Dhana Maya Gautam is 60, lives in a grand pavilion, she has police guards, a sunny veranda, lawn and a great view of the city skyline. But Dhana Maya is homeless.

The Newari-style ornate brick structure was built during the 2000 SAARC summit to welcome foreign heads of state to Patan. Dhana maya has been living here for the past seven years after her husband died and her brother-in-law chased her out of the house in Okhaldhunga. Dhana Maya’s lawn is the traffic island, and she has improvised cardboards to ensure some privacy and shelter her from the wind. “I wouldn’t go anywhere else, this is my home,” says Dhana Maya, as rush hour traffic picked up on the bridge one morning this week. Thousands of people see her every day from buses and cars, and Dhana Maya represents the sorrow of Nepali widows, the continued violence against women, the plight of elderly women cast out by their families.

On International Women’s Day on 8 March, there will be the predictable platitudes from ministers, lots of ribbon cutting and probably a new report. Dhana Maya will likely not even know that it is her day.

Home away from home

Dhana Maya Gautam is 60, lives in a grand pavilion, she has police guards, a sunny veranda, lawn and a great view of the city skyline. But Dhana Maya is homeless.

The Newari-style ornate brick structure was built during the 2000 SAARC summit to welcome foreign heads of state to Patan. Dhana maya has been living here for the past seven years after her husband died and her brother-in-law chased her out of the house in Okhaldhunga. Dhana Maya’s lawn is the traffic island, and she has improvised cardboards to ensure some privacy and shelter her from the wind. “I wouldn’t go anywhere else, this is my home,” says Dhana Maya, as rush hour traffic picked up on the bridge one morning this week. Thousands of people see her every day from buses and cars, and Dhana Maya represents the sorrow of Nepali widows, the continued violence against women, the plight of elderly women cast out by their families.

On International Women’s Day on 8 March, there will be the predictable platitudes from ministers, lots of ribbon cutting and probably a new report. Dhana Maya will likely not even know that it is her day.
Kamal Dahal has done everything to make him an Indian stooge, and Pushpa Hardliners within his party openly called Mustang jeep his official car, bulldozing half gestures like inspecting toilets in Mugling for stability. The Maoist party had to be a part of the government mainly because it saw no one else on the horizon to deliver on peace, constitution and stability. The Maoist party had to be part of the solution, and Bhattarai was the most acceptable face among them. The prime minister immediately made some high-profile, symbolic gestures like inspecting toilets in Mugling restaurants, making the locally-assembled Jeep his official car, and bulldozing half the city to widen roads. Bhattarai had no illusions about the job. He knew with his party openly called him an Indian stooge, and Pushpa Kamal Dahal has done everything to undermine his deputy. The radicals were out to make Bhattarai look like a failure right from the beginning. Bhattarai had better relations with more, and more important, factions of the NC and UML than from the hotheads in his own party.

But things have started going badly wrong for Bhattarai. Maoist ministers have been treating the national exchequer as their personal piggy bank. The other big allegations around Bhattarai’s lack of trust in the partnership with Madhesi members in the coalition. To accommodate more members, the Madhesh Front, led by Bhattarai, broke all previous records by swearing in the biggest government ever. It wasn’t just the numbers, the ministers lacked competence and wisdom of the NC and UML than from the hotheads in his own party.

It’s time to improve the lives of the ‘commoners’ who are living like royals, while commoners have ‘uprooted’ the ‘old’ which in this case happens to be our forests. ‘Uprooting’ the ‘old’ which in this case happens to be our forests. The revolt, the Maoists believe they ‘uprooted’ the ‘old’ which in this case happens to be our forests. Just like they razed all the monasteries, burned all the temples, destroyed all the villages, created a vacuum in order to create ‘new’ forests in ‘new’ Nepal. The Maoists believe they must wipe out all existing forests in order to create ‘new’ forests in ‘new’ Nepal. ‘Uprooting grassroots democracy.’

The Maoists are for that matter, the NC and UML don’t like anything which is organised outside their pupil and central committee chain of command or which could jeopardise their rent-seeking capacity. They destroyed community irrigation, community water supply, and community electricity and now they are after community forestry, NC, just admit that Lokanatra is really loot-lantra and spare us this phony utopia.

We Nepalis must stop putting our dear leaders on pedestals and treating them like deities, and the leaders should also understand that they are public servants, not gods. We need to interrogate their actions, hold them accountable and throw the ones who are guilty (like JP Gupta) behind bars. This is the only way to make progress.

We Nepalis must stop putting our dear leaders on pedestals and treating them like deities, and the leaders should also understand that they are public servants, not gods. We need to interrogate their actions, hold them accountable and throw the ones who are guilty (like JP Gupta) behind bars. This is the only way to make progress.

UPROOTING DEMOCRACY
Just like they razed all the infrastructure in our country during the Maoist regime, the Maoists believe they must wipe out all existing forests in order to create ‘new’ forests in ‘new’ Nepal. ‘Uprooting grassroots democracy.’

What more can we expect from the pupils of Stalin and Mao? They believe in ‘uprooting the old’ which in this case happens to be our forests. They have destroyed our national unity, Nepali, institutions, information, infrastructure and have instilled a culture of intimidation and violence. With Lal Dhoj at the helm and a host of who’s who of the criminal-ruling ministers, there is little hope for Nepal.

Parag

The forestry issue is not about the politicians, but about the welfare of ordinary Nepalis. All the leaders want the NC to partner with the Party of the NC or the Madhesi front have betrayed and failed us miserably. It’s time to inform the lives of the 99 percent Nepalis and send the one percent criminal politicians to prison. Pencil-pusher people like Pushpa Kamal Dahal will continue living like royals, while commuters will struggle to eat one good meal a day.

Sangita Manandhar

Gareesh Nepal

DON’T FIX
Anonymous

This is the only way to make progress.

Parliament

We Nepalis must stop putting our dear leaders on pedestals and treating them like deities, and the leaders should also understand that they are public servants, not gods. We need to interrogate their actions, hold them accountable and throw the ones who are guilty (like JP Gupta) behind bars. This is the only way to make progress.

We Nepalis must stop putting our dear leaders on pedestals and treating them like deities, and the leaders should also understand that they are public servants, not gods. We need to interrogate their actions, hold them accountable and throw the ones who are guilty (like JP Gupta) behind bars. This is the only way to make progress.

IPUP

I consider this news about the proposed new tax as probably the worst news from Nepal in a long time, hijacking its future. In fact, I think the author of the proposal is from the Maoist camp, and if the faction is walking, he has to make this issue his top priority. 

Nick Myeran

I consider this news about the proposed new tax as probably the worst news from Nepal in a long time, hijacking its future. In fact, I think the author of the proposal is from the Maoist camp, and if the faction is walking, he has to make this issue his top priority. 

Ajeet Karn

We must be given the benefit of doubt because Bhattarai’s predecessors failed. The state and its communities. A dynamic accountability and transparency framework for all the state’s programs is going to be another huge distraction and a giant waste of money.

Ajeet Karn

I consider this news about the proposed new tax as probably the worst news from Nepal in a long time, hijacking its future. In fact, I think the author of the proposal is from the Maoist camp, and if the faction is walking, he has to make this issue his top priority. 

Anup Singh Gurung

I consider this news about the proposed new tax as probably the worst news from Nepal in a long time, hijacking its future. In fact, I think the author of the proposal is from the Maoist camp, and if the faction is walking, he has to make this issue his top priority. 

Abhijit Parapat

Thank you Nepal Times for this timely article. There is no doubt what the government is trying to do by amending the Forest Act.

Dopial

The media should not publish such a biased article. Accusing all DOFs (district forest officers) of corruption is wrong. A number of current and former DOFs have actively promoted community forestry and have never acted against the program. If there are cases of corruption then members of user committees must be involved as well. CFUGs (community forest user groups) and activists need to understand that amending the Forest Act is a positive step from the government. Many CFUGs around the country are taking on the task of circulating information among the communities which lie on the fringes of the forests.

Ajeet Karn

I consider this news about the proposed new tax as probably the worst news from Nepal in a long time, hijacking its future. In fact, I think the author of the proposal is from the Maoist camp, and if the faction is walking, he has to make this issue his top priority. 

Ajeet Karn

I consider this news about the proposed new tax as probably the worst news from Nepal in a long time, hijacking its future. In fact, I think the author of the proposal is from the Maoist camp, and if the faction is walking, he has to make this issue his top priority. 

Anonymous

ABLAZE

I know illiteracy is still prevalent in large parts of the country, but how long will we use superstition and lack of education as excuses for the cold-blooded murder of women? I think there is something intrinsically messed up about the Nepali psyche which tells us it’s okay to treat women like animals, accuse them of all sorts of misdeeds and kill them to ‘cleanse’ evil from our society.

Maya Joshi

UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE

Universal health insurance is desirable in any developing country, but there are two important issues that we must consider: ‘Universal Health Insurance’. ‘Buddha with care is not so much financial (most people pay out of their pockets already), but a moral and humanitarian issue.

Anup Singh Gurung

ABLAZE

I know illiteracy is still prevalent in large parts of the country, but how long will we use superstition and lack of education as excuses for the cold-blooded murder of women? I think there is something intrinsically messed up about the Nepali psyche which tells us it’s okay to treat women like animals, accuse them of all sorts of misdeeds and kill them to ‘cleanse’ evil from our society.

Maya Joshi

UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE

Universal health insurance is desirable in any developing country, but there are two important issues that we must consider: ‘Universal Health Insurance’. ‘Buddha with care is not so much financial (most people pay out of their pockets already), but a moral and humanitarian issue.

Anonymous

UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE

Universal health insurance is desirable in any developing country, but there are two important issues that we must consider: ‘Universal Health Insurance’. ‘Buddha with care is not so much financial (most people pay out of their pockets already), but a moral and humanitarian issue.

Anup Singh Gurung

ABLAZE

I know illiteracy is still prevalent in large parts of the country, but how long will we use superstition and lack of education as excuses for the cold-blooded murder of women? I think there is something intrinsically messed up about the Nepali psyche which tells us it’s okay to treat women like animals, accuse them of all sorts of misdeeds and kill them to ‘cleanse’ evil from our society.

Maya Joshi

UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE

Universal health insurance is desirable in any developing country, but there are two important issues that we must consider: ‘Universal Health Insurance’. ‘Buddha with care is not so much financial (most people pay out of their pockets already), but a moral and humanitarian issue.

Anup Singh Gurung

ABLAZE

I know illiteracy is still prevalent in large parts of the country, but how long will we use superstition and lack of education as excuses for the cold-blooded murder of women? I think there is something intrinsically messed up about the Nepali psyche which tells us it’s okay to treat women like animals, accuse them of all sorts of misdeeds and kill them to ‘cleanse’ evil from our society.

Maya Joshi

UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE

Universal health insurance is desirable in any developing country, but there are two important issues that we must consider: ‘Universal Health Insurance’. ‘Buddha with care is not so much financial (most people pay out of their pockets already), but a moral and humanitarian issue.

Anup Singh Gurung

ABLAZE

I know illiteracy is still prevalent in large parts of the country, but how long will we use superstition and lack of education as excuses for the cold-blooded murder of women? I think there is something intrinsically messed up about the Nepali psyche which tells us it’s okay to treat women like animals, accuse them of all sorts of misdeeds and kill them to ‘cleanse’ evil from our society.
Kathmandu is witnessing a resurgence of violent attacks on civilians. The population density and gaping holes in the security mechanism make the city an easy terrorist target. The blast in Babar Mahal this week and unexploded explosives recovered by the police in several other locations have done the trick: sow public fear.

The use of violence for political blackmailing has in recent years blurred the line between politics and terrorism. The increasing trend of terror groups, brandishing political cover for a supposed freedom movement with no mass base, has unfortunately been promoted by the state’s own engagement policy.

The Babar Mahal incident which took place at a time when the government is holding talks with militant groups in order to provide them a political ‘safe landing’, may have been carried out by another group looking to draw the state’s attention. Eroding political legitimacy and fear of political backlash have made the government incapable of dealing with such threats.

Investigations so far indicate that Monday’s blast may have been a case of individual anarchism. Accused Devraj Lama of Dhankuta, who calls himself ‘Biswo Kranti’ (World Revolution) was until recently just a local thug who extorted money from people in Dharan.

If a small town goon has the capacity to take on the state, it speaks a lot about how stateless we are. Metropolitan police chief Kuber Singh Rana was blunt: “We are too short on logistics to be policing a city of this size.”

At a program this week in Dhulikhel, lawmakers and activists from Dalit, Madhesi, Muslim, Tharu, and various ethnic communities unequivocally condemned attacks on innocent civilians. They had gathered to debate the contentious issues that remain unaddressed in the constitution making process. Maoist lawmaker Ang Dawa Sherpa, who is a member of the ethnic caucus in the CA, said although there are pitfalls in ethnic federalism, rejecting the proposal may lead to a bigger disaster.

The Janajati and Madhesi activists present said their movement does not seek to establish the rights of indigenous people at the cost of others, and complained that the media has misrepresented their cause. This is not entirely untrue. A section of mainstream pundits are fearmongering by demeaning the genuine aspirations of the people for a dignified presence in the national agenda. But the refusal of a few Janajati and Madhesi leaders to acknowledge that Nepal’s social mosaic does not support ethnic enclaves is an even bigger problem.

Leftist intellectual Shyam Shrestha said those who are calling for ethnic enclaves must understand that except for 14 districts where there is some population density of one community, it is impossible to carve out a single ethnic state. “The demography of the country only allows multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural federalism,” he said.

Even as debates over state restructuring and forms of governance linger, the majority of lawmakers say they are helpless because their party bosses call the shots. This has been one of the major fallout of Nepali politics: lawmakers are there only to vote by whip on the party diktat.

The countdown to the 31 May deadline on the constitution has already begun and the political landscape will only get murkier. If the parties cannot find mutual points for agreement, there is a real danger the ground will fall beneath them. This will not just bring a constitutional void, it will lead to more anarchism and violence like we saw this week.

The lingering transition and un-negotiated political space are feeding into anarchist terror.
Ups and downs in Nepal
A trekker ambassador sees the need to be patient

On the Great Himalayan Trail, the team led by 21-time Everest summiteer Apa Sherpa, which is walking four months across Nepal, found an unlikely companion when it reached Tumlingtar: German ambassador to Nepal, Verena Gräfin von Roedern.

With four high passes over 3,000m, this segment of the 1,700km trail traversed Bhojpur, Sankhuwasabha and Solukhumbu districts. An avid hiker, Roedern wanted to support the cause the trek aimed to highlight: promote ecotourism and bring attention to climate change in the high Himalayas.

But walking the three week up-and-down stretch from Tumlingtar to Lukla also gave von Roedern the time to reflect on the ups and downs of Nepali politics in the four years of her tenure as the ambassador. She came when Nepal had just become the world’s youngest republic in 2008, and the former armed rebels had just joined mainstream politics. Four years and five extensions later, we are still waiting for the constitution to take shape and the peace process to conclude.

It is easy to get disappointed looking at things as they are,” von Roedern told Nepali Times, “but Nepal has transitioned far better than most post-conflict countries. Perhaps we should not be so impatient.” This is refreshing coming from the dean of the Kathmandu diplomatic corps, which is sometimes better known for its cynicism about the deadlock politics, corruption and poor governance.

It is her optimism about Nepal that sets the level-headed von Roedern apart, and patience is what the ambassador herself needed when at the end of her trek she was stuck for three days in Lukla due to bad weather.

But von Roedern also says she has been in Nepal long enough not to expect miracles overnight.

“The good thing is, unlike what an outsider assumes from reading papers,” she adds, “Nepali politicians are not always at each other’s throats, but interact among themselves and are open to solutions.”

Despite the history of bilateral cooperation going back 54 years, and the substantial aid that Germany gives to Nepal each year, the European economic powerhouse has maintained a low profile, keeping its interests firmly on the country’s economic development and not so much on domestic politics. And von Roedern seems determined to keep it that way.

During her three week trek across eastern Nepal she was more convinced than ever about the great potential that is just waiting to be unleashed in hydropower, medicinal herbs and tourism. So what is holding things back in her opinion?

“There will not be any real economic progress in Nepal until there is closure on the peace process with integration and rehabilitation of Maoist fighters.”

The last time she met prime minister Baburam Bhattarai, von Roedern joked that she wanted not flowers but a new Nepali constitution for her birthday on 28 May.

“There is a great opportunity for Nepali politicians to make a historical breakthrough,” says the ambassador, “investors also want stability, and I really hope Nepali leaders rise to the occasion.”

Rubeena Mahato
Resta Jha, CEO of Prime Life Insurance spoke to the Nepali Times this week about how the rural areas are driving growth in the insurance sector. Excerpts:

Nepali Times: How is Nepal’s life insurance sector performing lately and what is its growth potential?
Resta Jha: There has been a 20 per cent compounded growth over the last three years in the life insurance segment and it seems this growth rate will continue for another three years. The major growth engine has been rural Nepal as a result of progressive cash flows from remittance, agriculture and tourism in this segment.

Better awareness due to structured campaigns like ‘Sunya Wa Teen’ have also helped boost the premium collection. The total life fund of the industry today is more than Rs 20 billion.

Are there any Nepal-specific regulatory or environmental issues that are impending or fuelling growth?
The government’s mandatory policy for Nepali migrant workers has definitely helped growth. On the other hand, a very low tax exemption limit of Rs 20,000 is hindering the growth. Overall, I find the current regulatory environment to be business-friendly.

There are over nine companies with life insurance licenses in Nepal, where does your company, PrimeLife Insurance stand?
PrimeLife has 18 per cent and 21 per cent market shares in first life premium and total first premium respectively. We have been able to achieve these phenomenal numbers because we competed with the low-penetrated market condition, rather than competing with the competitors. In a country with 23 per cent population having insurable interest and only 5 per cent having bought life insurance policies, there is enough head-room for everyone. We just need a better structured approach of doing business.

Which regions in Nepal have superior awareness of the benefits of life insurance?
Surprisingly, it’s the rural sector taking the lead in terms of life insurance business in Nepal. Urban people might be more aware, but approximately 75 per cent of life insurance business comes from the rural areas. This is owing to the ‘push factor’ of the business. And eastern Nepal is ahead in terms of business.

Her name is Setuk, which is a name given to dogs with yellow eyebrows. She started following the Great Himalayan Trail team from just below Apa Sherpa’s home village of Thame last week.

She was a playful dog, and we all took to her immediately. Some members of our team even swore that Setuk was the same dog that climbed up to Camp 2 (6,400m) on Mt Everest last spring.

We initially thought that she would follow us for the day and return home to Thame. But she stayed with us for the night in Thyangbo and was with us on the long and difficult climb up to the Tashi Lapsa pass the next day.

She was always there by our side and showed off her skills on the technically challenging icy sections of the pass. With hurricane force winds and minus twenty degrees outside, she stayed in my tent vestibule as we camped 100m below the pass. The next day we crossed over into the Rolwaling valley, and with the last possibility of return behind her she has now become a permanent member of the Climate Smart Celebrity Trek that started in Kangchenjunga in January and will reach Humla in May.

Setuk is a happy and dignified dog although we occasionally see a glimpse of her wild hunter side when she chases goats as we pass through villages. She is intelligent, trail smart and understands instructions as if she can comprehend our language.

Lately, she is a little spoilt as she won’t eat just any food. You have to set it down gently in front of her on a plate, she is the only member of the team who gets the royal treatment.

Setuk particularly likes to roll around in snow though there is very little of that, now that we are in the lower valleys of Helambu. She has been very useful to us as a guard dog too, and barks at strangers who come near our tents. She has also been very helpful when the group splits up by going back and forth to show the way. Until today, she has walked over 250km with us. There is another 1,000 to go.

Dawa Steven Sherpa
If 60-year-old Dhana Maya Gautam described just her house, many might be envious. She lives in what looks like a palace with traditional carvings and lattice windows. The police stand guard outside, she has a sunny veranda and a garden.

But Dhana Maya is homeless, driven out of her home after her husband died. She has been living on the Bagmati Bridge for the past seven years. Every day tens of thousands of commuters see her plight. No one stops by to help, or chat. “I wouldn’t go anywhere else, this is my home,” says Dhana Maya, who still has property in Okhaldhunga but was forced to leave because of threats from her brother-in-law. Her son died and her daughter is in dire financial circumstances.

It is not difficult to meet other elderly, homeless and abandoned women like Dhana Maya on the streets of Kathmandu. Many are victims of domestic violence in the hands of their extended families. While the ratio of 60+ men is higher to women in Nepal, it appears that in most cases it is the women who are driven out of their homes. Women are also forced out after their husbands bring home second wives.

“The husband was no longer mine, the house wasn’t either,” recalls 77-year old Jamuna Bham (pictured above, right), at the old age home, Nishahaya Sewa Sadan where nearly all the residents are women. Old, female, single and homeless, and often uneducated, these women are abandoned in an uncaring city. The women don’t have citizenship cards and recommendations from VDC office required for shelters and end up on the streets.

With traditional family norms that valued and respected the elderly slowly eroding, grandparents feel neglected and disrespected in nuclear families. The trend of young families migrating abroad means that old parents are left behind with no one to look after them. The widening generation gap, family disputes and even physical abuse drive away the old into
Every Tuesday evening at 5.30 a crowd gathers under the pipal tree at Hanuman Dhoka for a ‘party’ thrown by Curry Without Worry (CWOW). As the familiar truck pulls in, the smell of warm food fills the air and there is a rush to form a queue as the buffet is set.

Warm rice, beans, roti, mixed vegetables and tomato pickle on a leaf plate – for most in the line this is one of the few full freshly cooked meals they are able to eat every week. CWOW is a charity that offers free warm meals to the homeless, and anyone else who is hungry, once a week. CWOW has been holding free buffets at the Hanuman Dhoka for more than a year and feeds over 300 people at one go.

The organisation was founded in 2006 by Shrawan Nepali in San Francisco where he opened a soup kitchen for the hungry in the city. Local businessman, Hem Ratna Shakya, would volunteer with Nepali whenever he visited the US and decided to begin the initiative here.

“The smile on the faces of our guests here motivates us to keep going,” says Shakya. The weekly cost of CWOW is Rs 16,000. Anyone who is willing to contribute money or labour is welcome.

www.currywithoutworry.com
+977 1 4229475
American by birth, Sherpani at heart
Caryl Sherpa finds love and a new family in the heartland of the Himalaya

M ore than 20 years ago at Bhote Odar, Caryl Sherpa feels she suddenly found the clarity she was searching for in her life when she met her guide, Nima. And two days into her trek of the Annapurna circuit she promises herself: “I will marry Nima Gyelgen Sherpa.”

Caryl’s book, I taste fire, earth, rain: elements of a life with a Sherpa traces Caryl and Nima Sherpa’s journey as they crosscriss the Annapurna, Los Angeles, Michigan and Solukhumbu and learn to reconcile their two worlds.

The memoir picks up in the spring of 1991, when 39-year-old Caryl leaves behind her posh home, difficult job and has strong faith, Caryl is restless, full of doubts and searching for a sense of purpose and in desperate need of change. Once on the trail, she quickly befriends one of her guides, Nima. While Nima is calm, assured and has strong faith, Caryl is restless, full of doubts and skeptical. Despite the language barrier and cultural divide, the two are instantly attracted to each other and risk a relationship.

While a large part of the book is devoted to stories about their love and marriage, Caryl also delves into the more serious issues of cross-cultural unions and the frustrations they experienced while adjusting to a world that did not fully accept Nima nor understood her feelings.

“Nima is wise, has been through some tough experiences and like other Sherpas was very adaptable. But it was still a very alienating environment for him and the way he dressed, or spoke, his lack of formal education, his rough edges made him an outsider. Sometimes people who want to emigrate to the US only see the money and opportunities, and fail to realise that it can be very difficult,” Caryl explained.

For readers who are unfamiliar with Nepal’s topography, Caryl describes the Brahmin, Gurung and Tibetan villages that she passes through on her way to Thorung La and Kala Pattar in meticulous detail. Her understanding of Sherpa culture and explanations of their customs and rituals will also fascinate and educate even Sherpas.

When asked about her first impressions of Nepal, Caryl told us in Kathmandu last week, she was amazed how despite the poverty, the Nepalis she met found joy in simple pleasures and their deep commitment towards their faith. Two decades later, she finds the country is almost unrecognisable: “When I came here in 1991, there were very few tourists and we used to camp out on the river banks. Today there are big, fancy lodges even in the Khumbu, and there is a road around the Annapurna circuit.”

After almost 20 years in the US, the Sherpas are now back in Kathmandu and preparing to settle permanently in Nima’s hometown in Solukhumbu. Caryl who took 15 years to complete her first book while working full-time, wants to dedicate more of her time to writing. She told the Nepali Times, “I have plenty of free time now and living in the foothills of Himalayas will definitely boost my creativity.” The couple is currently busy traveling back and forth from Kathmandu to Solukhumbu, making arrangements for their new home and planning to open a retreat for artists and writers near Namche Bazar.

Although Caryl says she misses her family in the US and might struggle to get through Nepali winters in cement houses with no central heating, she feels at home and is ready to start her life as a Sherpani.


SINGMA FOOD COURT. for the best Singaporean and Malaysian cuisine in town, Pulnhok, 5009692 and DhotiThali, 4411078.

Vesper Café, has quaint outdoor patio good for tastefully weekend brunch. Serves good salads, and steak-wraps. Jharmikhel

BRONCO BILLY. a new restaurant in town offering Tex-Mex and Indian dishes. They make their own corn tortillas, which gets a big thumbs-up. Pulnhok, opposite Namaste Supermarket

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

GETAWAYS

The Borderslands Eco Adventure Resorts, set in the mighty Bhole Kosi, try a canyon descent, or an off-the-beaten trek to a hidden monastery. Call 4700894

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

The Last Resort, be a part of the Bungy or Swing Jump Event over the Bhole Kosi river 160 metres below or mountain bike up to the Tibetan border. The Last Resort Sales Office, Mandalay Street, Thamel. 4700925

Fulbari Resort, enjoy the scenic view as you pamper yourself with tennis, golf, drinks and dinners. Rs 6500 per person for 2 nights and 3 days. Call 4461918, 4462248

SOMEPLACE ELSE

SOMEDAY ELSE, huge breakfasts and a never-ending supply of coffee amidst a lush garden setting characterise the café, popular among tourists and locals alike. Narali, 4242303

HANKOK SARANG, from Bimbab to Samgepeal, Hankok offers a wide range of Korean delicacies at affordable prices. Thamel

Jazoo, a quiet place ideal for beer and relaxing conversation. Bring a friend and enjoy the special barbeque set for a mix of everything. Jjawalilek (near the zoo), 553821

SAINI HOTELS, huge breakfasts and a never-ending supply of coffee amidst a lush garden setting characterise the café, popular among tourists and locals alike. Narali, 4242303

Day 40

The Climate Smart Trek led by Apa Sherpa arrived at Barhabise, Sinduphulchowk today, completing 530km (40 days) of its 710km long trek (120 days) on the Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) to raise awareness on Climate Change in the Himalayas, and to promote the development of the GHT to build the climate resilience in Nepal’s most vulnerable communities.

On the occasion Apa Sherpa said, “I have a message for my fellow Nepalis. Climate Change destroyed most of my property back in the Dhy Tcho Glaci Lake outburst of 1985. I successfully climbed Mt Everest for the first time in 1990, and since then I have scaled 21 times in 21 years. Tourism gave me back my life.” The pro-poor sustainable development GHT project aims to address the impacts of Climate Change in the Himalayas.

The core GHT-CSCT team, which includes Apa Sherpa (21 times Mt. Everest summiteer), Dawa Steven Sherpa (Mountaineer and Climate ambassador), Saurav Dhakal (British Council International Climate Champion and journalist) and Samir Jung Thapa (photographer) began its journey on 15 January 2012.

On Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/climatesmarttrek
Follow on Twitter: @TheGHT_Nepal
http://www.climatesmarttrek.org/np

The Indian chef and host of the popular cooking show Khana Khazana characterises his Pashtun heritage. His signature from Kapoor’s televised compendium, showcasing the colours and flavours of North Indian specialties and chaatwala-inspired dishes, indicated by his silhouette, were seen in his sweets, as to be expected. Kesari Kulfi with Rabdi (Rs 650!) make an apparent “sugar-free,” was a toothsome dessert where the saffron married well with the homemade ice cream.

Khan’s Shabnam ke Moti (Rs 510) promises “mushroom caps overflowing with cream cheese and a subtle touch of blue cheese cooked to a golden hue in the tandoor,” but what was tabled was something more like a skewered cream of mushroom. The mushrooms were tender and generous but the blue cheese was indeed subtle. Khan’s Seekh (Rs 650) advertised as the “Chef Special” and “the softest seekh kebab you’ll ever have” were quite different from Kapoor’s kebabs as televised in a September 2011 episode. Preparations may be different from the kitchen and the tandoor, and perhaps, watching Kapoor makes the food seem just more appetising. The minced chicken

that enveloped the panner stuffing was hardly traceable. Shaam Savaer (Rs 650) the restaurant’s “signature preparation of spinach koftas filled with panner served floating in a velvity makhni gravy” sounds divine. But sad to say, the gravy tasted like treacle and the panner was graniry.

Beverage-wise, the Peach Iced Tea (Rs 140) and the frozen Margarita mocktail were heavy on concentrate and required diluting.

Kapoor’s saving grace, aside from its attentive service and comfortable setting, was in his sweets, as to be expected. Kesar Kuli with Rabdi (Rs 225), apparently “sugar-free,” was a toothsome dessert where the saffron married well with the homemade ice cream. It appears that the Nepali extension of the streamlined chain may have been hasty and may have assumed that an Indian satellite would more or less sit well with the upcountry neighbour. For what is served, prices could better accommodate and the menu could be tweaked to suit the Nepali tongue and taste bud. But to be fair, the description of gulio bhat in parentheses and the addition of steamed chicken momos (Rs 600) was an attempt.

Kapoor’s saving grace, aside from its attentive service and comfortable setting, was in his sweets, as to be expected. Kesar Kuli with Rabdi (Rs 225), apparently “sugar-free,” was a toothsome dessert where the saffron married well with the homemade ice cream. It appears that the Nepali extension of the streamlined chain may have been hasty and may have assumed that an Indian satellite would more or less sit well with the upcountry neighbour. For what is served, prices could better accommodate and the menu could be tweaked to suit the Nepali tongue and taste bud. But to be fair, the description of gulio bhat in parentheses and the addition of steamed chicken momos (Rs 600) was an attempt.

On Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/climatesmarttrek
Follow on Twitter: @TheGHT_Nepal
http://www.climatesmarttrek.org/np

Day 40

T

he Climate Smart Trek led by Apa Sherpa arrived at Barhabise, Sinduphulchowk today, completing 530km (40 days) of its 710km long trek (120 days) on the Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) to raise awareness on Climate Change in the Himalayas, and to promote the development of the GHT to build the climate resilience in Nepal’s most vulnerable communities.

On the occasion Apa Sherpa said, “I have a message for my fellow Nepalis. Climate Change destroyed most of my property back in the Dhy Tcho Glaci Lake outburst of 1985. I successfully climbed Mt Everest for the first time in 1990, and since then I have scaled 21 times in 21 years. Tourism gave me back my life.” The pro-poor sustainable development GHT project aims to address the impacts of Climate Change in the Himalayas.

The core GHT-CSCT team, which includes Apa Sherpa (21 times Mt. Everest summiteer), Dawa Steven Sherpa (Mountaineer and Climate ambassador), Saurav Dhakal (British Council International Climate Champion and journalist) and Samir Jung Thapa (photographer) began its journey on 15 January 2012.

On Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/climatesmarttrek
Follow on Twitter: @TheGHT_Nepal
http://www.climatesmarttrek.org/np

The Indian chef and host of the popular cooking show Khana Khazana characterises his Pashtun heritage. His signature from Kapoor’s televised compendium, showcasing the colours and flavours of North Indian specialties and chaatwala-inspired dishes, indicated by his silhouette, were seen in his sweets, as to be expected. Kesari Kulfi with Rabdi (Rs 650!) make an apparent “sugar-free,” was a toothsome dessert where the saffron married well with the homemade ice cream. It appears that the Nepali extension of the streamlined chain may have been hasty and may have assumed that an Indian satellite would more or less sit well with the upcountry neighbour. For what is served, prices could better accommodate and the menu could be tweaked to suit the Nepali tongue and taste bud. But to be fair, the description of gulio bhat in parentheses and the addition of steamed chicken momos (Rs 600) was an attempt.

Kapoor’s saving grace, aside from its attentive service and comfortable setting, was in his sweets, as to be expected. Kesar Kuli with Rabdi (Rs 225), apparently “sugar-free,” was a toothsome dessert where the saffron married well with the homemade ice cream. It appears that the Nepali extension of the streamlined chain may have been hasty and may have assumed that an Indian satellite would more or less sit well with the upcountry neighbour. For what is served, prices could better accommodate and the menu could be tweaked to suit the Nepali tongue and taste bud. But to be fair, the description of gulio bhat in parentheses and the addition of steamed chicken momos (Rs 600) was an attempt.

Kapoor’s saving grace, aside from its attentive service and comfortable setting, was in his sweets, as to be expected. Kesar Kuli with Rabdi (Rs 225), apparently “sugar-free,” was a toothsome dessert where the saffron married well with the homemade ice cream. It appears that the Nepali extension of the streamlined chain may have been hasty and may have assumed that an Indian satellite would more or less sit well with the upcountry neighbour. For what is served, prices could better accommodate and the menu could be tweaked to suit the Nepali tongue and taste bud. But to be fair, the description of gulio bhat in parentheses and the addition of steamed chicken momos (Rs 600) was an attempt.

Kapoor’s saving grace, aside from its attentive service and comfortable setting, was in his sweets, as to be expected. Kesar Kuli with Rabdi (Rs 225), apparently “sugar-free,” was a toothsome dessert where the saffron married well with the homemade ice cream. It appears that the Nepali extension of the streamlined chain may have been hasty and may have assumed that an Indian satellite would more or less sit well with the upcountry neighbour. For what is served, prices could better accommodate and the menu could be tweaked to suit the Nepali tongue and taste bud. But to be fair, the description of gulio bhat in parentheses and the addition of steamed chicken momos (Rs 600) was an attempt.

Kapoor’s saving grace, aside from its attentive service and comfortable setting, was in his sweets, as to be expected. Kesar Kuli with Rabdi (Rs 225), apparently “sugar-free,” was a toothsome dessert where the saffron married well with the homemade ice cream. It appears that the Nepali extension of the streamlined chain may have been hasty and may have assumed that an Indian satellite would more or less sit well with the upcountry neighbour. For what is served, prices could better accommodate and the menu could be tweaked to suit the Nepali tongue and taste bud. But to be fair, the description of gulio bhat in parentheses and the addition of steamed chicken momos (Rs 600) was an attempt.
Cave of Forgotten Dreams

Despite these challenges Herzog, as usual, has made an amazing film. The cave paintings of Chauvet are dramatic in themselves, but Herzog has somehow turned his disadvantage into advantages with his narration, which is full of philosophical wonder at the epic gap in our knowledge between us and the Cro-magnons who painted these powerful renderings of lions, bulls, pre-historic wooly rhinos in the haunting, dark interior of the cave. Herzog uses the camera to drift and wander around the cave for long minutes allowing us to wonder and marvel at the paintings which are underscored by orchestral music that is both melodic and evocative. Finally, the other exceptional, aspect of this film is that Herzog chose to film it in 3D.

Another film-maker might not have had the patience or the experience to succeed with this kind of technology in such an environment, but Herzog and his team are able to create a breathtaking film that allows the viewers to feel like they are in this most mysterious of caves themselves.

Hidden hunger

Prompted by massive advertisement campaigns, sales of instant noodles and fizzy drinks have skyrocketed in Nepal. Among the world’s 7 billion people, 3 billion either eat too little, too much, or unhealthily. It is easy to detect when people are severely lacking calories because they will appear “marasmic” (chronic starvation). When people are obese, the effects are all too obvious as well. But it is “hidden” starvation (the group that eats unhealthily) that may go unnoticed.

If a nutrition survey is done in a Nepali village, it is likely to show a high degree of malnourishment. Many people are just barely healthy, which predisposes them to illnesses. People may not appear to be starving, but the “hidden” hunger is taking its toll. More than 160 million children in developing countries suffer from vitamin A deficiency, and many are afflicted by night blindness and even permanent visual problems. Iodine deficiency, which causes goiter and developmental disabilities affects 18 million babies each year. It used to be a significant problem in the Khumbu region in Nepal, when iodine-deficient salt was “yaked in” from Tibet, but nowadays thanks to iodine- enriched salt, goitre and mental problems are much less common in that area. (Interestingly, with the decrease in goiter cases, fewer Nepalis are superconveniently blowing into their hands after touching their neck to ward off goitre).

In 2008 as part of the Copenhagen declaration, eight eminent economists were asked to propose plans that would be most beneficial for humanity. Half of them recommended proper nutrition. For young people planning exciting careers, a useful and satisfying future may lie in being a nutritionist to help deal with the world’s problems.

Pina

Oddly enough, yet another German film-maker of the same era, Wim Wenders, has also created a fantastic documentary, also in 3D, about the famous choreographer and dancer Pina Bausch. In Pina, Wenders uses the camera in a fluid floating manner that allows the dancers a measure of freedom of movement that is impossible with a more static camera. Wenders’ amazing pieces come to life in this film that, along with Herzog’s, the pushes the boundaries of what we have come to accept as conventional cinema. Movies are still young, a little with Herzog’s, push the boundaries of what we have come to accept. Finally, the other exceptional, aspect of this film is that Herzog chose to film it in 3D.

LEAPING HIGH: Winner of the 100m hurdle, female, Arati Pathak of Nepal Police Club, jumps to the finish line during the sixth National Games in Dhangadi on Wednesday.
Knotting for Nepal

A woman’s personal hobby is helping others become self-sufficient and preserve traditional weaving skills

BHRIKUTI RAI

During a time when Nepali women had few economic and educational opportunities 30 years ago, Shyam Badan Shrestha gathered Rs 200, built a small workshop in her house and started making knotted handicrafts along with two friends.

That was the humble beginning of Nepal Knotcraft Centre, the country’s first showroom for knotted products and bamboo furniture.

After working as a teacher for 13 years, Shrestha’s foray into handicraft making was largely trial and error. “I was interested in macramé from an early age, but I had no formal training,” she recalls, “so I read a lot of books and taught myself the art of knotting.” She started by making small items and began experimenting with different materials like cotton, hemp and yarn when she gained confidence.

Today, the Centre produces a wide range of knotted goods such as hammocks, purses, belts, and decoration pieces at its factory in Patan Industrial Estate. Interestingly, ethnic dolls made of husk are one of the hottest commodities in the Kupondole outlet. Shrestha says she was inspired to experiment with cornhusk due to the Indian embargo of 1990 and 1991 when there was a severe shortage of cotton twine.

During this time she also discovered indigenous weaving traditions practiced by Nepali women from diverse communities who had the expertise, but lacked technical knowledge and resources to use their skills to earn an income.

Nepal Knotcraft teaches local women’s groups to blend their indigenous weaving techniques with contemporary styles. By the end of the training, the women are sent not just with the know-how, but a market for their handicrafts. This initiative has not only made them more socially and financially independent, but increased their interest in preserving their art and passing it to the younger generations.

The journey has been challenging. In 2007, the factory was shut down due to labor and liquidity and, although business resumed after two years, Shrestha says starting over was difficult because many skilled artisans from the company migrated abroad for work.

Now, Nepal Knotcraft is struggling to compete with cheap, synthetic Chinese products which have flooded the market. But Shrestha is confident that increasing preference among urban Nepalis for eco-friendly lifestyles will make handicraft goods a household staple in the next 10 years.

Still, Shrestha is content and optimistic. She says, “The future of the industry depends on how well we tap into the country’s abundant natural resources. If we can replace imported raw materials with local ones and develop research facilities, the handicrafts sector will take off in a big way.”

www.knotcraft.com.np

Sewing a social safety net

Reena Rai has decided to dedicate her life to helping other women like her to be independent with skills training

HARIDEVI ROKAYA

The small single-storied house in Gyaneswor is abuzz with the continuous clatter of sewing machines. Inside the home, poor women with difficult family lives are being trained in tailoring and other skills.

Women’s Advancement and Skill Development Centre which manages the home has not only helped the women overcome personal and social obstacles, but also made them financially independent.

Among the group is 16 year old Sushmita Subedi who is learning to be a tailor. Before coming to Kathmandu, she worked as a domestic helper to support her family of eight and injured her hand in the process. She says: “When I worked as a servant, people ridiculed me and I was scolded whenever I took a day off.”

Fatima Subedi, 18, shares a similar background. After completing tenth grade, she was forced into marriage and recalls being regularly abused by her alcoholic husband. Karki, who has two children, was desperate to make ends meet selling vegetables.

Opening a toy store in Kathmandu didn’t improve her economic position either. Following her sister’s advice she joined the centre, learned to sew and now earns a reasonable income.

When Deepa Rai from Solukhumbu started her tailoring shop, her husband was opposed to it. Today Rai is a respected earning member of her family and says her husband is more supportive.

Before coming to Kathmandu, Anju Poudel worked 12 hours daily at a garment factory in Birganj, where she earned Rs 2,000 and struggled to get by. Opening a toy store in Kathmandu didn’t improve her economic position either. Following her sister’s advice she joined the centre, learned to sew and now earns a reasonable income.

Like the women at the centre, Chairperson Reena Rai, too had humble beginnings. She started her career as a tailor, worked as an instructor for a while and then went on to establish the first women’s centre in her home district of Makwanpur. A tailoring graduate, Rai says she started the centre because she wanted to impart her skills and encourage women in her village to seek economic independence. Until now Rai and her staff have trained 11,000 women from diverse classes and ethnicities.

However, she is disappointed by the apathy and negligence of the state and private sector and disheartened to see skilled women staying idle at home without work or income. Many of the women she trains don’t have the capital to start their own ventures. Subsistence doesn’t even have the money to buy pieces of cloth to practice on.

Rai, “I wish the government or NGOs would help them financially at least during the initial stages. But so far no one has shown any interest.”

[For more information call 4412840]
They don’t count,

No one knows how many Nepalis work in India, nor is there a reliable estimate about how much money they send home.

A bhishek Mandal, 28, leaves his apartment in Tilak Nagar in New Delhi, India, at midnight, and drives to his office Quatro Global Service in Gurgaon of Haryana state where he works as a diagnostic expert.

Asif Ali, 29, who works for IBM Global has a similar routine. Both Abhishek and Asif came to New Delhi from Biratnagar in eastern Nepal in search of a better life, and after years of struggle they both make a comfortable living.

Abhishek owns property in India and sends money regularly to his family. Asif educates his younger brother and sister at his own expense. His mother, Aamna, and sister, Nazia, now live with him in Delhi.

Abhishek and Asif do not fit the stereotype of Nepali workers in India, who are usually gatekeepers, waiters or farmhands. Different studies estimate the number of Nepalis in India to be between 1 and 1.6 million. It is even more difficult to calculate the amount of money they send home every year. The figure of Nepal’s annual remittance earnings of $2 billion totals money Nepali workers wire home from the Gulf, Malaysia, Japan, and Korea, but does not include India.

Usually domestic labour market conditions determine migration trends, but in Nepal’s case, simple push and pull theory may not sufficiently explain such a huge flux of labour. Rising unemployment at home, geographical accessibility, affinity with the local language, culture and laws, and the open border, have certainly driven millions of Nepalis to India but the nature of the workforce they enter into is different. Although seasonal unskilled labourers make up a sizable number of Nepalis working in India, there are semi-skilled permanent job holders in various government and private institutions.

Historically, Nepalis have dominated the security profession. Tens of thousands of Nepali workers in the Indian Army and paramilitary forces (again, there is no exact count). Recently, private security companies have been hiring Nepali guards. Young Nepali boys are sought after in restaurants and hotels, and after the turnaround in Bihar, Nepalis have replaced Biharis in Punjab’s farms.

The lack of jobs in Nepal has also forced thousands of students in India to stay on after studies to find jobs there. Keshav Bashyal, who is doing his doctorate research from JNU on Nepali migrant workers told the Nepali Times: “There are people who are doing well in India with their creativity and hard work. Unfortunately, Nepal has not been able to entice them home.”

Besides the loss of skilled manpower, the lack of information and unsystematic migration to India have put Nepalis at risk. Nepali domestic workers are often mistreated and exploited, and successive governments in Nepal have been unable to control trafficking of young Nepali workers.

A s the feverish election campaign in Uttar Pradesh winds down, there’s only one question that is being asked around the city: is Mulayam Singh Yadav’s Samajwadi Party going to oust Dalit messiah and Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawati from the throne of Uttar Pradesh?

The stakes are enormous. The reason Uttar Pradesh lies at the heart of India’s politics is because the state’s nearly 200 million population elects as many as 403 members to the state assembly, and significantly, sends as many as 80 people (out of 545) to the federal parliament. In this case, the numbers are so overwhelming that nothing else in the country comes close. Uttar Pradesh also has a 600 km open border with Nepal, and what happens here with the Dalit identity and the fate of the Congress party always has an impact across the border.

Besides Yadav’s home-spun rhetoric and Mayawati’s ability to rouse up the state’s Dalit population to passionate zeal, there is Congress dynast Rahul Gandhi’s experiment with the thrut and party of state-level politics.

Even on the road, Gandhi looks a bit like a movie star, with his angular good looks set off by the ubiquitous white khadi kurti-pajama. Patil is the uniform of the average Congressmen, completed by a set of running shoes.

He is a huge curiosity considering several generations of Gandhi-Nehrus have stood from the Amethi constituency in Uttar Pradesh.

But the party has been routed right across the Indo-Gangetic plains for the last decades, ever since it mutely witnessed the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992. Simultaneously, as the genie of caste politics neatly divided up the state, the Congress was simply unable to provide either the leadership or the politics to overcome the challenge.

It became an embarrassing also-ran, lying in the ground for the last 20 years, even as the world – and India – changed.

By most accounts the Congress and the right-wing Bhartiya Janata Party are vying for the third slot in UP’s electoral race. Dalit leader Mayawati is backed by the solid clout of the Dalit vote, although it is a moot point that some of that vote-bank is also split. Clearly, the rainbow coalition that she had so successfully created in the last election, comprising the upper as well as the lower castes, has wilted. This has left Mayawati fighting with her back to the wall.

As for the Samajwadi Party, the reins are slowly being taken over by Mulayam Singh’s son, Akhilesh Yadav, member of parliament from Kannauj. Where Mulayam had once openly spoken out against the English language, son Akhilesh has sought to move the party into a new era by personally using a tablet computer.

Still, none of UP’s major leaders can match the vision and the leadership shown by the chief minister of Bihar next door, Nitish Kumar, who is in alliance with the right-wing Bhartiya Janata Party in the state but refuses to let Narendra Modi step into his province. Kumar, whose credentials as a socialist leader are impeccable, says he will not get into a sling match with Modi or his creed. That only further builds up the people’s respect.

Certainly, by improving the state’s notoriously infamous indices on female and child mortality, Kumar has shown himself to be a leader not only of national stature but also someone who can be an example to all of South Asia.

Earlier in the month, his invitation to Nepal’s prime minister Baburam Bhattarai, to attend the Bihar Global Summit as the chief guest, was received with great admiration as far away as the capital, Delhi.

Interestingly, Narendra Modi may be an outsider in Bihar, but he is being welcomed in Nepal next week for a business conclave.

UP’s politicians would do well to take a leaf out of Nitish Kumar’s book; once they settle down to governing. Mandates are precious things and must be treated with utmost respect. Even in the poorest parts of the subcontinent, one thing is already clear: if the rulers don’t listen to the voice of the people, they will be changed by the people.
A beautiful mind

Shanti Shrestha came to India from Dhangadi in 1984 when she was just 24, as a beautician trainee. She has now opened her own saloon in Delhi's South Extension.

She began in a small basement in 2000, and now runs a chain of five ‘Hair and Shanti’ saloons in different parts the Indian capital. “It has been difficult trying to make a living in a foreign country,” says Shanti, “I did not understand the language and was often humiliated but it has all worked out.”

Her partner in business and in life, Narayan (seen above with then minister Shashi Tharoor), is proud of his wife’s success. “It is through her hard work and determination that we have achieved what we have,” he says admiringly.

“We will soon be expanding to 20 more places and in the next three years plan to spread the chain all over India.”

women to brothels and boys for circuses and work in dangerous jobs like the firecracker industry. The estimate of Nepali sex workers in India varies from 25,000-250,000, but no one knows for sure.

Piyush, 14, works at a roadside eatery near Delhi’s Nizamuddin Railway Station. He ran away from his home in Gulmi district last year when his mother remarried after his father’s death. “I didn’t want to live with him so I ran away,” says the sixth grader. A plucky young boy, Piyush says he wants to earn some money and go back to Nepal.

Dil Bahadur Mahara, 39, from Dang works in an Indian restaurant in Tilak Nagar in Delhi and says he is happy with his job there. “People are good to me, and I manage to save Rs 5,000 every month and send it home to my old parents and son.”

Hundreds of thousands of Nepalis like Dil Bahadur don’t count because they are not counted. Ganesh Gurung of Nepal Institute of Development Studies feels the government has disowned the Nepalis who work in India and believes the 1950 treaty is detrimental for the immigrant community, because while it allows free movement across the border, it lets Kathmandu wash its hands of the responsibility towards its citizens.

“How can protecting your citizens be at odds with your friendship with India?” asks Gurung. “Regulating the Indo-Nepal border will not create unemployment problem in Nepal, in fact it will make migration to India systematic through record keeping and help the state keep track of its citizens in India, reducing their vulnerability.”

(Some names have been changed.)

PICS: ANURAG ACHARYA

Surya Nepal Masters 2012
Gokarna Forest Resort, Kathmandu
13th - 17th March, 2012

BOEBSFVODPVOUFE
‘We should rise above ethnic and class sentiments’

Interview with Mohan Baidya, vice president UCPN-M Himal Khabarpatrika, 13 March

You are considered Pushpa Kamal Dahal’s mentor. Who is leading the party, the mentor or the disciple?

Mohan Baidya: Let’s not get into the teacher-student relation. He is our party president. He has his own ideals while I have my own. The party’s official line is decided through dialogue.

What is the party’s official line now?

We are in favour of writing a pro-people constitution and concluding the peace process quickly. Although we know there is no alternative to revolution if the peace process and constitution drafting fails, we will not campaign against the party anywhere.

Are you in favour of extending the CA term or a people’s revolt?

I cannot inspire or postpone a revolt according to my will. But I am sure people won’t accept the new constitution if it does not guarantee their rights.

You have said that the armed revolution is incomplete. Are you planning to re-launch it?

Revolutionary movements need to evaluate the situation and adapt to different circumstances. The same modus operandi does not work time and again. We have also adjusted our goals keeping in mind the current situation.

The Maoists joined parliamentary forces when the insurgency failed. Why haven’t they transformed into a democratic force yet?

We joined the parliamentary forces to oppose and fight against the monarchy. In my opinion, the joint movement was the right move, but the party should not have surrendered completely.

Does it mean the Maoists have been trampled by the parliamentary forces?

Not quite, but they have become dominant.

Do you think the ongoing debate on ethnic states has sprung out of people’s awareness about their rights and country’s geopolitical situation?

We raised the ethnic issue to address existing inequalities, not to divide the country. But there are pitfalls. We should rise above ethnic and class sentiments.

How do you assess the performance of this government?

This government has compromised the integration process and hurt the sentiments of our ex-combatants in the cantonments. Even the decision to legalise war-time land transactions was withdrawn under the pressure of the opposition. This has dampened the party’s image in front of the public.

Dead and forgotten

Santosh Yadav, Sahara Times, 13 February

Every year on 18 Magh, CPN-UML Siraha mourns the death of its leader, Hem Narayan Yadav who was killed eight years ago during Gyanendra Shah’s dictatorial regime. Yadav, a UML MP from Siraha, was abducted in broad daylight and killed because he challenged army officer Babu Krishna Karki’s abuse. Standing over Narayan’s corpse UML leader Madhav Nepal made lofty promises of punishing the guilty. But justice for Yadav and his family remains elusive even after two UML led governments. Due to the apathy shown by the leadership, Yadav’s wife and son severed all ties with the party last year and they were absent from the program this year. Although the UML nominated Yadav’s wife into the parliament to engage the family and secure compensation for them, the family was not after monetary gain. They wanted justice, but the government only humiliated them further by promoting Karki and letting him walk free.

John Players

Premium men’s wear from
SURYA NEPAL PRIVATE LIMITED

- Offer available in Select Outlets from 24th Magh 2068 (7th February 2012).
Interview with Nilamber Acharya, Chairperson of the Constitutional Committee in Naya Patrika, 26 February

The February 3 deadline for resolving contentious issues in the constitution is fast approaching. Will we be able to meet the deadline? Since the rules have not been amended yet, the CA cannot even present its suggestions on the SRC’s report to the Constitutional Committee by that time. A working committee was formed to look into that matter, but due to the problems within the SRC, the process is stuck.

At this pace, how can we draft the constitution in three months? Except extending the deadline and altering the work-plans, we have done nothing concrete so far. This is not going to help. Unless we clean up our acts there is no way this constitution will be written in three months.

Are the problems only related to constitution making or are there other issues like relations between the parties and the peace process? There is a definite trust deficit among the parties. Look at how they have been making unilateral decisions on issues related to the peace process. No one has bothered to follow past agreements. Everyone wants to get ahead in the race by pushing away others. All this has delayed constitution writing. If we want consensus, the parties must forge better relations among themselves and come to a quick understanding.

Are you saying we need a government of national consensus? Of course. We need a strong government that can make decisions. Politicians are talking about a fast track path to the constitution. Can the constitution be introduced by sidestepping state restructuring for the moment? The mandate is to create the constitution of a federal democratic republic. There can’t be a constitution without federalism in federal Nepal.

Cost per copy service is the exclusive service provided by Mercantile Traders for your imaging need.

This exclusive service is with the purchase of new machine or on the rental basis.

**BENEFITS:**
- Spend ZERO on:
  - Stock – Toner
  - Maintenance kit
  - Preventive maintenance
  - Transportation (To and from Service Center)
- CPC Rental provides additional benefits to the company:
  - No Capital Asset or Liening Residual Value
  - Monthly FREE volume included on the payment.

**TASKalfa 180**

For further details: Please call us at 4230773 or email us at info_mts@mts.com.np

Authorized Distributor: Mercantile Traders

Mercantile Budhichok, Kirtipur, Kathmandu
Tel: 4230773, 4243566 Fax: 4259407 Email: info-mts@mts.com.np

---

Cost of a healthy life begins with a healthy gut. Improve Digestion, Boost Immunity, and feel great with a gut-friendly probiotic. Don’t let digestive issues hold you back. Explore today’s featured digestive solutions and unlock a healthier you. Click here to learn more.
The dumbest smartphones in the world

Just like we needed foreign experts to certify the height of the world’s shortest man, it looks like we need foreigners to help us with certifying the true height of Mt Everest. As the news went around the world this week that Nepal now had the world’s littlest human being and the world’s highest mountain, I guess the only headline we’d like to see next week is: ‘World’s Shortest Man to Climb the World’s Highest Mountain’.

What’s with our obsession with the Guinness Book of World Records anyway, this country needs to see a shrink. Nepal is in grave danger of getting into the Guinness Book of World Records anyway, this country needs to see a shrink. Nepal is in grave danger of getting into the Guinness Book of World Records anyway, this country needs to see a shrink. Nepal is in grave danger of getting into the Guinness Book of World Records anyway, this country needs to see a shrink.

‘World’s Shortest Man to Climb the World’s Highest Mountain’.

As one district after another starts declaring itself ‘no open defecation zone’, the Ass’ first reaction when Sunsari became the latest to bite the dust was: ‘No shit!’ But does this mean Sunsari-bazi’s no longer have to put up with the open verbal diarrhoea emanating from Minister Gutch and SuzieQ anymore?

Nepal is now in strong competition with the Australians in intra-party back-stabbing. But the Ozzies have a lot of catching up to do. Comrade KP Oily looked thrilled when his Kamreds threw in a surprise birthday bash at United Trade Center the other day. JNK was also there, so was MKD. And it was quite painfully apparent that the love triangle within the eh-Maley party is getting tangled again. Makunay expressed unconditional love for the birthday boy, but Kamred Goli was fluttering his eyelids rather flirtatiously at Irol Gnat and ignoring his ex.

The happiest man after Minister for Craft and Corruption Jay Pee was sent to the gallows was none other than our very own Upadro Yadav. His supporters went around distributing laddus in celebration and there were fireworks over Tarai town. Gupta Sir’s supporters tried to light a few tyres in protest of his anti-Madhesi discrimination, but it got no traction because anti-Madhesi discrimination, but it got no traction because anti-Madhesi discrimination, but it got no traction because anti-Madhesi discrimination, but it got no traction because anti-Madhesi discrimination, but it got no traction because.

Meanwhile, BRB has instructed Balu Water watchers found that razing buildings on the Lazimpat road “by mid-May”. Meanwhile, BRB has instructed Balu Water watchers found that razing buildings on the Lazimpat road “by mid-May”. Meanwhile, BRB has instructed Balu Water watchers found that razing buildings on the Lazimpat road “by mid-May”. Meanwhile, BRB has instructed Balu Water watchers found that razing buildings on the Lazimpat road “by mid-May”. Meanwhile, BRB has instructed Balu Water watchers found that razing buildings on the Lazimpat road “by mid-May”. Meanwhile, BRB has instructed Balu Water watchers found that razing buildings on the Lazimpat road “by mid-May”. Meanwhile, BRB has instructed Balu Water watchers found that razing buildings on the Lazimpat road “by mid-May”.

The happiest man after Minister for Deforestation has been on the take, keeping his hands very busy under the table. The guy’s luck ran out this week when CIAA sleuths working undercover caught him inflagrante having his palms greased. The ministerial PA who was the middleman is now employing the JP formula to demand that Chairman of the Interministerial Investigation Unit hand them back their stolen allowances.

Kathmandu’s Finest sure has its priorities right. The day after a terrorist killed three outside the NOC, our ever-vigilant cops were out in force apprehending jaywalkers at Baber Mahal, and fining people not wearing seatbells in a traffic jam. They deserve a place in the Guinness Book.