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Transitional injustice

Prime Minister Bhattarai has argued that violence perpetrated during the conflict were political in nature, and in the past year he has pardoned 1,715 Maoist cadre involved in atrocities. Bhattarai says digging up war crimes will endanger the peace process. Actually, not investigating them will ensure that the wounds of war never heal.

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Get used to it
by Damakant Jayshi

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by Anurag Acharya

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SICK CITY

Kathmandu Valley's air pollution has topped safety thresholds this winter. If you breathe you die, if you don't breathe you die.

page 12-13



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Among the most iconic images of the Nepal conflict is the photograph of a woman embracing the body of her dead husband on a blood-stained battlefield littered with the bodies of policemen executed after capture. Grisly as this picture is, it is another photo from Dailekh of a young girl with tears streaming down her cheek (*below, right*) that is even more searing.

The girl is weeping silently as her mother tells a press conference in Kathmandu in 2004 about the disappearance of her father, radio journalist Dekendra Thapa. The girl's story would have been forgotten had it not been for the personal crusade for justice of her mother Laxmi, Dailekh journalists, and human rights activists. Nearly seven years after the war ended, a courageous district police inspector doggedly pursued the case and finally arrested four of

conflict was raging, to find her husband and punish the guilty. The burial site was finally found, and forensic examination showed that Dekendra's mouth was wide open when he died, his femur and elbow were broken, evidence of having being buried alive after severe torture.

The case filed with the police languished for eight years, no one dared investigate as the former rebels went on to win elections and come to power. Finally, it was Inspector Binod Sharma who had the courage to investigate and follow the trail to the house of Lachhiram Gharti, who confessed to being ordered to torture Dekendra. Gharti readily agreed to be arrested, saying he had been consumed by guilt and haunted by Dekendra's ghost ever since he buried the journalist while his heart was still beating.

rape, and extra-judicial killings will ever be tried. In fact, Bhattarai promoted the Army's head of the Bhairabnath Battalion, and the policeman involved in the death during torture of Maoist journalist Krishna Sen. Since he came to power, Bhattarai has dismissed more than 100 cases involving 1,715 cadre accused of atrocities.

Prime Minister Bhattarai has argued that violence perpetrated during the conflict was political in nature and should be addressed by a future Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However, his draft of the TRC Bill that is languishing on the president's desk is a toothless farce. Bhattarai's dirty tricks department is handled by his hand-picked Attorney General Pradhan, but the buck still stops at Baluwatar.

Bhattarai says digging up war crimes will endanger the peace process. Actually, not investigating them will



TRANSITIONAL INJUSTICE

Not investigating war crimes ensures that conflict wounds never heal, and violence will continue in a climate of impunity



those involved in the torture and murder of the girl's father, Dekendra Thapa (*above*). This case has become emblematic of the unpunished crimes committed by both sides during the conflict.

It was the summer of 2003, and the Maoists had laid siege to the district capital of Dailekh, cutting off its water supply. After nearly two months without water, a few journalists led by Dekendra Thapa dared to walk up to rebel-held territory to negotiate. The team was abducted and led away, some were released after two weeks but the Maoists detained Dekendra Thapa and put up posters in the district two months later detailing 10 reasons why they executed him. His body was not found.

Laxmi Thapa kept up the pressure, even while the

While Dekendra's killers are willingly going to jail to atone for their crime, in faraway Kathmandu Maoist Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai and his crony Attorney General Mukti Pradhan have been trying their utmost to quash the investigation. They don't want the masterminds of Dekendra Thapa's torture and murder to be arrested, and the case to set a precedent against senior party leaders.

The Maoist-led coalition has an unwritten pact with state security not to pursue conflict-era atrocities, and to let bygones be bygones. This means there is little chance Army and Police involved in the Doramba massacre, the Kotbada killings, the torture and executions at Bhairabnath, and hundreds of cases of disappearances,

ensure that the wounds of war never heal. The ensuing impunity has eliminated deterrence, and fostered an epidemic of crime involving robbery, rape, murder, and violence against women.

Lachhiram Gharti was stung by a guilty conscience, but the real masterminds of Dekendra Thapa's murder have no such remorse. Top Maoists are terrified it is payback time for the terror they unleashed on the people.

nepalimes.com

Watch Dhruba Basnet's music video of Dekendra Thapa singing a Karnali folk song.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalimes.com

ABDICATING STATE OBLIGATION

Thank you *Nepali Times* for pointing out the utter shamelessness with which impunity has been institutionalised in Nepal ('Abdicating state obligation', Editorial, #638). However, it's unfortunate that the editorial chose to overlook how parties other than the Maoists are also equally involved in this game. People from across the political spectrum defended Col Kumar Lama. I have no love for the Maoists, but we cannot twist facts and be transparently partial in our accounts.

Anil Bhattarai

- After pressurising the police to let Dekendra Thapa's killers off the hook, Baburam Bhattarai has pressurised cable networks to drop Image Channel. Our prime minister is a fascist, he is out to grab total power, there is no two ways about this.

Gramsci

TRANSBOUNDARY JURISDICTION

Thank you Prateek Pradhan for your insightful article on the Col Kumar Lama case ('Transboundary jurisdiction', #638). It's one of the more level-headed stories I have seen in the media since this episode began. Lama's arrest has had a deterrent effect, but it also highlights the complete asymmetry in pursuing justice across boundaries.

Justin

- No democracy can survive or prosper in eternal impunity under

the perpetual fear of war mongers. Only through a proper truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) at home, like in South Africa, can fear be removed from the minds of citizens and the healing can begin. The current coalition government under the Maoists and the Madhesi failed to draft the constitution and develop a mechanism to foster reconciliation, thereby wasting a massive opportunity. Nepali leaders have lost credibility both at home and abroad, but thanks to human rights organisations moral pressure has been once again exerted on Nepal's ruling class.

Anonymous

- This is a well argued piece by Prateek Pradhan. Initially, I felt that it was wrong of the British to arrest Lama especially after letting him go through immigration. Although I believe all war criminals should be punished, the UK did not have access to evidence in Nepal. But after reading your article, I am actually neutral. I feel it's good Nepal is being put under the international spotlight. Maybe this will pressurise our leaders to set up a TRC and prosecute war-era crimes.

Ujjwal Acharya

- One can proudly demand for fair trials for war crimes in Nepal, and at the same time, be offended when a person representing your country on a UN mission is being tried at courts in a foreign land. There is nothing pseudo-nationalist about it. I don't understand

why Prateek Pradhan calls this jingoism? If the point of his article is to offend a section of Nepali society, then he has succeeded.

Krishna

- Transboundary jurisdiction sounds great, but the asymmetry in its delivery is what should bother us. I would love to see George Bush and his stooge Tony Blair arrested in one of the 'third-world' countries for crimes against humanity. But then, who watches the watchmen?

Funky Buddha

- It's easy to act all high and mighty in the name of justice, and human rights, and behave as if our national sovereignty getting compromised is not a big deal. But it's not so easy to ignore UK's shameful history of colonialism, racism, and genocide, not to mention a tarnished record of protecting Asian and Muslim minorities in its own backyard. If the British are really fair-minded and concerned about justice, they should demonstrate this by arresting Tony Blair who backed unjust wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and try him and others as war criminals instead of picking on an army officer from a weak third world country.

S Thapa

- Arguing that the capture of Lama in Britain is an affront to our national sovereignty is simply ridiculous. When did national sovereignty come to mean the so-called 'right' of one group of armed Nepali thugs (army leaders or Maoists) to kill another group of Nepalis

who happen to be unarmed and not a party to the conflict? Yes, Britain does have its share of human rights problems, but in this case the decision to arrest Lama is correct. From now on our murderous criminals will have to think twice before they decide kill another civilian or bury another journalist alive.

Ke garne'

THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE

The unthinkable always comes to mind when I walk through the narrow alleys of Bhotahiti, Ason, Indra Chok, and Nardevi in New Road ('Thinking the unthinkable', #638). There are no open grounds where we could run to safety in the event of an earthquake. Most of the houses (especially the older ones) will probably fall like a stack of dominoes. Even many of the newer buildings are poorly built and don't follow earthquake safety codes. The sad thing is that we Nepalis only think about short-term benefits and are willing to pay heavy bribes to officials just so that we can get things done quickly even if this means risking our lives.

Tashi Lama

ENERGISING THE ECONOMY

I agree with Puja Tandon's description of how the power crisis affects industries in Nepal and slows our economy ('Energising the economy', #638). However, I do not think we are going to progress very far if we stick to the 'Nepal is second richest in hydropower' slogan. Rather, we need

to acknowledge that our country has the poorest hydro production management record. Admitting the problem is the stepping-stone towards solving the problem.

Krishna Bahadur

REMEMBERING KESAR LALL

A giant of Nepali literature, Kesar Lall will continue to live in the hearts of many Nepalis and inspire us to find beauty in simplicity ('Remembering Kesar Lall', #638).

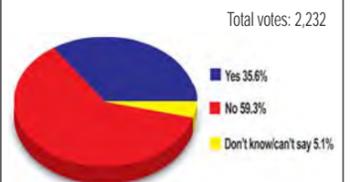
Adhish Gorkhali

- I have read one of Kesar Lall's book about beliefs and customs. It was rather amusing and made me think about my own childhood. We Nepalis are very superstitious and just can't get rid of this trait. May his soul rest in peace.

Satis Shroff

Times nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll #639

Q. Should the UK release Colonel Kumar Lama?



Weekly Internet Poll # 640. To vote go to: www.nepalimes.com

Q. Will separate street protests by the opposition and the ruling alliance pave way for an electoral government?



Get used to it

Battered Bhattarai will remain the stumbling block for consensus and elections



GUEST COLUMN
Damakant Jayshi

The reputation of Nepal's first PhD prime minister lies in tatters, and it's all his own doing.

His 'records' include making the state treasury pay more for his publicity stunt of travelling in a Mustang vehicle, having the largest-ever cabinet in Nepal's history, withdrawing cases against more than 1,000 people including those accused of rape and murder, having the most number of murder-accused in his cabinet (at least four), and inviting the largest number of people to his official residence at state expense. Now, he has also become the biggest obstacle to finding a way out of the current impasse, demonstrating that he will stop at nothing to cling on to power.

Madhesi ministers now don't even try to hide whose advice they heed. Home Minister Bijaya Gachhadar passed on a press release about the parties' strong objections to remarks by an Indian official in Birganj last year to the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu even before it was made public. So asking the Madhesi Front to ditch Bhattarai is asking for a lot.

This will change only if all the parties outside the coalition and Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal come together, with all of them supporting a move by President Ram Baran Yadav to end the deadlock. Other than that, it will take a genuine popular movement to unseat Bhattarai. Both are unlikely at present, and here is why.

With the exception of NC President Sushil Koirala, there is no leader of national stature who can stand up to the Indians and their representatives in Nepal. He

not only took Indian Ambassador Jayant Prasad to task without mincing words over the Birganj remarks, but

also pointedly asked him whether he considered Nepal a sovereign state or not. Koirala has also refused to compromise on his party's core ideals for the sake of power. One may accuse him of lacking charisma and being uninspiring, but the man has integrity and steel.

Even if the parties came together behind the president, the crucial support of the Nepal Army is not guaranteed.

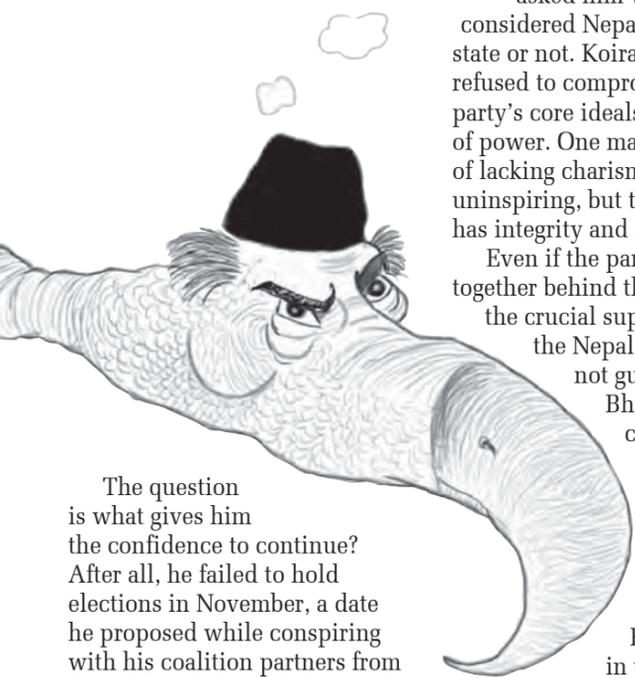
Bhattarai is courting the top army brass, and his sharp reaction to the arrest of Colonel Kumar Lama in the UK

and approving promotion of Colonel Raju Basnet (the main accused in the torture and disappearance of over 100 Maoists in the Bhairabnath Battalion) tell the whole story. It also helps that both the Maoists and the army agree on at least one objective: to provide amnesty to conflict-era abuses, irrespective of who caused them or how severe they were.

One trump card that the opposition parties had (cornering the Maoist-Madhesi coalition to announce elections) has been squandered. An election by May is now almost impossible, which means Bhattarai will continue for the foreseeable future.

Twitter: @damakant

Why dig up the past?



The question is what gives him the confidence to continue? After all, he failed to hold elections in November, a date he proposed while conspiring with his coalition partners from the Madhesi Front to let the CA expire in May last year without necessary changes in the Interim Constitution. He has cashed in on the lack of foresight of the NC and UML since he knew they would not accept an election government led by him. It now looks like he doesn't want an election at all. And to prove how far he can go, he is now openly obstructing justice over conflict-era abuses.

Bhattarai's confidence seems to stem from the fact that Nepal handlers in New Delhi think there is more merit in Bhattarai continuing than otherwise. The Madhesi Front holds the aces, and as long as Madhesi leaders in the government see more of an advantage in staying in the coalition for political and monetary gain, Bhattarai is safe.

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India's gender insurrection



LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

Extensive media coverage in India and Nepal of the phenomenon of rape seems to have fanned conservatism, spawned amorphous fears, and threatens to shackle women in villages where gender equality is a battle won or lost almost daily.

Travelling last week on a train from Delhi to Patna, and then by road to the Bihar countryside, I silently listened to passionate discussions in tea-stalls, offices as well as living rooms, astonished at the media's capacity to create a nationwide community, united in its focus on the issue of rape.

Yet it is a community bitterly divided in its analysis of the rise in rape cases, leading me to conclude: our liberalism is a mask worn to conceal the deeply ingrained conservative values we secretly nurture because of the premium placed on modernity. Media coverage of rape has ripped off the mask to reveal our fears of modernity swamping the values inculcated in us.

The discussions I overheard, or occasionally engaged in,



BIKRAM RAI

had a universal pattern: rape was unanimously condemned. Almost always the punishment prescribed for the guilty was public hanging as a deterrence. Indeed, there seemed to be a barely concealed admiration for the code of punishment based on the principle of 'an eye for an eye' and 'blood for blood'. A few Muslims took perverse pride in what they described as an idea of justice Islamic in nature.

With the rapists condemned to the gallows, the discussions would invariably turn to analysing the causes popularly described as social sickness.

Invariably again, the culprit was modernity. It is vital, they said, for girls to acquire an education, particularly through the medium of English, enroll in professional colleges and aspire to become engineers and doctors and bureaucrats. But is it necessary, they would ask, to wear body-hugging jeans, stay out late in the evening, and for boys and girls to mingle freely? Are teenagers, particularly girls, serving a larger purpose in emulating the lifestyle of their brethren bred in metros, say, in Delhi or Mumbai?

As young Patna consciously wraps itself in modernity

Liberalism is a mask worn to conceal the deeply ingrained conservative values small town India secretly nurtures

through spiffy showrooms selling designer wear, eats out in restaurants and coffee shops, or builds educational institutes and teaching shops, to which students from other parts of the state throng, their parents mull the outcome of flirting with progressivism. Have they erred in easing earlier curbs on children, allowing them greater personal space and independence, and believing they would not belie the faith reposed in them?

In a discussion on sartorial style, a parent remarked allegorically: "Thieving can be curbed by punishing the thief. But it is also important to lock your house at night. If you leave it open, you are asking for trouble. Why are we emulating the Western code of dressing - three-piece suit for men, two pieces for women?"

It is precisely why girls in small town India feel their freedom has been imperilled

because of the ambience that the prolonged national debate has created. The perception of the brutal rape of the physiotherapy student in Delhi has undergone a radical transformation over the weeks: the unconscionable criminal act is now considered symptomatic of the crisis springing from the degree of freedom granted to teenagers. The cure, therefore, is believed to lie in curtailing the freedom the young enjoy.

This curtailment won't be universal in its application, largely because parents are under greater societal pressure to skill boys for the job market than girls. The girls fear that the inability of their parents to negotiate and overcome their fears of modernity could have an adverse impact on them, particularly in circumstances involving decisions of sending them out of city or town for education.

They may willingly forego jeans, they will willingly shun male company, but it is their aspirations they don't wish to compromise on. They want the debate on rape to the background, and the national media train its spotlight elsewhere.

They wish to engage in silent insurrection, not trumpet their rebellion.

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Tug of war

How will politics and economics interact nationally and globally in 2013?

MOHAMED A EL ERIAN

Watching America's leaders scramble in the closing days of 2012 to avoid a 'fiscal cliff' that would plunge the economy into recession was yet another illustration of an inconvenient truth: messy politics remains a major driver of economic developments.

In some cases during 2012, politics was a force for good: consider Prime Minister Mario Monti's ability to pull Italy back from the brink of financial turmoil. But in other cases, like Greece, political dysfunction aggravated economic problems.

Close and defining linkages between politics and economics are likely to persist in 2013. Having said this, we should also expect much greater segmentation in terms of impact – and the consequences will affect both individual countries and the global system as a whole.

In some countries – for example, Italy, Japan, and the United States – politics will remain the primary driver of economic-policy approaches. But elsewhere – China, Egypt, Germany, and Greece come to mind – the reverse will be true, with economics becoming a key determinant of political outcomes.

This duality in causation speaks to a world that will become more heterogeneous in 2013 – and in at least two ways: it will lack unifying political themes, and it will be subject to multi-speed growth and financial dynamics that imply a range of possible scenarios for multilateral policy interactions.

With an election looming in Italy, the country's technocratic interim administration will return the reins of power to a democratically elected government. The question, both for Italy and Europe as a whole, is whether the new government will maintain the current economic policy stance or shift to one that is less acceptable to the country's external partners (particularly Germany and the European Central

Bank).

Japan's incoming government has already signalled an economic-policy pivot, relying on what it directly controls (fiscal policy), together with pressure on the Bank of Japan, to relax the monetary-policy stance, in an effort to generate faster growth and higher inflation. In the process, officials are weakening the yen. They will also try to lower Japan's dependence on exports and rethink sending production facilities to lower-wage countries.

The economic impact of politics in the US, while important, will be less dynamic: in the absence of a more cooperative Congress, politics will mute policy responses rather than fuel greater activism. Continued congressional

polarisation would maintain policy uncertainty, confound debt and deficit negotiations, and impede economic growth.

In other countries, the causal direction will run primarily from economics to politics. In Egypt and Greece, for example, rising poverty, high unemployment, and financial turmoil could place governments under pressure. Popular frustration may not wait for the ballot box. Instead, hard times could fuel civil unrest, threatening their governments' legitimacy, credibility, and effectiveness – and with no obvious alternatives that could ensure rapid economic recovery and rising living standards.

In China, the credibility of the incoming leadership will depend in large part on whether the economy can consolidate its soft landing. Specifically, any prolonged period of sub-seven per cent growth could encourage opposition and dissent – not only in the countryside, but also in urban centres.

Then there is Germany, which holds the key to the integrity and unity of the eurozone. So far, Chancellor Angela Merkel has been largely successful in insulating the German economy from the turmoil elsewhere in Europe. Unemployment has remained remarkably low and confidence relatively high. And, while growth has moderated recently, Germany remains one of Europe's best-performing economies – and not just its paymaster.

While some would have favoured greater policy activism, Merkel's Germany has provided a steady anchor for a eurozone struggling to end bouts of financial instability and put an end to questions about its survival as a well-functioning monetary union (one that aspires to becoming much more). A change in German leadership would, therefore, raise questions about Europe's policy underpinning.

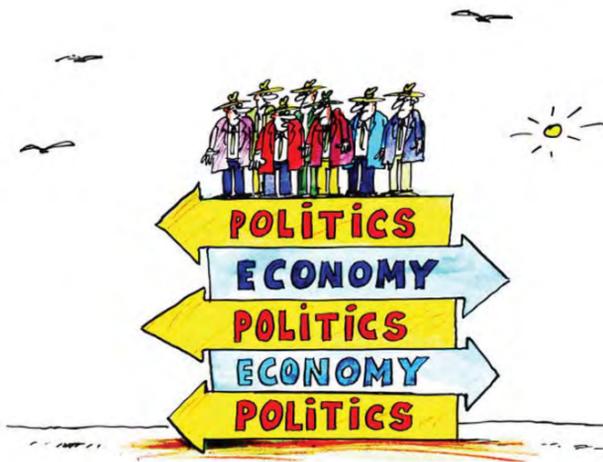
How politics and economics interact nationally and globally is one of the important questions for 2013 and beyond. There are three scenarios: good economics and effective politics provide the basis for a growing and more cooperative global economy; bad economics interact with dysfunctional politics to ruin the day; or the world muddles through, increasingly unstable, as a tug of war between economics and politics plays out, with no clear result or direction.

Part of the answer depends on what happens in three countries in particular – China, Germany, and the US. Their economic and political stability is essential to the well-being of a world economy that has yet to recover fully from the 2008 global financial crisis.

Current indications, albeit incomplete, suggest that the three will continue to anchor the global economy in 2013. That is the good news. The bad news is that their anchor may remain both tentative and insufficient to restore the level of growth and financial stability to which billions of people aspire. 

www.project-syndicate.org

Mohamed A. El-Erian is CEO of the global investment company PIMCO and formerly with the IMF.



BIZ BRIEFS

Dream expansion

QATAR AIRWAYS  Qatar Airways has embarked on its Boeing 787 European expansion with the deployment of the next generation aircraft on three additional routes: Munich, Zurich, and Frankfurt. On 14 January, the first-ever commercial flight of a Boeing 787 to Switzerland was launched with Qatar Airways introducing the Dreamliner on the Zurich route three-times-a-week.

Crazy cash

HONDA  Syakar Trading, distributor of Honda generators and power products, has launched Honda Scratch Card offer with cash prizes up to Rs 100,000.

Good business

bo2  Business Oxygen (BO2), Nepal's first venture fund aimed at small and medium enterprises was launched on Tuesday. It is a \$14 million SME venture fund, initiated by International Finance Corporation (IFC) and managed by a joint venture between Bank of Kathmandu and beed.

Like to win

CG-DIGITAL  The online shopping site cgdigital.com.np has launched a 'Like and Win' campaign on its Facebook page with a chance to win Lava and LG mobile phones through lucky draw.

Motor check

Vijay Motors, the authorised distributor of Chevrolet, Opel, and Subaru, is conducting a month-long free winter service camp until 17 January at its service centre and body shop facility, Service Plus in Banasthali. The camp offers checkups for fog and head lamps, air-conditioning system, wiper blades, rear defogger, battery, and a free car wash.

Upward swing

Mega Bank Nepal held its second annual general meeting and approved the issuance of 6.99 million shares worth Rs 699 million through an initial public offering, which is 30 per cent of the bank's total issued capital worth Rs 2.33 billion. In the last fiscal year, its lending was up by Rs 3.23 billion, totalling Rs 8.04 billion and its deposits increased from Rs 3.82 billion to Rs 9.19 billion.



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Rato Macchendranath
Chariot, RN Joshi

STROKES OF MODERNITY

Park Gallery's newest exhibition paints a complex narrative of the birth and evolution of modern art in Nepal



Untitled, RN Joshi

SULAIMAN DAUD

Ratna Park today is known for its chaotic traffic, microbus stands, and hordes of street vendors selling cheap Chinese knockoffs. Forty years ago, it used to be the city's cultural and artistic hub and artist RN Joshi's Park Gallery was at the heart of it all.

Started in 1970, Park was Nepal's first gallery of modern art where Joshi displayed his works, taught classes, and encouraged Nepalis to appreciate their artistic heritage. In 1975 Joshi shifted the complex closer to his home in Jawalakhel, where today Nira and Navin are keeping their father's legacy alive as well as promoting upcoming artists.

"We grew up with art and when you love art, you want to support it and support other artists," says Nira who is curator of Park Gallery. (see page 7)

Titled 'Emergence of Nepali Modern Art: 1960-80', the latest exhibit which runs until 31 January displays works from the sixties, seventies, and eighties that paints a complex narrative of the birth and evolution of modern art in Nepal.

Arranged in chronological order, pieces from the 60s are lined up closest to the entrance and a walk further inside the gallery reveals how the artists' work evolved through the 70s. A staircase leads to the upper level, where works from the 80s are displayed.

"The 1960s were a turning point in Nepali art," says Navin, "Uttam Nepali, Sashi Shah, Vijaya Thapa, Indra Pradhan, and my father went to Mumbai and Lucknow to study, brought back a lot of new influences and pioneered modern art in Nepal."



Collage, KK Karmacharya

ALL PICS: CINDREY LIU

However, even in the 1970s, many Nepali artists chose to play safe and paint landscapes or cultural events which were very popular among the audience. Then, some began taking risks and experimenting with abstract pieces and preparing the art-loving public for the revolution of the 80s.

One example is KK Karmacharya's piece (*pic, centre*) comprised of many different materials which stand out among the traditional oil paintings. "Karmacharya is part of the second generation artists, who were influenced by the famous five and later developed their own unique styles,"

explains Navin pointing to the collage on the wall.

In the 80s Nepali artists also began exploring different mediums instead of just sticking to paintings or sculptures. Says Nira: "Susan Chitrakar and Manish Lal Shrestha stick out from the 80s. Their installation based exhibitions were

exceptional."

As the founder of the gallery, RN Joshi's works are most prominently featured. Each of his paintings seems to serve a specific purpose. A large painting of a woman brushing her hair while a crow perches on a window (*pic, above*) is a reference to an old Newari folk tale, reflecting the artist's desire to preserve Nepal's oral storytelling tradition through art. His later works document everyday life around him, such as the Rato Machhendranath festival (*pic, left*) which takes place in Pulchok every year.

Artist and writer Saroj Bajracharya, who moderated a discussion held at the gallery on Sunday believes the exhibition is a good way to understand the history of Nepal's artistic landscape. "We need to encourage more Nepalis to come see art and learn about their own history," he says, "And an exhibition such as this is a good first step."

Among the throng of visitors this week was 16-year-old Dhiraj Bayelkoti, a student of fine art at Bijeshwori Secondary School who came to hear Bajracharya's talk. In an effort to promote art among young Nepalis, Park Gallery allows free access for students. If the gallery continues to inspire students like Dhiraj, Nepali art is in for some exciting times for the next three decades.

www.parkgallery.com.np
Emergence of Nepali Modern Art: 1960-80
9-31 January, 10.30am to 5.30pm
Park Gallery, Pulchok
(01) 5522307

nepalitimes.com
RN Joshi retrospective, #314



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Straight from the art

The brother and sister duo Nira and Navin Joshi of Park Gallery spoke to *Nepali Times* this week about current trends and the future of Nepali art

Nepali Times: How is modern art different than traditional art?
Navin: Traditional artists work with religious icons and use certain set techniques, whereas modern art is primarily about individual expression.

How far can an artist use his freedom of expression?
Navin: Freedom of expression is important, but Nepali artists are still members of society and have to respect its norms and values.

How do you view the Nepali public's interest and understanding of local art?
Nira: Some people are interested while others see it as just a luxury. And there is still a lack of understanding, but it makes me happy to see the audience gradually warming up and becoming more appreciative.

Navin: Today anybody can use Google to get a basic sense of art history. But I wish universities and art institutes made a greater effort to teach students the roots of Nepali art, how it has evolved in the last 200 years, and where it gets its influences from. Like Nira said a nuanced understanding of our own art history is missing.



What are your impressions of the new generation of Nepali artists?
Nira: Younger Nepali artists are not afraid to express themselves through different mediums like performance art, videos, and photography. I think greater exposure to the international art scene through travel and education has made them more confident.

Navin: It's also heartening to see that families today are much more supportive of their children's interest in art than say 10 or 15 years ago. When you are a young aspiring artist, you need a strong support system to succeed.

Any advice?
Navin: There is a famous quote by Picasso that says 'It's easy to become an artist, but it's difficult to remain an artist.' They have to remain focused even during the tough times and just keep working hard.

Nira: They should be aware of why they want to create art and what made them enter the profession in the first place, and have their hearts in the right place.

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EVENTS

RENEWABLE ENERGY WEEK, explore possibilities for wind energy in Nepal. 20 to 26 January, Bhrikuti Mandap, Nepal

Professional email-writing workshop, improve your communication skills and make email-writing a strong part of your resume. Rs 4000, 18 to 19 and 30 to 31 January, 10am to 4pm, Career Master Nepal, Pulchok, (01)5524891/98492249 32/9843031776



PUBLIC SPEAKING AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT, an opportunity to master the skills required for a gregarious public talk by media personality Malvika Subba. 1 to 3 February, 9 to 11am, Shiksha Nepal, New Baneshwor, 9851001569/9849325937

Bal utsav, if you're running out of ideas to help your kids spend their winter vacations, let them take part in this international talent hunt for

children aged 8 to 18. 9 to 20 January, Art of Living Centre, New Baneshwor, 9803039750/9808675895

B-boying competition, shake and brake, and do whatever it takes to win cash prizes up to Rs 50,000. 26 January, 10.45am, Dasrath Stadium, 984925612/9849685110/9841721736

Film competition, make a short, attractive, and appealing film on the themes of 'wealth creation' and/or 'economic development' and win prizes up to Rs 165,000. 25 January, 9851015260

Seto Dharti, award-winning writer Amar Neupane will be talking about his childhood and how he entered the world of reading and writing. 19 January, 1 to 3pm, Shiksha Nepal, Sankhamul, New Baneshwor, free entry

Know your child, join this program to understand and appreciate the apple of your eye. Rs 300, 19 January, 11am, Nepal Academy, Kamaladi, 9803039750

Hits FM Music Awards, catch the show live on television from wherever you are. 18 January, 3pm, Nepal Television, www.hitsfm.com.np

MUSIC

Live at Cafe 32, live music and delicious food every Friday. 6pm onwards, Café 32, Battisputali, (01)4244231



DINING

BARBEQUE BRUNCH BAZAAR, the best charcoal-grilled BBQ, period. Rs 1299 for children, Rs 1999 for adults, 19 January, 12 to 2.30pm, Gokarna Forest Reserve, (01)4451212

Cosmopolitan Cafe, located in the heart of Basantapur, this cozy cafe offers arguably the best chicken sizzler in town. Basantapur, (01)4225246



NEW TUSHITA RESTAURANT, relaxing ambience and good food. Don't miss out on its penne with creamy bacon and mushroom sauce. Lazimpat, (01)44432957

Chilly Bar and Restaurant, quality food and wide selection of drinks with great views of Phewa Lake. Lakeside, Hallanchok, Pokhara, (061)463614/463163

Haddock, big compound with ample parking space, its western and Thakali dishes are done to perfection. Jhamsikhel, (01)5546431



TAMAS-LAYA, promises a refined dining experience, try the prawn tempura, fisherman's fish and Balinese chicken satay. Naxal, Kathmandu



CHOPSTIX, savoury Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven. Kumaripati, (01)5551118

Tass and Tawa, savour a wide variety of Nepali meat dishes and reserve your palate for the heavenly Chusta. Pulchowk, Kathmandu

Fuji Bakery, tucked in Chakupat this bakery offers homemade goodies like apple pie, pain du chocolat, and banana cake. Chakupat, Lalitpur

Boudha Stupa Restaurant and Cafe, bide your time in their free wi-fi zone as you enjoy the wood-fired pizzas, homemade pastas, and the Tibetan gyakok. Boudha, (01)4485585



EVEREST STEAK HOUSE, an old-school joint for everything steak, indeed a sanctuary for meat lovers. Thamel, Chhetrapati Chok, (01)4260471

Krishnarpan, a specialty Nepali restaurant at The Dwarika's Hotel serving 6 to 22 courses of authentic Nepali meal. The Dwarika's Hotel, Battisputali, (01)4479488

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HIMAL
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14 - 28 January

COMMENTARY
Wounds of the war, Mumaram Khanal PM's lies symptomatic of Maoists' fears, Narayan Wagle A war-cry against democracy, Purusottam Dahal

COVER
Into the docks: politicians and security officers could soon find themselves in Col Kumar Lama's shoes if wartime atrocities are forgiven

REPORTS
Gender violence misunderstood CPN-M anxious to be unique Patronised crime at immigrations

EDITORIAL
Critical issues finally surface

PROFILE
Purnimaya Lama

INTERVIEW
Chandra Dhakal

GETAWAYS

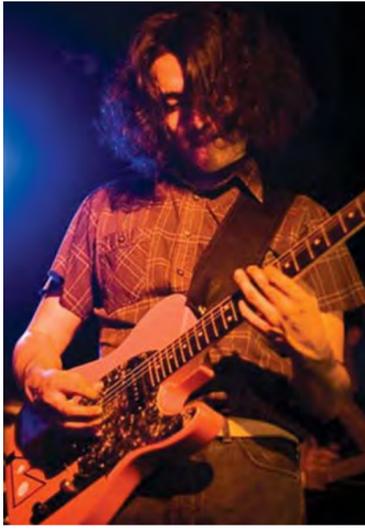
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www.himalayanwellness.com.np

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Rato Mato

Famous among Nepalis home and abroad for his recent forays into Nepali folk music, Diwas Gurung will perform in Nepal for the first time in eight years. Gurung was an active musician in Nepal's underground music scene, and his band Albatross was a favourite among those who wanted a taste of something different. For two shows in January, Gurung will team up with his old bandmates and play songs from his album Rato Mato. Get a taste of Nepali neo-folk while it lasts.

18 January, 7.30pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel
25 January, 7pm onwards, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

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SOMEPLACE ELSE

If it is typical Nepali khana that you are craving, then Noyoz is the place for you. This tiny little joint in Bhatbhateni serves momos, aludum, meat and more meat, and they all taste like your mother's home-cooked dishes.

Don't go to Noyoz looking for ambience or fine decor and you will walk out deeply satisfied. This very basic eatery, run by a Limbu couple and named after their adorable daughter, specialises in one thing: good basic food at very reasonable prices. Originally from Dharan, Barsha Limbu, the proprietor and chef all rolled into one, learned cooking from her mother, grandmother, and her many aunts. And she tries to emulate their style in her own kitchen by serving up nutritious, hearty, and wholesome meals

with a special eastern touch.

The aludum with roti (Rs 100) is the real deal. Authentic aludum is plain boiled potatoes dunked and cooked in a hot chili sauce without the addition of tons of masala and onion and garlic and tomatoes and the serving is perfect for a filling lunch. Sargemba (Rs 150), the Limbu version of blood sausage, has minced pork and blood mixed with edible moss, dried and boiled in ash, sourced from the hills of Taplejung. It is mild and best had warm- truly delicious.

The folks at Noyoz claim that theirs is simply the best Dharane pork momos (Rs 95) in town and I have to agree. Soft and moist, the flavour of



PICS: RUBY TUESDAY

NOYOZ

the meat is accentuated by a tinge of ginger and the crunch of chopped onions. The masala-free dumplings (masala is the death of many a good plate of momo), come with a hot bowl of soup. After discovering Noyoz, I doubt I'll ever cook momos at home again. We polished off two plates very quickly and would have ordered more if we didn't have the pork leg curry with roti (Rs 150) begging for our attention.

Pork feet or if you prefer euphemisms, trotters, come cooked long enough for the flavours of tomatoes and chilies to saturate and soften even the bones, in a thick spicy sauce. I personally think it goes better with rice than rotis, but



that's just my personal taste. Regardless, the dish remains true to the spirit of Dharan and its eternal love affair with pork.

The smoked pork chop with steamed vegetables (Rs 195) is the dish that sealed the deal for us. The pork is slow smoked over a wood fire by Barsha's aunt in Dharan and can only be found at Noyoz in Kathmandu. The almost peaty flavour of the wood combined with the seasonings and the charred bits make this dish addictive. It's

been almost two weeks since my visit and I can still clearly recall the taste, yum. Noyoz is definitely going to be revisited, many, many times.

Non-pork eaters and vegetarians fret not, Noyoz serves a variety of vegetarian dishes. In a relatively short time Noyoz has become extremely popular among nomadic writers, artists, and musicians from east Nepal (and they have quite a huge diaspora in the capital) and it has taken on the air of an 'intellectual adda'. They congregate here to talk about all things Nepal while eating bona fide purveli meals, just like back home. 🇳🇵

Ruby Tuesday

How to get there: Noyoz is smack opposite the Chinese Embassy's gate in Bhatbhateni. (01) 4439857

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MUST SEE

Sophia Pande

The awards season is here and with it a slew of films clamouring to win, some worthy and some not. Most of these films will become available to us, however, in the 'Best Foreign Language Film' category there are always a few that many of us will never see.

Happily, that is not the case with *A Royal Affair*, one of the five films nominated in the above-mentioned category. An entry from Denmark, *A Royal Affair* is a period film costume drama based on the real life story of Johann Friedrich Struensee, an 18th Century German physician and philosopher who finds himself at the Danish court, hired to be the caretaker of King Christian VII of Denmark, a monarch who is mentally disabled, child-like, occasionally mean-spirited and extremely persuadable.

The story centres around two main relationships, that between Struensee (Mads Mikkelsen) and King Christian (played by Mikkel Følsgaard and whom the doctor calls by his first name), and the inevitable love affair that develops between Struensee and the young, beautiful, and spirited Queen, Caroline Mathilde played by the lovely Alicia Vikander.

As Christian becomes increasingly more attached to Struensee, the conservative Danish court of the time becomes anxious, seeking to exile the forward thinking doctor and retain control of a legal system where the old men pull all the strings of the puppet like King. It is the reverse

that happens with Christian bestowing Struensee with unlimited power, finally empowering himself and actively changing the history of Denmark with such a decision.

Unfortunately, as Caroline and Struensee's love affair unfolds, so too does the scheming of Christian's envious and omniscient mother. While perhaps not strictly historically accurate, what follows is the most tragic of stories. Christian is finally happy surrounded and cared for by the people he loves, namely Struensee and Caroline, so it is with horror and pity that we see his grief at his mother's whisperings.

With one fell swoop, the power hungry mother of the monarch reverses much, but not all, of the philanthropic laws that Struensee had implemented (such as the freedom to publish) and exiles Caroline. Struensee, meanwhile, is imprisoned by the decree of the very monarch whom he had come to think of as a son.

Costume dramas are period pieces that strive to recreate a time of the past and not all of them succeed. The high-flown language and the archaic customs often serve to irritate viewers in lesser films of the genre.

A Royal Affair however, is deserving of your time and energy. While ultimately tragic, the characters are greatly engaging and Mads Mikkelsen as Struensee are not to be missed. While Michael Haneke's film *Amour* is likely to take the foreign language film prize at the Oscar ceremony in February (and possibly even win the 'Best Picture' category), *A Royal Affair* is a gem of a film that will take you back to an era that is both beautiful to look at, but terrifying for all who chose to transgress from their proscribed boundaries.

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

Decoding H pylori



DHANVANTARI

Buddha Basnyat, MD

Until the early 1980s, mental stress and excessive acid secretion in the stomach were thought to be responsible for peptic ulcer disease (PUD), a condition where patients feel a burning sensation especially on an empty stomach at the lower end of the breastbone region for days. Doctors advised them to take it easy and prescribed plenty of antacids.

However, it was only in 1982 that the real culprit was identified. To the astonishment of the medical fraternity, two Australian scientists Barry Marshall (*pic, left*) and John Robin Warren (*pic, right*) from Perth discovered that bacterium called helicobacter pylori (H pylori) causes PUD and gastritis. Although drugs like aspirin and ibuprofen can independently cause PUD, H pylori are much

more common sources and may well exacerbate mucosal injuries in the stomach and duodenum triggered by drugs.

Marshall and Warren shared the Nobel Prize in 2005 for revolutionising the treatment for PUD and bringing relief to thousands of people across the world. Today, doctors usually

cause tuberculosis, typhoid or cholera, the spiral-shaped and three microns long H pylori infect a larger population than those three diseases combined. Also the H pylori bug is more prevalent in poorer communities with low levels of education. 80 per cent of those infected reside in developing countries and only 30 per cent in developed nations.

Not surprisingly, PUD is a well-known problem in Nepal. Many patients visit their doctors complaining about 'gastric', meaning gastritis which is an inflammation of the lining of the stomach, a common finding with PUD.

However, like many other aspects of medicine, the relationship between humans and H pylori is staggeringly complex. Some recent scientific

recommend antibiotics as treatment. Generally one antacid and two specific antibiotics are used for a total of two weeks, and the recovery rate approaches 90 per cent.

While they may not be as deadly as the bacterium that

evidence strongly suggest that H pylori are not the villains they are usually made out to be. In fact, they provide protection against childhood asthma, hay fever, some skin disorders, and even some forms of gastrointestinal cancer.



BIKRAM RAI

AND THE WINNER IS: CPN-Maoist general secretary, Ram Bahadur Thapa, announces a 51-member Central Committee with Mohan Baidya (centre) as the chairman, during the 7th general convention of the party in Tundikhel on Tuesday.



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

SAFETY FIRST: Architect and sculptor Rabindra Puri (left) inspects a model of a reinforced house at Bhaktapur on Tuesday during a program to mark the 79th anniversary since the 1934 earthquake.



NEPAL ARMY

HEAVY HANDSHAKE: Chief of Army Staff Gaurav Shumsher Rana (left) is greeted by Chief of General Staff Lt Gen Nepal Bhusan Chand (right) at Tribhuvan International Airport on Tuesday afternoon after Rana returned from his 10-day official visit to India.

READERS' PHOTO



SUVANWAIT GURUNG

TRYING HARD: Despite the chilly temperature, a man rides his bicycle early in the morning near Darbar Marg.

WEEKEND WEATHER

It's been a four month wait, but looks like rain is finally headed our way. Kathmandu Valley is likely to get its first winter rain starting Friday as the first hefty westerly of the season brings moisture-bearing clouds from the Mediterranean in a double-barrelled system. There may be a short respite early Saturday as the clouds mass up again. But since this front is being pushed by the jet stream, it will move on over the Himalayan hump to bring a foggy morning on Sunday with a clear afternoon. The higher valleys across central and western Nepal will see moderate snowfall down to 3,500m.



FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
17° 5°	18° 4°	19° 2°

Skeletons in the closet

BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya



BIKRAM RAI

The framework of justice cannot be custom-made and tailored to serve the interests of the few

The dilemma of post-conflict reconciliation is to balance society's need to ensure justice while at the same time curbing retribution. In many post-war situations the delivery of justice is limited to avenging wrongdoings, without effectively addressing the structural roots of violence.

Seven years after the end of Nepal's bloody insurgency which claimed 16,000 lives, a status quo media and civil society activists still give asymmetrical weightage to crimes committed by the Maoists, often obscuring the brutality of state security. While the media spotlight is on Dekendra Thapa who was tortured and buried alive by the Maoists in 2004, we must not forget the names of other journalists like Kanchan Priyadarshi, Dev Kumar Acharya, Krishna Sen, and Milan Nepali, who were

killed by the state. When the framework of justice is custom made and tailored to serve the interests of the few, it loses its essence and stokes revenge.

To be sure, we shouldn't wait indefinitely for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be formed to try war-era crimes, especially since the current draft of the bill makes it a rubber stamp mass-pardon body. Also, the prime minister is wrong to argue that probing human rights violations will hinder the peace process. Not only is that a politically incorrect thing to say, it is morally flawed as well.

But we have to be scrupulously even-handed in pursuing war crimes. While calling for the prosecution

of Ujjan Shrestha and Arjun Lama, we must also investigate the cases of Sapana Gurung, Maina Sunuwar, the torture and executions at the infamous Bhairabnath and hundreds of other cases involving state security that are languishing in civilian courts.

The decision to set up the Truth and Reconciliation and Disappearance Commissions was part of an understanding between Girija Prasad Koirala and Pushpa Kamal Dahal who were both worried about skeletons in their own closets. As the leader of a party which was in power for the longest period during the conflict, and under whose watch Kilo Sierra II was launched, Koirala

was acutely aware of his own culpability.

Similarly, although Dahal may not have pulled the trigger himself he did give the order to do so, and the chain of command led up to him. Many unspeakable atrocities were committed by his revolutionaries on innocent Nepalis and justified as an answer to the structural violence of the state.

The Koirala-Dahal pact sought to assuage the international community that transitional justice was being addressed domestically since the entire peace process was a homegrown exercise. In actual fact, it was a ruse to let their own fighters, as well as

themselves, off the hook. This accommodation is still in effect, as is seen in the NC and UML's unhappiness with the detention of Colonel Lama in the UK.

What is different about the Dekendra Thapa case is that the NC and UML, desperate to get the Bhattarai government to step down, have decided to politicise it by launching an agitation from Dailekh next month. This has already provoked the Maoists into launching a parallel protest to demand justice for state excesses during the war.

Every upright citizen of this country will, and should, support mobilisation against the Bhattarai government's obstruction of a judicial probe into Dekendra Thapa's case. But justice must be seen to be even-handed, and there must be as much outrage about the same prime minister's promotion of Army officer Raju Basnet of Bhairabnath.

What makes politicians think they can get away with this is the state of impunity in the country. When massive kickbacks, payoffs, murders, protection rackets, extortion, murder, and rape go unpunished, anyone can get away with anything. Those entrusted with protecting citizens, prey on them. Law-makers turn law-breakers.

The greatest lesson Nepal can draw from the bloodshed of the decade long war is that it is cheaper in the long-term to address social injustice through politics rather than violence.

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SICK CITY

Air pollution is making Nepalis sick and undermining the national economy

ANNA-KARIN ERNSTSON LAMPOU

Forty-year-old Ali Akhtar never leaves home without what has become an essential accessory for most Nepalis: his brown cloth mask.

As the streets around his fabric shop in Jawalakhel are demolished for road widening and the neighbourhood becomes shrouded in a cloud of yellow dust, Akhtar is trying his best to protect himself from the

pollution and keep his business running.

While Beijing made headlines this week for the worst air quality on record (*see box*), Kathmandu Valley is not far behind. The average PM 10 count concentration in Kathmandu, a measure of particulate matter content in the air, was 183 ug/m³ in 2003 and 173 ug/m³ in 2007, both far above the WHO standard of 50 ug/m³ and the US National Ambient Air Quality Standard of 100 ug/m³.

There is no data beyond 2007 because the seven monitoring devices installed by DANIDA across the Valley in 2002 to measure PM levels have been out of order for the past four years. Without the units, there is no mechanism to monitor and warn citizens to take extra precautions during bad days. The Department of Transportation, however, has said it is going to repair four of the stations by next month.

While mismanaged waste and unplanned urbanisation contribute to the city's air pollution, vehicle exhaust and brick factories are the biggest polluters. Fumes from the 60,000 plus vehicles plying on the choked roads of the Valley add the most toxins. The road expansion drive has only made things worse.

Anjila Manandhar from Clean Air Network Nepal says that instead of improving air quality, the government has aggravated the problem: "They just tore down houses and roads, nobody thought about how to get the job done with the least amount of pollution and there were no cleanup efforts either."

In winter, the Valley's topography creates a cold inversion layer that traps warm and polluted surface air, trapping

dust and smog. "Air pollution has become a huge problem and it gets worse during the winter," says Buddha Basnyat, a doctor at Patan Hospital, "we have long queues and ward full of patients with respiratory problems at this time of the year and children suffering from asthma are also on the rise."

Every year the government spends more than \$ 21 million in medical bills for pollution related illnesses. Street vendors, construction workers, road workers, and traffic police who are exposed the longest to the smoke and dust face the greatest risk along with those who attend schools, colleges, and offices located along major roads.

According to a recent study conducted by the Nepal Health Research Council, the average PM 2.5 (the smallest pollution particles) around a school in Jawalakhel located next to the road was 200 ug/m³, significantly higher than the WHO threshold, and the national standard of 40 ug/m³.

Arjun Karki, a pulmonologist at Patan Hospital, says pollution is not only harmful in terms of health, but stunts the country's economic growth. "When an adult falls sick, the family risks losing



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Between Beijing and Delhi



Beijing cleaned up its air for the 2008 Olympics after facing international criticism. Power plants installed scrubbers, emission controls were introduced so athletes and spectators could inhale fresh air. However, once the games were over, things got back to 'normal'. And this week on 12 January Beijing residents suffered a day of shockingly bad air with the capital shrouded in thick haze. Beijing witnessed off-the-chart reading of 755 on the Air Quality Index, which maxes out at 500.

Any reading above 100 is deemed 'unhealthy for sensitive groups' while anything above 400 is rated 'hazardous' for all.

Meanwhile, in the Indian capital winter air quality is also steadily worsening after almost a decade of improved policies that raised emission standards, closed polluting industries, and expanded green spaces. The visibly improved air quality has taken a downturn with fine-particle pollution rising by 47 per cent in the last decade and nitrogen dioxide levels up by 57 per cent. It made a costly investment to convert the city's buses and auto rickshaws to compressed natural gas, but environmentalists say New Delhi now needs aggressive second generation reforms to improve air quality.

its source of income, productivity goes down, expenses go up and sometimes the family is pushed into poverty," explains Karki. Streetfront shops like Akhtar's lose business when pollution is higher.

While the road widening campaign is partly to blame for the thick clouds of brown dust in Kathmandu, lack of

government control and monitoring is also responsible. The state introduced a Vehicle Emission Standards (VES) test in 1995, and those four wheelers which passed were given green stickers. Similarly the ban on vehicles older than 20 years was announced in 2000.

However, many government vehicles

don't have stickers and not all those that do have actually passed the test. Corruption is rife and the traffic police hardly checks the validity period. And despite repeated attempts to stop the worst offenders, the state hasn't been able to enforce the ban on old vehicles plying on the roads of Kathmandu.

In the absence of clear environmental guidelines, industries are free to let off massive amounts of smoke into the atmosphere without any repercussions. BrickCleanNetwork is an exception. It has introduced a new certification system for brick factories to encourage them to remove exploitation and pollution.

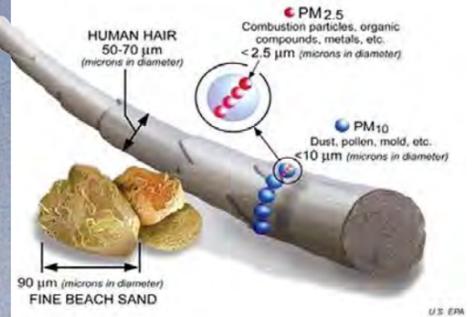
"The pollution is making us sick, affecting our incomes, and turning Kathmandu into a very unpleasant city. But our leaders are so busy with power politics, they don't care," says Akhtar as he puts on his mask and gets ready to go home.

nepalitimes.com

Lost in the smog, #500
Bikram Rai's photo gallery

How effective is your mask?

Most Kathmandu commuters don masks or hold a handkerchief to their mouths when out on the streets, but these barely provide any protection in this dust bowl. Larger particulate matters above 10 microns (PM 10) are trapped in the nose and mouth, but the finest and most deadly particles, PM 2.5, lodge themselves deep in the lungs.



About 30 times thinner than human hair, PM 2.5 easily penetrates generic masks found in the market. Masks designed for industrial use or professional cyclists and bikers provide better protection and are available in Kathmandu or online, but at Rs 1,500 a piece, they are beyond the reach of most Nepalis. However, considering the health costs, investing in a mask could be worthwhile in the long-term.

WHICH MASK?

Type of mask	Price	Effectiveness
Cotton handkerchief	Rs 20	28%
Cyclist mask 1	Rs 1,500	55%
Surgical mask	Rs 15	80%
Cyclist mask 2	Rs 4,000	83%
3M Dust Respirator	Rs 1,400	96.6%
Teflon filter	Rs 2,500	99.34%

Source: Beneficial cardiovascular effects of reducing exposure to particulate air pollution with a simple facemask

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Many more Dekendras

Media Kurakani, 13 January

After the arrest of Lachhram Gharti, one of the accused in journalist Dekendra Thapa's murder in 2004, there have been demands for free and fair investigations into the murders and disappearances of journalists during the conflict. While Thapa's case has gained national and international publicity, more than 30 murder cases of journalists are left in limbo. Following Gharti's

arrest, UCPN (Maoist) has decided to file new cases in contestation.

According to the Federation of Nepalese Journalist (FNJ), 35 journalists have been killed since the conflict began in 1996, while three are still missing. FNJ is demanding a high level probe committee to investigate each and every case. While it might still take some time to see the government responding to the demands, for now here are the names of the journalists who were killed and disappeared and the parties involved.

S.no	Name	Organisation	Date	Party involved
1.	Dev Kumar Acharya	Janadesh Weekly	23 July 2001	State
2.	Kanchan Priyadarshi	Former Secretary of FNJ, Sindhupalchowk chapter	29 April 2002	State
3.	Krishna Sen	Janadesh Weekly	27 May 2002	State
4.	Kamal A.C.	Janadisha Weekly	29 June 2002	State
5.	Rajkumar K.C.	Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS)	24 October 2002	State
6.	Nawaraj Sharma 'Basanta'	Kadam Weekly	2 May 2002	Maoist
7.	Ambika Timalisina	Janadesh and Mahima Weekly	11 December 2002	Maoist
8.	Kumar Ghimire	Janaprabhat Weekly	2 November 2002	State
9.	Gyanendra Khadka	RSS	6 August 2003	Maoist
10.	Bindod Sajana Chowdhary	Janadesh Weekly	30 September 2002	State
11.	Nagendra Pokhrel	Janadesh Weekly	22 December 2003	State
12.	Gopal Giri	Saptahik Manch	15 January 2004	Maoist
13.	Padamraj Devkota	Karnali Sandesh, Murichaula	7 February 2004	State
14.	Dekendra Thapa	Radio Nepal	11 August 2004	Maoist
15.	Badri Khadka	Janadesh Weekly	29 August 2004	State
16.	Dhanbahadur Rokka Magar	Radio Nepal	30 January 2003	Maoist
17.	Khagendra Shrestha	Dharan Today	1 April 2005	Maoist
18.	Maheshwor Pahadi	Rastriya Swabhimani Weekly	4 October 2005	State
19.	Birendra Shah	Avenues TV, Nepal FM, Drishti Weekly	5 October 2007	Maoist
20.	Pushkar Bahadur Shrestha	New Highway, New Season Weekly	2 January 2008	GTMM-J
21.	Anand Kumar Thapa	Janadesh Weekly	August 2004	State
22.	Bhim Bahadur Gharti	Correspondent, Maoist Radio	2003	State
23.	Subhash Mainali	Correspondent, Maoist Radio	2004	State
24.	Mohan Khanal	Janabidroha Weekly	2005	State
25.	Ishwar Dhungana	Janabidroha Weekly	2005	State
26.	Chin Bahadur Buda	Janadesh Weekly	28 February 2006	State
27.	Jagatprasad Joshi (JP Pandit)	Janadesh Daily	28 November 2008	Maoist
28.	Uma Singh	Janakpur Today, Radio Today FM	11 January 2009	Unknown
29.	Jamim Shah	Chairman, Channel Nepal	7 February 2010	Unknown
30.	Arun Sahaniya	Media entrepreneur	1 March 2010	Unknown
31.	Deviprasad Dhital(Hemraj)	Media entrepreneur	22 July 2010	Unknown
32.	Babur Kharel	Media entrepreneur	26 July 2011	Unknown
33.	Yadav Poudel	Mechi Times, Rajdhani, Avenues	3 April 2012	Unknown
34.	Santosh Kumar Gupta	Media entrepreneur (Bindaas FM)	6 July 2012	Unkown
35.	Chandan Nepali	Radio Skype, Gulmi	12 September 2012	Unkown

Journalists who forcefully disappeared:

1.	Milan Nepali	Janadesh Weekly, Lalitpur	9 June 1999	State
2.	Prakash Singh Thakuri	Rajdhani Daily, Kanchanpur	5 July 2007	Maoist
3.	Chitrnarayan Shrestha	Sindhuli		

Note: Names of some journalists are not mentioned here since their details have not yet been confirmed. Source: FNJ

Arresting justice

Editorial, *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 14-28 January

हिमाल

The arrests of Colonel Kumar Lama in the UK and those accused of journalist Dekendra Thapa's murder in Dailekh have put international spotlight on the gruesome crimes committed during the decade long civil war and steered the nation's attention away from musical-chairs politics to issues that matter.

These two cases have not only exposed the real faces of Nepal's leaders, but also shattered the Maoists' facade. By objecting Lama's arrest in the name of 'national sovereignty' and stopping investigations into journalist Thapa's murder because it would 'undermine' the peace process, the UCPN (Maoist) has proved beyond doubt that it will do anything to obstruct the path of justice. The opposition parties too are sending out a similar message: ending impunity and delivering justice for war victims are not on their priority list.

However, trying to protect the murderers of Dekendra Thapa is equal to killing peace and protesting against the investigation into human rights violations only weakens nationalism. Humanity goes beyond national boundaries and by trying to restrict legal process with the rhetoric of nationalism our leaders are deceiving us.

A country is sovereign only when its citizens are able to live with dignity. And it doesn't take external forces to weaken Nepal's sovereignty; it automatically becomes hollow when rulers refuse to provide justice and reconciliation for thousands of Nepalis who were killed, tortured, raped, and disappeared and instead look for ways to pardon those involved in war crimes.

Seven years after the armed conflict ended, the arrests in the UK and Dailekh have once again made us realise how important it is to identify and punish perpetrators on both sides so that families of victims can find closure. However, if Nepal's rulers sweep the dirty secrets of the war under the carpet and provide blanket amnesty to criminals, then wounds will continue to fester and could turn into potent ingredients for future unrest.

NEPALI TWEETS

Anushil Shrestha
 'न्याय नपाए गोरखा जानु' भन्थे, गोरखाबाटै भरी जनमत ल्याए देशको प्रधानमन्त्रीसम्म भएका डा बाबुरामले देशलाई नै न्याय विहीन बनाउँदैछन् !!
 They used to say 'go to Gorkha for justice', but Prime Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai who came from Gorkha with massive public support is making the country lawless.

Praveen Dhakal
 जंगलपस्टेमा समस्यासमाधान हुनेभए जंगलपसेकाले समाधानगरीसक्थे राउतेले समस्याआउन दिनेथिएनन त्यसैले साथिहो जंगलपस्टेमा न्यायालयपसाँ कालुनिराज्यमापसाँ
 If returning to the jungle could solve problems, then the ones who are in the jungle would have already resolved them. The routes would not even let any problem arise. So friends let's enter the court and enter a state governed by law, not the jungle.

Budhi Karki
 जब शासकले आत्मविश्वास गुमाउँछ उसले स्वतन्त्र प्रेस उपर नियन्त्रणको प्रयास गर्छ।
 When the ruler loses his self-confidence, he tries to control the free press.

Narendra Joshi
 गरीबका घर घर बस्ने हिड्ने "प्रधानमन्त्रि एक रात सडक बालबालिका संग विनाउनुहोस" अनौ थाहा हुन्छ गरीबी के हो भनेर via fb.
 The prime minister who visits houses of poor Nepalis should spend a night with street children to find out what poverty really is (via Facebook).

Amrita Lamsal
 दिमागमा चेतनाको सुई टिल सकिने भएको भए चिन्ने गनुपर्ने थिएन 'मयादा' पालन गर्ने टैक्का पनि जहिले पनि अहिल्लाहरूले मात्रै निनु पर्ने?
 If we could inject a dose of conscious into people's brains then we wouldn't have to worry. Why do women have the sole responsibility to stay within their 'limits'?

Narayan Amrit
 पत्रकार र पेशाकामी सडकमा। अधिकारकामी सडकमा। विपक्षी सडकमा। कलाकार सडकमा। हिंसला पनि सडकमा। हेन घरमा त बाबुराम मात्र बस्छन् कि क्या हो?
 Journalists and professionals are out on the streets. Human rights activists are on the streets. Opposition is on the streets. Actors are on the streets. Hisila is also out on the streets. Is it only Baburam who stays at home?

PHALANO
 उहिले त पाप घुरीबाट कराउँथ्यो। अहिले त रेडियो, टिभी, पत्रिका, फेसबुक र ट्विटरबाट कराउँदै रैछ, कमेड।
 Earlier the consequences of sin would be declared from the roof of the sinner's house. Today it is gets broadcasted on the radio, TV, newspapers, Facebook, and Twitter. Comrade.

"Press for qualitative changes"

BBC Nepali Service, 16 January

बिबीसी नेपाली

Rabindra Mishra: The foundations of the people's war, like people's courts and PLA, have been disbanded. How are you going to reconstruct these for your new uprising?

Pampha Bhusal: First of all, we must try to peacefully reach consensus for a constitution that guarantees federalism and protects our sovereignty. As far as the bases of a revolution are concerned, we already have experience organising people's courts, unions, area commands, and a liberation army. If necessary, we will draw from these experiences and move forward.

You spent half of your life working for a revolution. Will you spend the other half trying to rebuild these conditions again?

As long as our society is mirrored in class, gender, and identity conflicts, there is always ground for a revolution. We don't have to lead the revolution, someone might take the initiative and that's fine with us. But we have not forgotten our experiences, and the sacrifice made by thousands of Nepali men and women for our cause. We are aware of what we must do.



BIKRAM RAI

You talk about sacrifice, but everyone knows that the top brass was hiding safely somewhere in the neighbourhood. Will you call up ordinary citizens to take arms and ask them to give up their lives and call it your 'sacrifice' later on?

We call it our sacrifice because all of us were present while making plans for the revolution and that's all I want to say for now.

You said that Dahal and Bhattarai sidelined women leaders in the old party. But all the leaders in the permanent committee of your new party are men.

As far as committees go, we have maintained the old structures.

Which means there is still gender discrimination in the new party?

It is natural that social structures are replicated in social units. But politics is all about strength of ideas and ability, so I feel that our party has done justice to us.

You spent millions on your general convention after exhorting from businesses in Kathmandu, and those who refused were reportedly beaten up. Is this the kind of awareness you are talking about?

Not at all. We asked for support because all parties in the world work through donations and we received positive feedback from all over the country. It's not only about collectiong money, but also exchanging political views and convictions.

None of what you say today is new. So what has changed in all these years?

The conditions today are such that all of it is still relevant. When we protested against the Panchayat, everyone made fun of us, and people never thought that we could abolish the monarchy and establish a republic. There have been many changes, but our party will now press for qualitative changes.



नागरिक Yubak in *Nagarik*, 16 January

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



Baburam Bhattarai is a more loyal contractor for India than anyone in the NC or UML.

CPN-M chairman Mohan Baidya, *Kantipur*, 17 January

Making up millions

Baburam Bishwakarma, *Sikshak*,
December-January



For the past six years, administrators in public schools across the country have been celebrating as if it's Dasain all year through. The government had started the Per Child Fund (PCF) in 2007 which allocates Rs 1,626 for each student to cover the cost of their uniforms, stationery, and other essentials.

However, school administrators have been inflating enrollment rates and fleecing the government. And it's not only schools that are looting the state, even parents are enrolling their children at more than one school to pocket the scholarship money.

According to the 2011 census, there are 6,003,178 children between the ages of 5 and 13. However, flash reports from the Department of Education (DEO) put the number of students in the 5-13 age bracket at 6,595,565, which leaves almost 600,000 children unaccounted for. In Sunsari alone there were 83,000 'fake' students out of the reported 196,562 in 2011-12. Sunsari's District Education Officer Bir, Bahadur Khadka, says that out of the total budget allocated for schools during the last fiscal year, Rs



MIN RATNA BAJRACHARYA

900,000 has already been collected. Says Khadka, "Falsifying enrollment for more than 80,000 students in one district is no joke. The government needs to intervene immediately before things get completely out of control."

Schools in Saptari are a step above the rest. They managed to double the number of students in just a single academic year. The flash one report at the beginning of the academic year in 2011 shows the total

number of students to be around 84,000 which reached a staggering 149,100 by the end of the year.

There are close to a million 'fake' students across 75 districts and more than one billion was spent on them last year alone. The figures for the entire six years exceed Rs 8 billion.

In the last fiscal year, the government allocated Rs 63.9 billion, the highest ever for education of which Rs 51 billion

went directly to schools. Of the country's total education budget, 22 per cent is provided by donor countries and agencies while the rest comes from the state treasury. Since 2009 the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Union, DFID, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Australian Aid, UNICEF, and Global Education have been providing funds for the School Sector Reform Plan.

Neither the donors, nor the Ministry of Education (MoE), or even the teachers' unions have spoken up against such massive embezzlement. Shankar Thapa, vice secretary of the research and information branch of DoE admits to the shortcomings of the monitoring mechanism. "Since it is not possible for the department to cross check the records of each and every school, it's very difficult for us to find out which students are real and which are not," acknowledges Thapa.

Although the government issued a directive last June to investigate those involved in the fraud, it first needs to inspect its own staff. Everyone involved in the preparation, monitoring, and sanctioning of funds needs to be held responsible and punished if found guilty and the PCF also needs a major overhaul to weed out the loopholes.



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Pardon Mantri Bhattarai

It is an insult to say that Prime Minister Rambu presides over the most corrupt government we've ever had in the history of the Federal Kleptocratic Raperpublic of Nepal. Those of us who are a bit long in the tooth remember with nostalgia and fondness good, old-fashioned corruption when we had scandals named after Niki Lauda, or Sudan. Those were the days when the prime minister's daughter took a teensy weensy commission on some construction contract here and a jet leasing deal there. So what an affront on the BRB administration that we call it 'corrupt'. What a slur on its capacity for plunder and state capture. It's like saying Al Capone was a pickpocket.



All this hasn't gone unnoticed in Nepal's lively social media scene, where people have been posting variations on the title of Prime Minister Bhattarai. An unedited selection:

- Primordial Minister Bhattarai
- Pardon Mantri Bhattarai
- PM Bhattedanda
- Pradhan Monkey Bhattarai
- Sri Tin Bhattarai Maharaj
- Crime Minister Bhattarai
- Prime Sinister Bhattarai
- Promo Minister Bhattarai
- West Minister Bhattarai
- South Minister Bhattarai



The folks at Kathmandu Fried Chicken (KFC) must be heaving a sigh of relief that their minor infraction of importing drumsticks from India and



not Brazil has been overshadowed by the news this week that inspectors in London found that one-third of the burgers being sold there were made up of horse meat. The Ass' first reaction to the news from London was: at least it wasn't donkey meat. I guess we have to be thankful that at least KFC serves chicken and we're not inadvertently eating crow when we order a bucket of Hot Wings. However, we must ensure greater vigilance. Our own food safety inspectors must do a DNA analysis on all butcher shops so as to ascertain that the sudden absence of street dogs in Tripureswor isn't somehow linked to the price of mutton in Dharara holding steady. This happened in Nepalganj last year when elderly donkeys were found to have been pulverised and sold as goat keema. I don't want to be species-ist about it, but are all of you valued readers absolutely sure that the buff momo you ate today wasn't adulterated with common street fauna?



One of the predictable fallouts of high profile war crime cases coming out of the woodworks is that it has temporarily patched up the differences between PKD and BRB. Like the boy and the tiger in *Life of Pi*, the two find themselves on the same boat. Suddenly, Comrade Awesome's

roar has lost its ferocity, and he told his party faithful on Monday: "At this rate we will all be in jail, and won't be able to travel anywhere in the world again. So we must never leave the government, we must back up the prime minister." Everyone nodded in assent. Instead of weakening Comrade Laldhoj, therefore, the Lama and Dekendra cases have strengthened his position within his party. Which means BRB now plans to stick it out for as long as he can, and if the NC and UML pile on the pressure he'll offer an 'independent civil society prime minister' deal, or a CA revival option. The NC and UML are in a dilemma: having civil society Maoist lackey as PM is even more unacceptable than allowing BRB to continue, and reincarnating the CA is worse than both. The NC should have just taken the Home Ministry when it was offered to them.



Long and short of it is that there will be all kinds of fun and games in the Kathmandu Spring. Everyone and their grandmothers are going to be out on the streets protesting. Gender rights activists, the film industry, Baddie journalists and Goodie journalists are already out there with rival protests, soon they will be joined by the NC's fraternal organisations, and the UML will field its own affiliated groups to demand the PM's resignation. And as soon as it gets a little warmer, the ruling party will also be out on the streets that it newly widened protesting against the protesters. Must be one helluva job these days being a riot policeman.



Mukti-cha is willingly allowing himself to be BRB's lighting rod to atone for having deserted the Maobaddie party during the revolution. As an ultra-chauvinist ethno-federalist the Attorney General has done everything in his power to pardon war crimes and now finds himself splattered as the fhit hit the san after he sent written instructions to Dailekh police to stop investigating Dekendra's torture and murder. Doesn't look like Comrade Freedom is going to the Land of the Free in his lifetime.



The total bill for the Dash Baddie Convention has just come in: Rs 25 million of the cash they extorted from Kathmandu businesses. And what did they achieve: they carried on the Kangresi tradition of keeping septuagenarian Buda Kaka Kiran at the helm. Poor Comrades Cloudy and Bigplopp, they thought their time had come.



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ISSN 1814-2613

CDO Regd No 194/056/57 Lalitpur, Central Region Postal Regd. No 09/069/70