are an extension of themselves. Recently, we started using Nepali sports personalities as models, because they have large fan bases among young consumers.

**Have there been any policy changes for clothing industry since you came into operation?**  
Majority of the products in Nepal's fashion/

clothing industry consists of imported products. For the 15 years years that we have been in the clothing industry, policies have hardly been reviewed. Custom valuation and tariff need to be modified so that both the government and the industry can benefit. New policies which level the playing field for big and small enterprises and promote healthy competition also need to developed.

**Have you thought of selling online?**  
We have been selling selected range of products and gift cards online through muncha.com for more than a year now. We also have a Facebook page where customers get updates about new arrivals and can post comments. Though our website itself is not equipped to accept orders right now, it is still able to provide customers information about the products in our stores. Nepal has not fully embraced e-commerce, but it is only a matter of time.



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**SOMEPLACE ELSE**

Tukche Thakali Kitchen, the 15-year-old institution once in Darbar Marg, now in Lazimpat boasts a welcoming staff and a cordial ambience housed within an intimate dining hall and a wide patio. But behind the dimpled service is a dal-bhat dupery. Regardless of the recipe, the custom of complimentary second helpings of bhat, dhedo, dal, aloo, saag, achar, gundruk, etc. reinforces dal bhat as the national mainstay. But at Tukche an extra charge for extra helpings on top of the already exorbitant Rs 300 (plus 10% and 13%) for a vegetarian ‘mini thakali set’ could only be rationalised by the establishment’s seniority or an ostensible bid for higher quality.




PICS: MARCO POLLO

# Tukche



‘Elevating the local’ isn’t about elevating prices on quality de rigueur—unless we’re elevating to higher altitudes, then steep charges are somewhat justified. Down to the taste buds, Tukche’s chicken curry in the non-vegetarian thali (Rs 325) is stewed to a fine balance between spice and viand; the black dal, thick and rich; the potato wedges, crisp on the edges and fork-tender; and the spinach, on par with homemade saag. Dhedo, the buckwheat

paste, paired well with the mutton curry set (Rs 375), which included portions of gundruk, the bitter dried spinach, pickled radish and chili. Soaking the ghee-basted staple into the red curry produces a savory experience similar to the spongy Ethiopian *injera*. Tukche’s Thakali table d’hôte (Rs 790 per person) includes a soupçon of apple brandy, appetizers, chicken and mutton curries with standard thali trimmings and curd for dessert. The sets at Tukche are standard but are preposterously priced. *Dal bhat is dal bhat is dal bhat.* On a budget? Consider nearby Tama or the multitude of other Thakali restaurants in Thamel, where the Nepali custom of *thapnu* or generous servings isn’t compromised for the cost of good food.  *Marco Pollo*

*Opposite the north end of the Narayanhiti Palace Museum, a couple of shops east of the Attic*

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# Flu jabs



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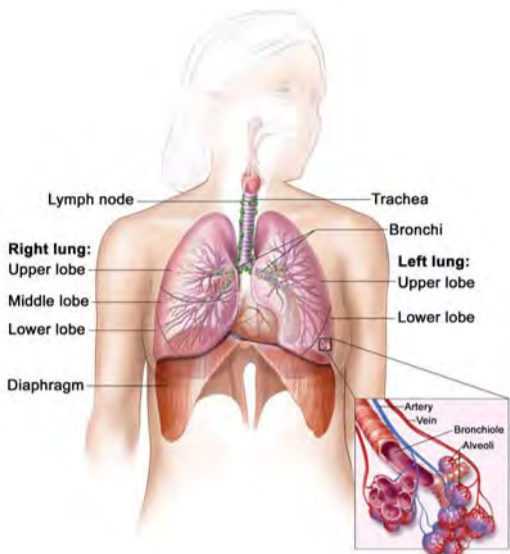
Nonspecific upper respiratory tract infections (URIs) are very common, and in Nepal they rival diarrhoea (or gastroenteritis as it is pompously known) as the most important cause for a visit to the doctor. By definition, URIs are characterised by no prominent features, and the symptoms include cough, sore throat, and nasal congestion. The majority of these nonspecific URIs are caused by viruses like rhinovirus (most common) and the influenza viruses. There are no vaccines against rhinovirus, but annual vaccination against influenza A and B viruses are available.

Influenza vaccines are the most effective method of preventing influenza and its complications like pneumonia and meningitis. The effectiveness of the seasonal vaccine in preventing influenza depends on the match between the vaccine and the circulating strain of the virus for that year. All influenza vaccines contain two influenza A strain and one influenza


B strain, selected annually based on data from institutions like the CDC (Centres for Disease Control). Clearly, vaccine effectiveness is highest when the match is close, but even when the match is poor, vaccination has been shown to reduce the number of deaths from influenza. Furthermore vaccination of children and adolescents can protect

H1N1 virus responsible for causing the 2009 influenza pandemic, the Perth, and the Brisbane strains. The American ACIP (Advisory Committee for Immunisation Practices) recommends annual influenza vaccine for everyone six or more months old including pregnant women without a specific contraindication. Vaccination of pregnant women not only protects them against influenza but also protects the newborn for the first six months of life. Adverse reactions are uncommon for injectable vaccines. The vaccination is available from October or November and is usually given till May although in Nepal, influenza may be present throughout the year.

In the ideal world everyone above 6 months is recommended this vaccine, but the vulnerable group that will most benefit from jabs are the thousands of patients with chronic lung disease. The vaccine will decrease their disease exacerbation and hospital admissions. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these patients may not be able to afford the vaccine annually. To deal effectively with this and other burgeoning health problems in Nepal, a state health insurance scheme is mandatory.





unvaccinated residents of the same community, a phenomenon attributed to 'herd' immunity. This winter (2011) the strains in the influenza vaccine are the same three strains as the 2010 winter formulation. The three are the California strain which includes the





WEEKEND WEATHER  
by NGAMINDRA DAHAL


A humongous system that spans the Bay of Bengal is moving slowly northwards along India's western coast. Because of the size of this low pressure circulation, cold, dry air from the Tibetan plateau is going to be sucked into central Nepal through the weekend. Expect some cloud cover as the tentacles of this cyclone are blown over our skies by the westerlies. This may make Kathmandu's morning smog soupier on Sunday, with fast-moving high altitude clouds over the mountains on new year's day.



FRI  
  
20-03

SAT  
  
20-05

SUN  
  
18-04



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA


**YOU'VE BEEN MARKED!** A building in Lazimpat is marked for demolition as part of a road expansion campaign by the Metropolitan Traffic Police Division and the Kathmandu Valley Town Development Committee. The the campaign is expected to cost around Rs 450 million.

KRISHNA SINJALI

**JUMBO GOAL:** Elephants in a game of football during a three-day international elephant festival in Sauraha on Monday. The festival features races, games and an elephant beauty contest.


MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

**ECONOMY MATTERS:** Dambar Krishna Shrestha, correspondent of Himal Khabarpatrika receives the Outstanding Economic Journalist Award 2011 from Finance Minister Barsha Man Pun in Kathmandu on Monday. The award was conferred by Society of Economic Journalists of Nepal (SEJON) for his coverage on casinos in the Valley.



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# The last straw

No good can come out of dragging the judiciary into the political mud



THIS IS IT

Rubeena Mahato

Just when we thought we were making progress on peace and constitution building, the Supreme Court's verdict to reject a review petition on the term extension of CA has brought the judiciary into direct confrontation with government and the parliament.

The Supreme Court this week maintained that the CA term would automatically expire if the constitution is not written by 31 May 2012, and there is no reason why this decision should be reviewed or revoked.

Nepalis, frustrated with repeated extensions of the CA, overwhelmingly welcomed the decision not to extend. But instead of taking the SC's decision as a warning to finish its homework in time, the parties are lashing out at the Supreme Court as if it is just another feckless party. Ideally we should not have a situation where the judiciary has to push the parliament to get its act together. But people want someone to step up and say enough is enough.

The leaders have no explanation for why they have done nothing with four extensions in four years, while Nepalis continue to pay 601 very idle people to sit in the House. The parties need to wake up from their delusion of grandeur. They were elected for a task, they are the servants of the people, and they have been found wanting. They are not indispensable, and as much as they would like us to believe it, the sky will not fall on 31 May if the CA term is not extended.

Not extending the present CA's term does not mean dissolution of the house. We will have another election, a fresh mandate and the CA would continue. It is clear that the only reason why the leaders are opposed to this is because they are afraid to go back to the people again.

The Minister of Law and Justice Brijesh Kumar Gupta took the cake to say that the Supreme Court should be held responsible if the country heads towards a political disaster. Bravo. Everyone else is responsible for the mess we are in except our Great Leaders. Gupta and his ilk consider themselves exempt from any duty or moral

obligation.

Before insulting the Supreme Court, the party leadership would do well to look at itself in the mirror. It is not the Supreme Court that is presiding over the most corrupt government this country ever had, it isn't the Supreme Court that has pocketed billions earmarked for cantonment fighters who didn't exist, it isn't the Supreme Court that is raking in 'pre-paid' bribes from civil service and police transfers. The Supreme Court is not protecting a convicted murderer in parliament, or coddling war criminals in the cabinet. The judiciary, despite its own internal problems, has for the most



part stood up for the integrity and interest of the nation than parliament ever has. And that is not really a statement to be proud of.

Critics are saying that the SC should have at least registered the petition, then gone on to decide if the earlier verdict should be reviewed or not. That is splitting legal hairs. House Chairman Subhas Nembang, a lawyer himself, should

know better than most that a refusal of review is routine court procedure. If the Court does not find enough grounds to question the fairness of an earlier verdict, it may chose to reject request for review. And turning constitution-writing into a Ten Year Plan just because our once-elected leaders can't deliver is not reason enough for the SC to waste its precious time.

The greatest danger now

is the prospect of parliament overriding the SC decision. If that happens, impunity would win and the judiciary lose. One by one, the politicians have destroyed the pillars of democracy: first they squandered the people's faith in the executive, then they made a mess of the legislature, and now they are slinging mud at the judiciary. They have demoralised the civil service through continual interference.

Those who call themselves our 'leaders' should get on with constitution-writing in the time left rather than wasting any more time insulting the Supreme Court. 🇳🇵

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ALL PICS: ANURAG ACHARYA



# Unleashing Kangchenjunga

Pristine region offers new hope to revive trekking in 2012

ANURAG ACHARYA  
in TAPLEJUNG

Kangchenjunga, the third highest point in the world, is more a mountain range than a peak. Stretching east to west across nearly 25 kilometers from Sikkim to Nepal, Kangchenjunga looks as if a

slice of the planet has risen to pierce the stratosphere. The mountain dominates the northern horizon, most famously from Darjeeling, and the best access is from Sikkim. However, it is from the western side in Nepal that the approach to the mountain offers the most adventurous and dramatic treks. The narrow, sparsely

populated valleys on the upper reaches of the wild Tamur River have been the refuge of only the most driven holy men, naturalists and mountain climbers. The foot of Kangchenjunga is the least-visited among 16 protected areas in Nepal. Its location on the north-eastern corner of the country gives the region the highest

annual rainfall, and hence the richest biodiversity. The pristine coniferous forests, high meadows and wetlands are the most biologically rich areas of the country inhabited by many amphibians, birds, plants and animals found nowhere else. Many of the mammals found here are endangered: the snow leopard, the red panda, or musk deer. The Kangchenjunga Conservation Area has at least 69 varieties of orchids, 30 types of rhododendrons and 15 out of 28 endemic plants of Nepal. Besides rainfall, it is the dramatic altitude variation from deep subtropical gorges to glacial valleys that makes this nature reserve an attractive destination for trekkers. The Arun Valley cuts right

through the Himalaya, and is an important corridor for bird migration from Siberia to India. “This place is radically different from anything and everything you’ve seen in your life”, says Canadian Glenn F. Miller who was camping in Ghunsa on his way to the base camp. The author of ‘Dreaming Kathmandu’ admitted that the place inspired him to write. Sylvia Wilfried and her husband Studer from Austria were leading a group of 40 tourists from different European countries. The couple say they have been in Nepal 15 times since 1983 and keep coming back because mountains here are so varied. “Especially the Kangchenjunga valley,” says Sylvia, “it is one of the most

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नेपाल सरकार सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय सूचना विभाग



beautiful place on earth.”  
‘One of the most beautiful places on earth’ sounds like a cliché, but walking along a ridge with the hulk of Jannu towering over us, it is clear there is no other way to describe this trail.  
Perhaps Kangchenjunga has remained remote and pristine because it is so inaccessible. The nearest airfield at Suketar is unreliable, and although the road has reached Taplejung it is an arduous 16

hours from Kathmandu via Bhadrapur before you even start the three week trek.  
Paul Stevens of The Great Himalayan Trail Program says tourists who come to Nepal have until now been confined to few well-known destinations like Annapurna, Everest and Langtang.  
Says Stevens: “If we can integrate all major trekking routes along the east-west Himalayan stretch and encourage tourists to explore new destinations, it will

increase the span of their stay or bring them back to Nepal creating more jobs and bringing in money.”  
The GHT Development Program, promoted by the government in partnership with SNV Netherlands is working closely with stakeholders in the tourism industry, NGOs and host communities to develop best practices in tourism, contributing to local economy through sustainable tourism. 🇳🇵



## Road to nowhere

This is the dilemma of tourism everywhere: do you improve access so more people can visit, or do you deliberately limit infrastructure to preserve an area’s natural beauty?  
In 2010, over half a million tourists visited Nepal. Their average span of stay increased from 11.3 to 12.6 days but the number of trekkers and mountaineers decreased by half. One reason was the expansion of road networks along main trekking routes.  
The undisturbed trails of Kangchenjunga can help to revive trekking numbers. But this needs investment in airports and basic infrastructure. Here in Kangchenjunga, it also means repairing trails and lodges damaged by the earthquake in September.



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# Plotting

Jana Morcha leader Chitra bahadur KC in *Karobar*, 25 December

कारोबार

What we need in this country is not federalism but genuine devolution and decentralisation. Federalism is just not necessary. Yet some politicians are using ethnic politics to propel themselves to power. Ruling parties are giving into anything to remain in power, even ethnic divisions in the army. The silent majority in this country is against federalism. People in the army, police, Congress, Maoists, UML, civil society and media have all understood this, but for various reasons have not been able to articulate it.

Even without a new constitution there is a conspiracy to carve the country into ethnic provinces. If this plotting of the country is not halted, Nepal will not remain a nation state. Yugoslavia used to be a strong united country, however after it was split into ethnic territories it ceased to exist. Nepal has already been psychologically divided. There are 103 ethnic groups in Nepal, and only the future will tell how many provinces we will have.



# Ethnic aid

Ram Bahadur Rawal in *Nepal*, 1 January

नेपाल

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has doled out Rs 120 million to 19 ethnic groups and networks over the last three and half years. UNDP has spent Rs 25 million on 15 ethnic and regional networks to advocate for ethnic issues under a project on inclusive constitution. Swiss Development Cooperation has been providing Rs 2.25 billion annual budget to the CA, political parties as well as other NGOs since 2009. The

Danish HUGOU recently launched a Rs 624 million project called the Madhes Initiative. Similarly, the German aid agency (GTI) has already spent Rs 82.5 million during the first phase and an additional Rs 110 million has been dispersed for discussion on federal issues. There are 34 EU projects supporting the ethnic agenda. The EU has been openly advocating ethnic issues in Nepal since 1998.

Ethnic issues have overshadowed political and economic issues during the country's political transition mainly because they have been well-funded from external donors to redress discrimination against marginalised communities. The issue came to prominence after an indigenous caucus of CA members recently prevented the four major parties from tabling a proposal in parliament, proving that the ethnic agenda is dominating debate in the CA.



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The party should declare me as a prime ministerial candidate.”

NC leader Sujata Koirala speaking at a program in Sunsari district on Thursday

# closeup

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Diwakar Chettri in Nepali Times, #558



Tank: Local development budget  
Bucket: Parties  
Yubak in Nagarik, 13 July, 562



Prachanda: Come! Sit!  
Abin Shrestha in Kantipur, 7 February, #540

# 2011 in toons

Cartoonists from a cross-section of the Nepali media give their take on the year's politics



The criminal  
The minister  
The cop  
Bhanu Bhattarai in Himal  
Khabarpatrika, 1-17 August, #565

## TIMELINE 2011

- UNMIN packs up, 15 January
- Jhalanath Khanal becomes PM, 3 February
- CA term extended for three months, 28 May
- Jhalanath Khanal resigns, 14 August
- Baburam Bhattarai becomes PM, 28 August
- CA extended three months, 29 August
- Weapons to Special Committee, 1 September
- Earthquake jolts eastern Nepal, 18 September
- Buddha Air crash, 25 September
- Nepal declared 26 million strong, 27 September
- PM Bhattarai visits India, 20 October
- Regrouping of Maoists begins, 19 November
- State Restructuring Commission, 22 November
- CA extended for 6 months, 29 November
- Chinese Premier cancels visit, 13 December



Diwakar Chettri, in Nepali Times #569



Picture: Karin Landgren  
Crib: Peace Process  
Snake: Revolt  
Batsayayan in Kantipur 11 January, #536

### विद्वान नेता



Intellectual Leader  
Abin Shrestha in Kantipur, #579  
PhD. PM  
46 Ministers  
Amnesty petition for a murderer  
Largest cabinet in history



# Ground-level research

BRITTANY SEARLE

Since 2007, Jean Marc Hero has been bringing students from Griffith University in Australia to Nepal to take part in expeditions that focus on learning about environmental research and teaching methods.

The Program for Planned Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research (PPBio) aims to establish an international monitoring system that measures biodiversity and the long term effects of climate change.

Collaborative efforts between Griffith University and a number of environmental intuitions within Nepal have resulted in the formation of PPBio Nepal.

With help from Bird Conservation Nepal, WWF Nepal, the National Trust for Nature Conservation and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Australian and Nepali students from Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University work together to research the minute differences in the habitat due to global warming.

“It’s a fantastic collaboration. It’s really nice for Australian students to see how many people can come together to get things done,” says Hero.

Over the two-week course the students witness the ways in which PPBio is aiming to measure



the effects of climate change as well as taking part in the various conservation research methods used by researchers in Chitwan National Park. The project is doing more than exposing Australian students to Nepal’s environmental challenges, it also allows students to learn ways to deal with conservation and climate change issues.

PPBio has set up 5x5-km-sized research plots as a part of an international network of organised grids to gather and compare information using a standardised system of measurement that is available via an open-source database.

“What’s unique about the system

is that its systematic standardised methodology that can be applied anywhere in the world allows us to measure and monitor biodiversity and the impacts of climate change at a global scale. So we all work in exactly the same way at a local scale, we’re using the same plot size and the same measurements of birds, plants, frogs, lizards and mammals. So that if I measure the mammals on my plot in Australia, it’s comparable to measuring a plot in Nepal or Brazil,” explains Hero.

The plotted grids can currently be found in Brazil, Australia and Nepal with more in Costa Rica, New Zealand and the USA. As this international network grows, so

In a unique project Australian and Nepali students study how global warming is affecting wildlife

too does the hope that research into environmental issues can advance far enough to understand the effects of climate change across the world.

However, it is not an easy feat. Hero says one of the biggest problems all over the world is establishing plots that can withstand environmental challenges. In Australia it is fire and human encorachment that pose the biggest threats to plots. In Nepal it’s wild elephants that trample the plots. “We need to work out a system that is elephant proof,” says Hero.

Masters students from Tribhuvan University are using the plots as part of their research projects, and Hero believes that this is a positive step towards PPBio projects being handled by Nepali universities.

Climate change can have disastrous effects for Nepal, and not just with receding glaciers but also for migratory birds, plants and wildlife. PPBio offers the first step in finding out what is happening so we can adapt to the changes. 🇳🇵

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# MAKE IT LARGE

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# Bend it like Sagar

AVASH BHANDARI

The only way to remember 2011 for Nepali football and cricket would be to describe it as “action packed”. For years, power struggle between ANFA, National Sports Council and elites of Nepali sporting fraternity kept domestic football leagues on the sidelines. Nepal performed poorly in international matches: it failed miserably in the SAFF Championship and AFC Challenge Cup finals in 2008.

Surprisingly, in 2011 rancour was replaced by resurgence. Not only did Nepal become the highest ranked team in South Asia, it qualified for the finals of AFC Challenge Cup, and reached the semifinals of SAFF Championship in Delhi in November.

Mid-way through the year, the national team had become a formidable force under the guidance of its new coach, Graham Roberts. When Nepal crushed East Timor 7-1 in the first round of the FIFA World Cup 2014 qualifiers in July, some overtly optimistic supporters even started dreaming about Nepal going to Rio. However, our hopes were shattered by Jordan with a 9-0 humbling in Amman.

Although Nepal failed to qualify, it showed promising signs. On the field, players demonstrated absolute



## Sagar Thapa's free kick will immortalise 2011 in the annals of Nepali football

confidence and off the field Roberts was becoming familiar with the team's strengths and weaknesses. Nepal's best performances came in December in Delhi. We dominated the first match against Maldives, but had to settle for a frustrating 1-1 draw. In the second match, Captain Sagar Thapa lit the competition with a scorching goal, deep into injury time against Bangladesh. Thapa's stunning free kick drew endless comparisons with Ronaldinho's legendary goal against England in the 2002 World Cup. Having worked its way into the semifinals after 12 years, the team's calibre was on full display against Afghanistan. Throughout the match

Nepal controlled possession, played breathtakingly. But it ran out of ideas and steam, and failed to score. Afghanistan dealt a killer blow during extra time and sealed the ame. After all the hype, expectations and promises it was again a case of 'dream deferred'. What happens in 2012 will be determined when Nepal plays the AFC Challenge Cup in front of a home crowd in March.

Meanwhile, cricket saw equal action on and off the field. With the Ministry of Youth and Sports under its control, the Maoists nominated their Central Committee member, Tanka Angbuhang, the head of a Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN).

## Ceremonial Olympics



Unlike the last two summer Olympics, Nepal failed to make its place in the quadrennial sporting spectacle through qualifiers. Sangina Vaidya and Dipak Bista represented Nepal as Taekwondo qualifiers in Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008. Therefore it won't be overtly pessimistic to expect Nepali athletes to return from London this summer after fulfilling token participation. Like previous competitions, however, national records are expected to be broken. Manita Shahi, Ayesha Shkaya, Rohit Tamang and Asish Maharjan failed to make it to London after losing in the Asian Taekwondo qualifiers in Bangkok. Earlier, the Taekwondo association failed to send them to the world qualifiers in Azerbaijan for 'financial reasons'. Boxing too suffered the similar fate in the qualifying rounds. The only hope for Taekwondo now is wildcard entry but the chances are bleak. Meanwhile, the real game is the dispute within the National Olympic Committee and it wouldn't be surprising if there are more officials than athletes going to London.

On the field, Nepal had a new Sri Lankan coach, Pubudu Dassanayake, who faced his first real test during ACC T20 in Kirtipur in December. The team succeeded in earning a place in the ICC World T20 qualifiers, however, like in football (and on the same day as the defeat in Delhi) Afghanistan prevented Nepal from advancing to the finals. 🇳🇵

Watch Sagar Thapa's goal on:

[nepalitimes.com](http://nepalitimes.com) 🖱️ 📺

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# The mice play when the cat is away

What were the Mao Buddies thinking when they exploded a socket bomb at the US Information Centre in Kathmandu in 2005? It spooked the Americans so badly they withdrew the Peace Corps from Nepal. So, six years later, Financial Minister **Rain Man Pun** goes to Washington DC and says Nepal will benefit from the return of the Peace Corps. So, um, why did we fight that war, again?



The uncertainty over the future of the Constituent Assembly seems to be taking its toll on the honourable members who are venting their frustration on the furniture. On Sunday, members ran amok and broke microphones. They can have so much fun and even get paid to do it, no wonder they are so mad at the Supreme Court for playing **spoilsport**.



The mice play when the cat is away. With most Kathmandu-based dips and donors away on extended holiday till next year, organisers of bunds have sneakily announced

shutdowns in various parts of the country, hoping the embassies will not notice and put them on their visa black lists. One group has even threatened a strike for January first. What a great way to start Nepal Investment Year 2012-13.



Baddie hardliners had a secret conclave the other day somewhere over the western sector, and Comrade God came up with a list of 15 gripes against PKD, which included stealing from Baddie guerrillas to build high-rises. Quite a few eyebrows have reportedly been raised in party circles over the highest high-rise on the airport road named after Com Lotus Flower's daddy, **Mukti**.

The meeting also decided to sabotage every session of the CA from here on to prevent a new constitution from being drafted. House Chairman Name Bang and PM BRB have got wind of this, which is why they are desperate to get the Supreme Court to lift its ruling on further extensions. But



they doth protest too much. Those who are speaking out most vocally against the Supremo Court are also the ones who have no intention of finishing the new constitution.



We would like to list the names Baddie comrades are calling each other these days but are constrained by the Anti-Pornography Legislation and the fact that there maybe unsupervised minors reading this. Tovarish CP probably thought he was flinging the gravest insult on Chairman Flabbergasting by calling him an **"NGO administrator"**. But PKD apparently took that as a compliment because it signified

recognition that he is the titular head of the Lumbini Development Trust. Then fellow-Gajurel, Comrade Horrible, heaped what he thought was another unspeakable slur on Chairman Superman by calling him a **"Buddhist"**. In the Maoist Lexicon of Rude Words (*Peking Foreign Languages Press, 1971*) that is like calling someone a "running dog lackey of capitalist imperialism, a bourgeois traitor to the proletariat, a revanchist idler and Trotskyite fascist hyena". But PKD was not only unfazed, he was thrilled to bits.



With all this name calling, many of you must be wondering why the party hasn't split yet. Been wondering about that myself. Apparently it is because the hardluck faction just can't muster the minimum of 95 out of the 239 CA seats for the party to officially bifurcate. So it has now come down to Baddie factions extorting each other, beating each other to pulp up over contracts, closing down each others' radio stations.

And few noticed the tiny news item buried in the inside pages this week that the Maobuddies in govt have doled out legit license plates to all the stolen **Scorpios** and **Boleros** with green and yellow plates that their Central Committee members used to drive around in. But get this: all the stolen cars will be exempt from taxes and this has cost the govt 27 karods in lost revenue.



If Mohamad can't come to the mountain, then the mountain will move to Mohamad. That is exactly what has happened to Victorious Bachelor who has been summoned to Beijing for a chat over the scuttled visit by Premier Wen. Although he is being wine, dined and fattened like a sacrificial piglet, Gutch is apparently being forced to note down bullet points about how to curb Tibetan protests in KTM.



And so what if Wen didn't come, Nepal has just established diplomatic relations with the Solomon Islands.



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