Nepal’s political leaders should take some time off to study the findings from recent polls. Although disillusionment and apathy run high, the people haven’t yet given up on them. But they don’t want any more empty promises and slogans. Increasing number of Nepalis think federalism may not be so bad, but a majority doesn’t want provinces to be named after ethnicities. They will vote for the party that think is best placed to provide them jobs, education, healthcare, and development.
The good news from public opinion polls is that Nepalis haven't given up on the parties, but they won't vote for crooks and liars from the past.

Interestingly, the acceptance of federalism among urban respondents appears to be going up steadily in the past four months from 46 per cent to 56 per cent. Those in favour of ethnically-based federalism is still low (17 per cent) with more than half supporting North-South federal units.

The responses seem to corroborate the findings of The Citizen Survey 2013 carried out nationally in April-May by International IDEA as well as the results of the Himalmedia Nationwide Public Opinion Poll 2013.

The IDEA Citizen Survey showed that 69 per cent of Nepalis said they hadn’t yet made up their minds about who they would vote for. Half the respondents were confused or did not understand concepts like federalism, but among those who did, support for it has risen to 73 per cent with a majority wanting as few provinces as possible. Interestingly, nearly 7 out of every 10 respondents said they will vote along party lines and not along ethnic lines.

The political parties would do well to re-invent themselves, have more women candidates, and not field the crooks and liars of the past. The people don’t want any more promises, they don’t want speeches. They will vote for the party that they think is best placed to provide them jobs, education, healthcare, and development.

We have often written in this space about the widespread public unrest and disappointment with leaders who have repeatedly squandered opportunities to come up with political compromises necessary to extricate the country from the morass they got us into.

And now, a party-less government that itself is in life support, seems to be having private doubts about November polls.

It must be a desperate attempt to cling to straws that the proportion of people not interested in the vote has gone down in the weekly Himalmedia Bazzar Poll (See Page 18). The tracking poll carried out every week in 12 urban centres around the country and supported by The Asia Foundation, shows that only 22 per cent of the 363 respondents last week were in the Don’t Know/Won’t Say category, compared to more than 26 per cent a month ago.

Asked who among the current crop of top leaders they trust the most, Sushil Koirala of the NC has increased his lead to 13.5 per cent, compared to 12.7. UCPN (M) Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal has also climbed one point to 9.4 per cent to put him on second spot. Baburam Bhattarai, on the other hand, has dropped from 9.1 per cent to 8.3 per cent in the past month. The pro-Maoist splinter Kathmandu Valley chapter of the RPP-N has nearly doubled his rating from 3.6 percent to 6.6 per cent. But UML leader Kamal Thapa of the RPP-N has nearly doubled his rating from 3.6 percent to 6.6 per cent. But UML leader Kamal Thapa of the RPP-N has nearly doubled his rating from 3.6 percent to 6.6 per cent.

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The political parties would do well to re-invent themselves, have more women candidates, and not field the crooks and liars of the past. The people don’t want any more promises, they don’t want speeches. They will vote for the party that they think is best placed to provide them jobs, education, healthcare, and development.
Almost everything is on hold until the internal power struggle within the UCPN (M) is sorted out

A party political dispute within the CPN (Maoist) has been decided beforehand. The crisis within the UCPN (M) therefore is not really ideological, but rather the clash of ambitions between Dahal and Bhattarai. Unless a new system in which all positions and members are elected is introduced, the party’s special congress will just be a show in which everything, as usual, has been decided beforehand.

Muma Ram Khanal was a central leader of the CPN (Maoist) during the insurgency. His new column, Inside Out, will appear every fortnight in Nepali Times.
Move over, MDGs. Here come the SDGs.

Surendra Shrestha served in the United Nations Environment Program’s Rio+20 Secretariat as Team Leader for Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development that is drawing up new sustainable development goals for the 21st century. He explained the goals to Nepali Times during a visit to Kathmandu this week.

The intensity and frequency of natural disasters are increasing due to climate change. Inequality is causing civil unrest. Current scientific knowledge compels us to have a more holistic approach to address these crises as countries. The SDGs are a part of discussions at the United Nations General Assembly for the post-2015 Development Agenda that will set the direction for the rest of the 21st century.

So, the SDGs have been influenced by the success of the Millennium Development Goals? The MDGs have brought the international community together around eight mainly social goals for developing countries. These targeted the ‘bottom billion’ and provided direction and focus for the donor community. MDGs that expire in 2015 have shown that collective action is possible when there is agreement at the global level and have had an impact on the current discussions for SDGs and post-2015 Development Agenda in both the process and content. Through a more inclusive process, 70 UN member states are discussing and negotiating the SDGs and they have also recognised the need for sustainable development with equal treatment of all three dimensions-economic, social, and environmental-in the implementation. The SDGs will be for all countries, not just for developing ones, and will work on priorities that now need to be clustered into a few goals that build on the MDGs.

Aren’t century-long targets too long? How are we ever going to make sure the targets are met? The discussions at the UN on SDGs are ongoing and is hoped to be completed by September 2015. The goals will be an action plan for the next 15 years with immediate and urgent actions to achieving long-term goals. At the global level, SDGs will be aspirational and universal, and a participatory approach will help countries define national targets to meet these goals. The metrics will be important and common indicators will ensure the measurement will be a part of national statistical bureaus.

Are there going to be resources for poorer countries to meet the basic needs targets? An expert working group on finance from over 30 countries will begin deliberations on finance for sustainable development. Given the current financial landscape, the discussions will include ODA, technology support as well as issues such as trade. The BRICS countries will begin deliberations on finance for sustainable development. Given the current financial landscape, the discussions will include ODA, technology support as well as issues such as trade. The BRICS countries are expected to play a bigger role in both the governance and contribution of the financial architecture for the 21st century.

Nepal has made dramatic progress in attaining almost all of the MDGs. What are our prospects vis-à-vis SDGs? Nepal is a member of the Open Working Group on SDGs and will be a signatory to the SDGs when it is completed in 2015. The Planning Commission will need to embrace the SDGs in its planning process and, as a country in the less developed category, Nepal will receive external assistance to achieve the SDGs like the MDGs with political support.

Personally, what was the most challenging part of the negotiations? In the Secretariat it was to communicate to the negotiators the complex technical issues in a simple easy to understand briefs and to understand the group dynamics to reach a consensus on a given topic and their interconnectedness to other topics.
As we approach the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, the lessons of 1914 are more about simply the dangers of national animosities. The origins of the Great War include a fascinating precedent concerning how financial globalisation can become the equivalent of a national arms race, thereby increasing the vulnerability of the international order.

In 1907, a major financial crisis emanating from the United States affected the rest of the world and demonstrated the fragility of the entire international financial system. The response to the current financial crisis is replaying a similar dynamic. The aftermath of the 1907 crash drove the hegemonic power of the time – Great Britain – to reflect on how it could use its financial clout to enhance its overall strategic capacity. Between 1905 and 1908, the British Admiralty developed the broad outlines of a plan for financial and economic warfare against Europe’s rising power, Germany. Economic warfare, if implemented in full, would wreck Germany’s financial system and force it out of any military conflict. When Britain’s naval visionaries confronted a rival in the form of the Kaiser’s Germany, they understood how power could thrive on economic destruction.

Pre-1914 Britain anticipated the private-public partnership that today links technology giants such as Google, Apple, or Verizon to US intelligence agencies. London banks undertook most of the world’s trade; Lloyd’s provided insurance for the world’s shipping. These financial networks provided the information that enabled the British government to discover the sensitive strategic vulnerabilities of the opposing alliance. For Britain’s rivals, the financial panic of 1907 demonstrated the necessity of mobilising financial power themselves. The US, for its part, recognised that it needed a central bank analogous to the Bank of England. American financiers were persuaded that New York needed to develop its own commercial trading system to handle bills of exchange in the same way as the London market and arrange their monetisation (or ‘acceptance’).

Some of the dynamics of the pre-1914 financial war are now re-emerging. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, financial institutions appear both as dangerous weapons of mass economic destruction, but also as potential instruments for the application of national power. In managing the 2008 crisis, foreign banks’ dependence on US-dollar funding constituted a major weakness and required the provision of large swap lines by the Federal Reserve. Addressing that flaw requires renationalisation of banking and breaking up the activities of large financial institutions. For European bankers, and some governments, current efforts by the US to revise its approach to the operation of foreign bank subsidiaries within its territory highlight that imperative. They view the US move as a new sort of financial protectionism and are threatening retaliation.

Geopolitics is intruding into banking practice elsewhere as well. Russian banks are trying to acquire assets in Central and Eastern Europe. European banks are playing a much-reduced role in Asian trade finance. Chinese banks are being pushed to expand their role in global commerce. Many countries have begun to look at financial protectionism as a way to increase their political leverage.

The next step in this logic is to think about how financial power can be directed to national advantage in the case of a diplomatic conflict. Sanctions are a routine (and not terribly successful) part of the pressure applied to rogue states like Iran and North Korea. But financial pressure can be much more powerfully applied to countries that are deeply embedded in the global economy.

In 1907, in the wake of an epochal financial crisis that almost brought a complete global collapse, several countries started to think of finance primarily as an instrument of raw power that could and should be turned to national advantage. That kind of thinking began to look at the theme ‘Own the Business’. That kind of thinking had feature in its promotional campaigns and activities.

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In the global blind spot

Nepal is in serious need of rebranding and restoring self-esteem

Protocol violations by former prime ministers, ministers, and leaders as they queued up outside Dwarika’s Hotel last week to meet Indian Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid set off a self-righteous nationalistic uproar in Nepal. Not a single newspaper could resist dashing off an outraged editorial. Many saw it as an affront to Nepal’s sovereignty and national pride. Though such criticism was not unwarranted, this was not the first time our leaders have chosen to ignore protocol. From Baburam Bhattarai to Pushpa Kamal Dahal, from Madhav Kumar Nepal to GP Koirala, they have all been guilty of hosting or visiting ambassadors and dignitaries without the knowledge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

While a particularly egregious example of our leadership’s lack of political acumen and tact, the queue at Dwarika’s was only the latest proof of Nepal’s sinking image in regional and global politics. What does it say about a country where ex-prime ministers line up to kowtow before a foreign minister and use the occasion to bad-mouth fellow Nepalis, weep excuses, grovel and beg, and come up with no coordinated national response to resolve our national crisis? Never in our history, not even when our neighbour to the south was British India, have we stooped so low.

One might argue that Nepal is an important trading and investment partner for its northern and southern neighbours and this may give us an inflated opinion about our own geo-strategic importance. Given our economic crisis and political mismanagement, the only reason our neighbours are interested in us is because Nepal might just blow up.

Our trade deficit with India of Rs 290 billion a year is so heavily lopsided that India doesn’t even see it in its own national interest anymore. Petroleum imports have doubled in three years and because of our lack of foresight in switching to renewable energy, it will continue to grow. And even as we try to extricate ourselves from the FAFT’s (Financial Action Task Force) ‘grey’ list and create a more conducive environment for foreign direct investment, unless there is long-term political stability and continuity in economic policy, we will carry on being regarded as the poorest and sickest country in the region.

Trips to China and India have long been a rite of passage for our prime ministers, but it took more than a decade after Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji’s tour in May 2001 for the next premier to step on Nepali soil. Cancelled at the last minute and rescheduled, when Wen Jiabao finally made it to Kathmandu in January 2012, the visit lasted for just five hours. Nepal was just on the way from somewhere to nowhere.

India’s record is even more abysmal, with the last prime ministerial visit taking place 16 years ago. Compare this to Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Afghanistan which have been hosting successive Indian and Chinese prime ministers and presidents – almost one major visit a year. For three years now, Nepal has also had no ambassador in the country that is politically and economically the most important to us.

Outside of South Asia, too, Nepal seems to have lost what little clout it had. Darring the occasional trips by heads of aid agencies and experts, high profile visitors just don’t bother anymore. It is as though Europe and the United States have outsourced their Nepal policy to New Delhi and so a Kathmandu pit-stop is no longer deemed necessary.

Although bilateral relationships hinge on more than glossy photo-ops, these visits have symbolic value. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made a two-day pit visit to Dhaka during her Asia trip last year before heading to India. While confirming the value the Obama administration placed on economic ties with Bangladesh, the trip also marked the US’s endorsement of Bangladesh as a role model for other developing countries where trade now supersedes aid.

It’s not surprising, then, that except for major events like Everest anniversaries and plane crashes, Nepal falls in the international media’s blind spot. The scant coverage it gets is usually heavily influenced by Indian views, with the nation pegged somewhere between a failing and a failed state.

Nepal is in serious need of rebranding and restoring its self-esteem. The place to start is to stop blaming others and each other. Nepali leaders need to first deliver on promises to their own people and get our politics right.
A decade ago, there were a handful of Nepali mountain bikers. It wasn’t surprising considering mountain biking is one of the more expensive individual sports in the world. Today not only is it incredibly popular as a recreational activity among young Nepalis, but local riders are dominating races at home and a few even abroad despite the obvious lack of support and resources.

Ajay Pandit Chhetri, current Nepal national champion, three-time Yak Attack winner and 2013’s runner up, won three of the seven races in the UK this year, most recently the Midlands Cross-Country Championships 100-kilometre marathon. In 2011 he placed second in the Trans Wales Mountain Bike Stage Race, the largest in the UK.

Narayan Gopal Maharjan, this year’s Yak Attack winner, last year’s runner up and currently the 2nd nationally ranked rider, has what his coach, Ton Evers, calls “sustained power he has never seen on longer climbs”. On a pre-Yak Attack ride with competitors, his heart rate was 15-20 per cent lower on the climbs than professional riders, meaning he required significantly less effort. This power was on full display as he dominated the field on longer climbs”. On a pre-Yak Attack ride with competitors, his heart rate was 15-20 per cent lower on the climbs than professional riders, meaning he required significantly less effort. This power was on full display as he dominated the field.

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Along with Chhetri and Maharjan there are several younger riders with tremendous potential including Aayman Tamang (3rd place Yak Attack, 4th ranked nationally) and Roan Tamang (5th Yak Attack, 3rd ranked nationally) both of whom are under 20. However, the challenges for Nepali cyclists have remained more or less the same. While international racers have the support of their national cycling Federation and race professionally for teams sponsored by companies who get free marketing supporting them, in Nepal even top riders support teams.

Young Nepali riders continue to dominate local races, but need greater exposure and financial support to excel at the international level. The Nepal Cycling Association recently received international support for training riders for the 2016 Olympics in Rio from the Ravenswell Foundation, a Swiss organisation that promotes development through entrepreneurship and sport. To fill the gap in the racing circuit, the Himalayan MTB Cross-Country Cup Race Series was started a month ago by with its first race in June. Five more races are planned and the organisers want to turn it into an annual event.

On an individual level, Jenny Lama and Santosh Rai who run Himalayan Singletrack, a mountain bike retail store and tour operating company, recently started the first professional mountain bike team in Nepal called Singletrack Team. “We created this team because we wanted to build a public profile of riders, encourage local interest, and get businesses involved in sponsorship,” say Rai and Lama. “We hope others follow our lead.” As more young Nepalis take up mountain biking, there couldn’t be a better time for corporations to step up and sponsor teams.

With their unmatched talent and passion, Nepali riders are more than capable of competing with the world’s top riders. What they need now is increased local support, professional teams and races, along with more opportunities to race at international events. “Training can only take us so far, it’s the actual racing experience that helps us make it to the next level. And for this we need a well-organised, regular local race circuit as well as opportunities to take part in international events,” explains Chhetri.

Recognition of local riders is also limited. Chhetri admits he is more recognised in Europe because of his Yak Attack and European success than he is in Nepal despite being a three-time national champion and Yak Attack winner. Maharjan, Aayman, and Roan just put on valuable experience on the international race circuit this year when they were denied visas to the US for a two-month international race circuit as well as opportunities to take part in international events. Recognition of local riders is also limited. Chhetri admits he is more recognised in Europe because of his Yak Attack and European success than he is in Nepal despite being a three-time national champion and Yak Attack winner. Maharjan, Aayman, and Roan just put on valuable experience on the international race circuit this year when they were denied visas to the US for a two-month international race circuit as well as opportunities to take part in international events.

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1981: Four Indian Army men - captains HC Kohli (team leader), H Chauhan, Nima Doriy Sherpa, Nar Bahadur Gurung - set out to traverse the entire Himalayan range alpine style. If they succeed, they will be the first to complete the trans-Himalayan expedition, setting a new record.

1982: After 485 days of hiking through leech infested jungles in Arunachal Pradesh of north east India, trudging through vast stretches of snow, climbing three peaks, crisscrossing 48 passes and glaciers, and experiencing the mountain life of three countries - India, Bhutan, Nepal - the men complete their mission by unfurling the Indian flag at 6,110m in Karakoram Pass, Ladakh. At a press conference in Delhi, the team introduces their fifth member Druk, a Tibetan mastiff found in Bhumthang valley of Bhutan who accompanied the soldiers as they completed the 8,000km journey. Druk seems unfazed by all the attention.

More than 30 years since the team completed its phenomenal 1981 expedition, we meet Nar Bahadur Gurung (pic, far right) in Kathmandu. Born in Pokhara, Gurung joined the Indian Army in the 1970s. After retirement in 2000, the 66-year-old father of four spent a few months in Darjeeling before heading home to start a trekking agency with a friend.

Gurung’s face lights up as he sets out a collage of photos, scraps of old newspaper clippings, and route maps in front of us and begins to reminisce about the journey that made history and inspired a generation. “Ours was one of the most difficult expeditions of all time,” he says. Sponsored by the Indian Army Adventure Foundation, the expedition was the brain-child of its director, Lt Col SS Singh, who worked closely with the four men in outlining possible routes and also supervising the training session. Says Gurung: “Some of my fondest memories in the army are from the time I spent at the mountaineering and skiing institute in Kashmir. And the day I found out I had been chosen for the expedition, I was the happiest man alive.”

The team set out on 15 January 1981 from Gelling at the Indo-Tibet border in Arunachal Pradesh. From there they marched to Bomdila, before crossing into Paro and Thimpu in Bhutan, Gangtok in Sikkim, and entering Nepal via the Kanchenjunga range. In the Nepalese circuit of the expedition, the team passed through Makalu Base Camp,
Determination, team spirit, and love for adventure took four soldiers on a never-before attempted journey through the Himalayas.

Before Catriona Williams had a riding accident that led to a spinal cord injury that paralyzed her, she never gave much thought to cycling. But earlier this month she returned from a grueling two-week ride across the Himalaya from Lhasa to Kathmandu via Everest Base Camp.

Her team of 15 cyclists, among whom were three tetraplegics including herself, rode their hand cycles along the old trans-Himalayan trading route in a campaign to raise $1 million to help find a cure for spinal cord injury.

Williams was New Zealand’s champion equestrian and had represented her country in competitions all over the world. In 2002 she fell off a horse at a championship and was paralysed. She started The Catwalk Spinal Injury Trust to raise awareness about spinal cord injury.

The goal this time was to make cycling as difficult as possible by riding down from the roof of the world. None of the participants had hand-cycled for so long at one go and certainly not at such high altitude through rough roads. Before Williams and her team went to Lhasa, doctors had recommended seeking an easier challenge, but they persevered and even returned a day earlier than scheduled.

“Surprisingly, it was tougher on our able-bodied cyclists than it was for us,” says Williams. “The 100km from the turnoff to Everest Base Camp through Rongbuk was all rough road and was harder for us.”

The team also included tetraplegics fellow-New Zealanders Neil Cudby and Rob Creagh and when they finally got to the Everest Base Camp one of their bikes broke down, so the remaining two towed him to the destination. It was a world-first for tetraplegics to have done the Lhasa-Kathmandu ride. Williams says the feeling of having overcome this momentous task has still not sunk in.

It was a personal goal for the three of us, to see how far our bodies would go,” says Williams. “But the main aim was to raise awareness and money, so that kids who break their necks get help. Even if there is no time for us to fully recover and be able to walk and dance again, we want to make a difference for the next generation.”

The team raised $600,000 and Williams hopes this will help fund spinal cord injury. Says Williams: “Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.”

Sunil Pandey

www.catwalk.org.nz

Pedal Power, #659
Watch interview of Catriona Williams
MCUBE CHAKATI GUFF, talk and presentation by visual artist Ashmina Ranjit. 29 July, 6 to 6.30pm, Gallery Mcube, Chakpati, Lalitpur

Monsoon Yoga @ Monastery, engage in classic Monsoon Yoga @ Monastery, Teku road, (01)4421634/242832

Bottoms up, let your taste buds and olfactory nerves go on a joy ride at the 20th Annual wine tasting festival at Khirya. Rs 200 per glass or Rs 800 per half litre. July to August, Khiryas, Thamel, (01)2340442

Goal, team up with friends and take on other teams in the KTM Nights Cup football tournament. Rs 1000 per team, 27 to 28 July. 8 am to 8pm, Grassroots Recreational Centre, Mandikat, 9841342635

NEVER SORRY, the inside story of Ai Weiwei, who inspired global audiences and blurred the boundaries of art and politics. 19 July, 5.30pm, Moksh, Lalitpur, (01)5524891

A People War, a permanent exhibition of photographs that portrays the reality of Nepal through 10 years of insurgency. Every day except Tuesday, 12 am to 4 pm, (01)5549914, www.madapuraskar.org

Cut, write a script, win $2700 prize money, and make your own movie. Deadlines 31 August, www.newnepalcinema.com/scipt2013

Together for Baitadi, ride to raise money to build an eco-friendly birthing facility in Baitadi. 20 July, register at www.socialburs.com

Voices, a talk program with media personalities Kunda Dixit and Narayan Wagle. 19 July, 9.45 am, Nepal Bharti Library, Nepal Airlines Building, New Road

Report it, hone your report writing skills with this at three day workshop. Rs 6000, 26 to 28 July, 9 am to 4.30pm, CareerMastor Nepal and HP Development Center, Pulchok, Lalitpur, (01)5554319

Photography Workshop, learn the tricks of basic photography with in-class lectures and practical shooting assignments. Rs 2000, 21 July to 24 August, Sundays and Wednesdays, 5 to 7pm, photo.orv HD, Jamshedpur, Lalitpur, learning@photocircle.com.np

Talk Talk, meet and share your ideas with Jon Shrestha, the 19-year-old author of crime fiction novel The Darkside. 22 July, 4.30 to 6 pm, Pasa Yard, Lalitpur

Spak and Friends, don’t miss an evening of music, dance, and stand-up comedy. 29 July, 7.45pm, Mohak, Jamshedpur

Dining

Dhokai Cafe, exquisite ambience, friendly service, cozy bar, place to see and be seen at. Patan Dhokai, Yata Maya Kendra, 5522233

Degaa Resto Lounge, for mouth watering Newari and Indian cuisine. Kumarpati, 023068879

Peri Peri, home of legendary Portuguese-flavored grilled chicken, enjoy dishes served with the trademark peri peri sauce. Jamshedpur, 9807563903

Chopstix, savoury Asian food cooked in true Chinese fashion sure to charm and impress. Try the famous drums of heaven. Kumarpati, 023552118

Yellow Chili, enjoy renowned Indian chef Sanjeev Kapoor’s signature Indian delicacies and a variety of other mouthwatering dishes. Thapathali

Alice Restaurant, step in for scrumptious Thakali, Chinese, Continental, and Japanese cuisine. Gairidhara, 9804392007

Events

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Display

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MUSIC

Monkey Temple Live, the band will perform its new single Sangai and covers of Incubus and Wolfmother among others. 19 July, Casa De Cass, Pulchowk.

Temple Tree Resort and Spa, a peaceful place to stay, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour and sauna.it also hosts three different restaurants to cater to your needs. Gaurighat, Lakeside, 977-4249213.

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

Music Jams, enjoy great live music every Tuesday. 7pm, Moksh, Jhamikhel.

KORA

The third edition of the Kathmandu Kora Cycling Challenge will take place on Saturday. More than 700 cyclists have registered to take part in the challenge that aims to raise 1 million rupees to build a model eco-friendly birthing centre in Baitadi. The Kora is a circuit route of the Kathmandu valley’s lower hills, sub urban areas and sights. Participants can choose to take on the 50 km challenge or the more demanding 75 km. For each kilometer covered, the Kathmandu Kora requests participants to pledge Rs 100 for support.

If you are not a cyclist, you can help by choosing to sponsor a few kilometers or others cyclists taking on the challenge. Last year’s challenge saw participation of 300 riders and collectively raised over Rs 950,000 which went towards building a birthing facility at Samritu in Rukum.

Date: 20 July 2013
Time: 7am
Place: Patan Durbar Square
Website: www.kathmandukora.net

Head down to Patan Museum and show your support for Baby Life Home- a home for children infected with HIV/AIDS. Moving forward with the motto ‘altruism is religion’, Baby Life Home has been providing shelter and education to infected children from Dang, Baitadi, and Salyan. Nepali folk instrumental band Kutumba performs live along with Hari Maharjan and Monsif to support the home. Also enjoy Slam poetry by Word Warriors.

Entrance: Rs 300
Date: 19 July
Time: 5pm onwards
Venue: Patan Museum Courtyard

Reggae Explozion, share the reggae vibes in an evening with Joint Family Internationale. 19 July, 7.45pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel.

Good earthy food

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Time: 5pm onwards
Venue: Patan Museum Courtyard


**Jiro Dreams of Sushi**

**MUST SEE**

Sophia Pande

Is your profession your passion? If it isn’t shouldn’t it be? Well, of course we all know it isn’t easy, after all, how many of us are able to live for our work? To do what we love? Most of us work so we can live, but not Jiro Ono, the 85-year-old Michelin starred chef who wakes in the morning having dreamt about how to perfect his already sublime sushi and heads to his revered father’s autocratic system. After Yoshikazu, his hardworking and loyal as he is 50 but still works under his demanding father to his two sons, Yoshikazu and Takashi, both of whom have apprenticed at his restaurant. Both sons are clearly very talented and rigorously trained, but it is unclear whether either of them will be able to exist from behind the shadow of the god-like Jiro who is so revered that when he places a lovingly handcrafted sushi in front of his customers they are often too nervous to eat.

These complex human dynamics, as well as the finding, preparing, and making of the sushi are expertly but unobtrusively filmed by Gelb himself in a crystal clear cinematographic style that is perfect for such a closely observed documentary.

Most documentary makers manipulate their subject matter, writing scripts in advance and tweaking subject’s behaviour to create more drama. This is clearly not Gelb’s method. Having the precise eye and the instinct to choose the right subject, he steps back, letting events unfold for themselves, and so they do, with each character stepping forward quietly, gently, and yet trustingly so that we get a true sense of whom they are. This is the hallmark of a great documentary maker.

Jiro Dreams of Sushi is a pleasure to watch, it will make you ravenously hungry and wanting to rush to the nearest sushi place, it will make you want to book the next flight to Japan, but it will also make you think about traditions, good or bad, and whether or not that much hard work over the course of an entire life time is worth it for a moment or two of ephemeral perfection. Perhaps it is, if we could just get our hands on some of Jiro’s sushi.
**From the page to the stage**

**UJJWALA MAHARJAN**

When Samip Dhungel performed his poem *Chura* at Kala Saahitya Utsav in Jhapa in March this year, gasps of ‘amma’, ‘wow’, ‘once more’ filled the air. At the school where he was conducting a workshop for young poets, his poem drew similar reactions.

Seeing Samip so confident and poised on stage, it was hard to believe that the 24-year-old preferred the four walls of his room as his audience. And even though he had been a member of Word Warriors, a slam poetry group since 2011, he didn’t venture out. That changed seven months ago when he attended a workshop by visiting American slam poet - Sarah Kay. Samip is now not just performing poetry, but also teaching the art.

For some, the inspiration to make the leap from page to stage comes from watching poetry performances - live or on YouTube. For others like Samip getting on the stage is the wisest choice. The juicy and crispy pan-fried chicken breast with a treat.

Secondly, the excitement with which young students embraced slam poetry during the workshops and school visits with some teenagers attending the lit fest solely for the spoken word performances made us realise how thirsty Nepali youngsters are for such creative outlets, almost non-existent in our education system.

The next major event this year is the QC Awards: Slamming in Surkhet 2013. Organised by Quixote’s Cove bookshop in collaboration with Word Warriors and Kopila Valley School, six Word Warriors will travel to western Nepal for the 10-day event which begins on 1 August where they will visit schools, perform, and train teachers. Surkhet will also host its first ever inter-school slam poetry contest.

The cut throat competition among restaurants in Jhamel means only the fittest (or ones with very deep pockets) survive. Several have pulled their shutters down, only to be quickly replaced. Lhakpa’s Chulo is among a handful that has stuck it out for more than four years.

Nestled in a small lane off Jhamsikhel road, Lhakpa’s exudes a quiet and warm ambience, like an old inn. The restaurant has an indoor as well as a garden seating and true to its name, Chulo maintains traditional Nepali décor with earthy colours on its walls and loka paper table mats. The menu, also made of local loka paper, offers a modest selection of recipes from around the world. Nepali dal-bhat and Newari khaja alongside Swiss Rosti, Italian Risotto, and Thai green curry - take your pick.

For starters, we ordered fried prawn wrapped in bacon (Rs 550), one of the specials for the day. You can’t really go wrong when you wrap something in bacon, but as I took a mouthful I realised that maybe fried prawn is the wisest choice. The juicy and rich combination of the two was complimented by the Thai sweet sauce and the citrusy of lemon. Sadly, we had to savour every bite very slowly. The serving was only five pieces at Rs 110 each! The menu for the mains read so good, it was hard to decide. Finally we settle for pork chops (Rs 590) and chicken schnitzel (Rs 550). The pork chops were topped with Sauce Robert and served with steamed vegetables and a choice of rice, home fries or mashed potatoes. As I chewed, I could feel the chops had been marinated well to let the flavours seep in. The portions were perfectly cut and the meat was cooked just right. My friend claimed that he had been on a failed mission in Kathmandu to find good pork chops, but was thrilled by Lhakpa’s creation and ate it down to the bones.

My chicken schnitzel with capers, on a layer of lemon and butter sauce, was served with home fries and fresh organic green salad. Coated with flavourful crumbs and pan-fried until brown, the chicken breasts looked like they would be

A group trying to spread and promote spoken word, Word Warriors provides budding artists that gentle nudge.

Formed right after the QC Awards 2010, the first slam poetry workshop and competition in Nepal, Word Warriors was more or less restricted to its Facebook page in its early days. A handful of poets began performing at events around town and slowly the art form gained recognition. Eventually, the group started organising workshops in different venues, schools, and recently held a second inter-school slam poetry competition.

This year, Word Warriors is trying to take the slam movement outside Kathmandu in search of creative voices from all over Nepal. The art and literature festival and school visits in Jhapa were a great start for two main reasons: one, Word Warriors got an opportunity to perform alongside Nepali poets like Manu Manjil, Swapnil Smriti, Bhipun, and Buddhisasagar and expose the audience filled with Nepali literary stalwarts to this new kind of art form, and two, the energy and enthusiasm which the students showed was heartening.

Eventually, the group started organising workshops in different venues, schools, and slowly the art form gained recognition. Word Warriors provides budding artists that gentle nudge. For others like Samip getting on the stage is the wisest choice. The juicy and crispy pan-fried chicken breast with sauce and the citrusy of lemon. Sadly, we had to savour every bite very slowly. The serving was only five pieces at Rs 110 each!

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A treat. I was quite wowed by my first bite, the chicken tasted mild and went well with the pickle-like sourness of the capers. But as I dug in, I felt it was too mild and could use a little spice.

We wrapped up our meal with dark chocolate cake served with vanilla ice-cream (Rs 250). The cake was warm, spongy and like dark chocolate, not too sweet. Combined with vanilla ice-cream, it was the perfect end to the evening. I am going back.
Mystery fever

Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in 2004, leptospirosis ranked fourth (after typhoid, typhus, and pneumococcal pneumonia) as the cause of fever in over 800 consecutively admitted hospital patients. And yet for some reason leptospirosis is still overlooked by physicians and many medical colleges and residency programs don’t even include the disease in their curriculum.

Leptospirosis is acquired when water or soil contaminated with urine or reproductive fluids of infected animals gets into abrasions in our skin. The abrasions are typically followed by flu-like illness approximately 7-14 days later. In patients with mild Leptospirosis, the symptoms eventually subside. However, some like Ram Devi Shakya have severe leptospirosis, also known as Weil’s Disease which is characterised by respiratory and renal complications. These complications may lead to other organ failure and eventually death if the diagnosis is not made on time and medication not started immediately. Diagnosis is usually established by finding either high serum antibodies against leptospira polychromase chain reaction (PCR) test to look for leptospira DNA. Neither test is readily available in Nepal.

The highest incidence of this disease is in tropical countries like ours especially during the summer. In fact this disease is perceived to be common enough that many travel books advise visitors at high risk (for example those partaking in jungle safaris or recreational water sports like kayaking) to take prophylaxis. One such drug is doxycycline, but it should only be taken after consulting with a doctor who is well-versed in the prevalence, prevention, and treatment of leptospirosis.

If the doctors who looked after Ram Devi had used doxycycline from the beginning, she might have survived. Unfortunately, this humble and inexpensive drug is not used often in Nepal. Hence the importance of knowing what are the specific fever-causing bugs in our community with which Nepalis may be infected and empirically treating with appropriate antibiotics based on that knowledge even when laboratory back up is pending (specimen sent abroad in this case) or unavailable.

PREVENTION:
Avoid swimming or wading in water that might be contaminated with animal urine.
Avoid contact with potentially infected animals.
Wear protective clothing and footwear if you know you might be exposed to contaminated water or soil.
Drain contaminated water.
Control rats in and around the house.

CAUSE:
LEPTOSPIRA BACTERIA
Transmission: When water or soil contaminated with urine or reproductive fluids of infected animals gets into human through abrasions or cuts in the skin.

SYMPTOMS:
• High temperature
• Sudden headaches
• Chills
• Nausea and vomiting
• Diarrhoea
• Loss of appetite
• Muscle pain
• Conjunctivitis
• Rash

INCUBATION PERIOD
7-14 DAYS

TREATMENT:
Early diagnosis and treatment prevent complications and save lives.
• Take doxycycline after consulting with physician.
• Travelers who are likely to be exposed to contaminated water can also take doxycycline.

SOME FACTS:
• Most doctors don’t even include the disease in their curriculum.
• One such drug is doxycycline, but it should only be taken after consulting with a doctor who is well-versed in the prevalence, prevention, and treatment of leptospirosis.
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Leptospirosis comes from the Greek word leptospira which means finely coiled organisms (spirochetes). In a study done at Patan Hospital and published in the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in 2004, leptospirosis ranked fourth (after typhoid, typhus, and pneumococcal pneumonia) as the cause of fever in over 800 consecutively admitted hospital patients. And yet for some reason leptospirosis is still overlooked by physicians and many medical colleges and residency programs don’t even include the disease in their curriculum.

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from the Indian perspective, it does not look like the opposition PDP’s political project. His selection will be seen as evidence of the fairness of the process.

For Delhi, therefore, the choice of Rasool could be a dilemma. Will they now pray for a stellar performance from Rasool and a defeat for India? Many will find it delicious to imagine him bowling the last over against Pakistan in an ODI in which Pakistan will win, or to see him as representing the Muslim temperamental and religious plurality, many would not miss the irony in his bowling or batting against Pakistan. Rasool will become a counter-argument against the idea of Pakistan.

Or imagine a situation in which Rasool is declared man of the match. Considering his penchant to lace his statements with the Arabic expression of ‘in the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful’ rest assured he will, in his acceptance speech, echo the lexicon of Pakistani who erroneously perceive themselves as representatives of the Muslim cricket world. For many, Rasool will become a counter-argument against the idea of Pakistan.

You can’t but imagine the flip side of these imagined situations. Suppose Rasool fails a poor showing and loses the match, disappointed voices are likely to hark to his Kashmiri identity and drop innuendos about his betrayal. The 24-year-old bears a harsh burden, in cricket and otherwise because of his Kashmiri Muslim identity. ashrafraz32@gmail.com

But Thinley irked New Delhi by playing fast and loose with China, which wants to keep India in the loop. He was also deemed to be extremely keen on engaging with the five permanent members of the UN (US, China, UK, France and Russia) which India wanted kept out of Bhutan. Thimphu had bestowed honorary consul status on citizens of these countries residing in Bhutan.

New Delhi seems to have therefore decided to nip Thinley’s plan before China’s growing shadow loomed over Bhutan and India and the best way to send the message was by cutting fuel subsidies just before elections. Free lunches are a rarity in international relations and Thinley forgot that.

In New Delhi, foreign policy architects are reconciled to the fact that as a regional power, it will invite hostility of sections in neighboring countries. But as with the blockade of the Nepal border in 1989-90, they haven’t got over their urge to retaliate as and when they see regional interests undermined, particularly vis-a-vis China. There is a price to pay: creating a long-term perception that Beijing is a bully.

New Delhi will have to take into account that as democracy develops deeper connections and among its other South Asian neighbours, governments will respond to the popular will. Despots, on the other hand, face no such compulsions and are easier to manipulate.
King Harisingh Deva of Simraongarh must have sat on his heavy-set chair while a pair of household staff was cross-legged on the black chlorite stone floor massaging sandalwood oil onto his feet. The masseuses must have been especially drowsy that day because of a combination of intolerable humidity, the postprandial partaking of raw beetle nut, and the soporific calls of cuckoos outside.

Despite the protestations of the chief of staff of the royal household, the servants didn’t seem to have their mind on the job at hand and the king didn’t look unduly concerned. The year was 1352 and Simraongarh palace was located deep within the dense jungles along what is now the Indo-Nepal border in Bara and Parsa districts. Harisingh Deva was a philosopher king intrinsically disposed to self-reflection and spent a considerable amount of time pondering the question of existence and the meaning of life. He was always on a different wave-length than those around him.

Fully alert with his chin cupped in his right hand, he sat gazing around his large airy verandah that monsoon afternoon, occasionally glancing down at the sleepy servants. Destiny had placed him on the throne, but he struggled to understand why. The question continually vexed him.

A grave expression suddenly took hold over the well-groomed face of King Harisingh—he turned to his left, then right, and then slowly towards the ceiling as he simultaneously placed his hands on the shoulders of either servant indicating to them to stop moving so he could listen to a distant rumble. “Go!” he thundered to the Chief of Staff. Destiny was playing itself out before his very eyes.

The invasion of Simraongarh by Gheyas-ud-din Tughlaq in 1352 had a far-reaching impact on Kathmandu Valley. The Indian art historian Heinrich Zimmer, alluding to the general geography of Simraongarh and the stone sculptures and artifacts discovered there, asserted that these ‘works were important historically because of the region’s geographical position between Nepal and Tibet in the north and Java, with its famous centres of Buddhist learning, in the southeast’. Zimmer was of the opinion that the region ‘inspired to a remarkable degree both the arts and the philosophies of these two realms’, inflections as he called them of the glorious Gupta period under the Pala and Sena dynasties (c. 730—1250AD).

The events surrounding the invasion of Simraongarh were going to have a far-reaching impact not just on King Harisingh’s kingdom, but also on Bhaktapur in Kathmandu Valley to the north-west. The King’s fallback option in case of an attack was to retreat to Bhaktapur, which is indeed what he did.

He was prepared for this attack and had made particularly special arrangements to safeguard a powerful tile-shaped mystical diagram (yantra) that was the family’s tutelary deity and which he had resolved to protect at all costs.

It is this yantra that is now the centrepiece of Bhaktapur’s Darbar Square and which is discreetly housed within the exquisite Mul Chok or Taleju temples, accessible only via the famous golden gate of the Sun Dhoka. The gate itself is crowned by a beautiful bronze sculpture of a four-headed, ten-armed Durga, which is an anthropomorphic representation of Taleju, or the human depiction of the yantra carried to Bhaktapur during the flight from Simraongarh by King Harisingh Deva and...
PAST TENSE: The Mulchok where King Harisingh Deva’s ‘yantra’ is now located in a 19th century water colour right. Painting of the Sun Dhoka in Bhaktapur in 1853 as rendered by Henry Ambrose Oldfield (below, right). Bhaktapur Darbar Square in an early photograph from the beginning of the 20th century (below) and today (big picture).

The stuff of Mithila

The Mithila Kingdom held sway over Kathmandu Valley twice in the past 1,000 years, its influence on the evolution of Newari culture and language has been well documented. The first period of Mithil influence was in the 11th century during the reign of Nayna Deva of Simraonghar, located in what is now Bara district, which lead very likely to the deenominators of the princes who ruled Kathmandu Valley. The second time it was the last king in Nayna Deva’s dynasty, Harisingh Deva, who had to flee Muslim invaders to Kathmandu Valley.

Later, the Malla king of Kathmandu married Harisingh Deva’s grand-daughter. Thus, the Malla reign of Kathmandu Valley was heavily influenced by Mithil culture. Mithil was the official language of the court, and Newari music, art and language derived a lot from Mithila. The Shikharaka architecture of the Mahaboudha (this stupas as I understand is a facsimile of the temple at Bodhagaya) and Krishna temples of Lalitpur Mahaboudha (this stupa as I understand is a facsimile of the temple at Bodhagaya) and Krishna temples of Lalitpur were brought in during this period, indicating an influence not just of Mithila, but of south India on Kathmandu Valley. Indeed, there appear to be historical records pointing to a connection between the Valley and Mithila, and more specifically between Bhaktapur and Simraonghar, even beyond to Karnataka in South India.

Given this historical perspective, the current tussle between the plains and the hills in Nepal seems petty and banal, based on an inaccurate understanding of history. And a time when relations between Nepal and India are limited to mundane politics and petty point-making, it may do well for us to remember how closely our cultures are interrelated. Instead, the lack of a dignified position by Nepal and India’s micro-managing has taken away from the glory of the past. More research is required to dig out the details of these connections, and a joint Indo-Nepal archaeological project is needed of the ancient kingdoms along the plains. One could start with Simraonghar, which is a testament to the bonds between India and Nepal that pre-date both nation states.

Bhaktapur and Karnataka?

The question therefore remains: is there a credible historical connection between Bhaktapur and Karnataka? A Fragmentary Inscription from Simraonghar: The Recent Mithil Capital Records Carlen, Delhi-October 1982, Ancient Nepal, Department of Archaeology Kathmandu.

Further readings:

- A Test Trench Through the Fortifications of Simraonghar. Visok, Balaka, Tomer, Okt. 1983 Ancient Nepal Department of Archeology, Kathmandu
- Simraonghar: The Kingdom City and its Age by Carlen, RM, Contributions to Nepalese Studies, CIHS, Thiruvananthapuram, Vol XVI, 1989
- Architecture of the Newars: Niels Gutschow
- The Art of the Kathmand Valley, Michael Holt: History of Nepal series, Dilli Raman Regmi
- The Art of the Kathmand Valley, Heinrich Zimmer: Philemon Book

Gurudutt Mishra (pic, above) lives in Mahapal of Lalitpur and his ancestors came to Kathmandu Valley with King Harisingh Deva’s entourage more than 700 years ago. Mithil Brahmin families like the Mishra and Jhas still live in the midst of Newari families like Shresthas, Pradhans, Bajracharyas, Shakyas, Tamrakars in inner city Patan and Bhaktapur. They speak Nepali with strong Newari accents, observe all the local festivals and are indistinguishable. Bhaskar Koirala is doing a PhD at Peking University and heads the Nepal Institute for International and Strategic Studies.

The Art of the Kathmand Valley, Heinrich Zimmer: Philemon Book

Lukas Grimm

KATHMANDU VALLEY

SIMRAONGHAR

BHAJTAPUR

in South India under the lordship of Chalukya Emperors such as Vikramaditya VI and Someswara III. They had regularly conducted military campaigns as far north as Mithila which they managed to subdue. Simraonghar had been a seat of power for these Karnataka commanders since around the late 11th century from which time until the first quarter of the 14th century and King Harisingh Deva’s flight to Bhaktapur, a mere 250 years intervened.

The question therefore remains: is there a credible historical connection between Bhaktapur and Karnataka? Bhaskar Koirala is doing a PhD at Peking University and heads the Nepal Institute for International and Strategic Studies.
Politics of poverty

Bibek Pondel, Setopati, 15 July

When Finance Minister Shankar Koirala declared a hike in salary of government employees during the budget announcement on Sunday evening, people immediately quipped, “Why has the state increased the salary of its staff and neglected ordinary citizens?” While the question is valid, it is a difficult one to answer given the realities of Nepal’s economy.

Everyone in this country has demands. Students want free, quality education, farmers want subsidies, the unemployed want an allowance, and the poor want government assistance. But how can all these demands be accommodated by an economy that is moving at a snail’s pace?

Countries that provide citizens with free education, affordable health services, and subsidies are often bought up during such discussions. But what we must not forget is that these are mostly advanced nations where the number of unemployed and the student population, Nepal, on the other hand, has to pay for these subsidies from the pockets of a small, relatively poor taxpaying population. What is worse is that the number of practising ordinary Nepalis who make these subsidies possible are being misused by those in power. For example: chartering helicopter for Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Kathmandu’s road expansion driven, food for fancy cars, and importing gold ornaments.

The more well-off citizens there are in a country, the easier it is to support the less fortunate ones. For example: when there are more employed people, setting aside allowance for the unemployed becomes an easier option. So are we always going to beg for subsidies for the poor or are we going to open up opportunities for employment and revenue? There are seven million students in Nepal, are we going to ask for free education to feed student leaders and pay for tuition classes or are we going to work to improve the quality of education so that there are more qualified Nepalis? The decision is ours.
Dharmaraj Thapa. The very name evokes strong feelings of love of country, of Nepal’s mountains, rivers and plains, and one starts humming familiar songs made famous by Nepal’s best-known poet and singer.

At age 90, Thapa is bed-ridden at home in Swayambhunath. He cannot talk and doesn’t recognise visitors. Thapa’s life was devoted to documenting, recording, and conserving Nepal’s treasure house of folk lyrics and music. At a time when Nepal didn’t even have roads, he walked right across the country and travelled to the Nepali-speaking parts of north-east India in search of poetry and songs.

Today, Thapa’s songs like Nepali le maya maryo and Dhuru dhuru narou ama have become eternal anthems for the Nepali nation, evoking the neglect and exclusion that has driven Nepalis to suffer and migrate for work. The words of these songs are as relevant today as they were in the 1960s when Thapa first recorded them.

His inspiration was the traditional troubadour of Nepal, the gandarvas. It was Thapa who first brought the gandarvas to Nepal’s musical mainstream and recognised their role in voicing the Nepali people’s stoic acceptance of suffering and hardship. Thapa ‘discovered’ Jhalak Man Gandarva and brought him to the national stage, as well as another 200 singers from Pokhara’s Batlechaur where he was born, giving them employment and even taking one on a tour of China with him.

Few know that Thapa was involved even in the democracy struggle during the Rana rule and composed the song Prajatantra ko kaphal pakyo where he used words and music that people related to in order to rouse them. The lyrics of his songs are simple, everyday Nepali words and when accompanied by the flute, sarangi, and madal they pour out the Nepali soul.

Thapa won the Madan Puraskar for his 1969 book of poetry, Mangali Kusum. Later he won the Jagadamba Shree for his life’s work as a poet and folk musician.

Thapa’s daughter, Gyanu Rana, is an accomplished singer in her own right. She says her father showed her the way. “I grew up in a musical household. He was progressive and taught me how to sing for a cause,” Rana told Nepali Times. Thapa took his daughter on visits to famous Nepali poets like Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Bai Krishna Sama, and Lekhnath Poudel.

Thapa was writing till four years ago when he turned 86. Gyanu Rana was by her father’s side this week after he was brought home from the hospital. She said: “Now he has stopped recognising us too. And it looks like the government has also forgotten him.”

Have Nepalis forgotten Dharmaraj Thapa?

SUNIR PANDEY

FORGOTTEN GENIUS: Ninety-year-old poet and songwriter Dharmaraj Thapa lies bedridden at his home in Swayambhunath Thapa (left). Thapa in his late 20s in this black and white photo (right).

nepalitimes.com
Listen to Nepali le maya mayo
Dhuru dhuru narou ama
How to make Nepalis less horny

Two headlines on the front pages of the Thursday editions of two national dailies proved just how confusing Nepali politics is.

I don’t know about you, but the Donkey has given up reading the papers to try to make head of tail of the riddle wrapped within an enigma that are the Maobaddies. Chairman Awesomeful has tried to appease his arch-rival Comrade Red Flag, who resigned from his vice-chairman post by offering to kick him upstairs with the title of ‘Senior Leader’. PKD must have got this idea when he air-dashed to Singapore with wife Sita last week, because it dropped broad hints that he’d rather he called ‘Senior-most Leader’. What this has proven, yet again, is that there is no such thing as a resignation among Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties. You either die a natural death as a card carrying member, or the party bumps you off.

It looks like the Kill Raj gobarment is in a quandary about what to do about the new all-party Gol Mech since there isn’t a round table in the land with a circumference that can hold all 139 political parties. Either one has to be imported, or the partyless gonement of Regmi Sir will have to rent the National Stadium for the purpose. There is also a bit of a problem about what to call this new organism. How about: ‘Apparatus of Apartchicks’, or ‘Even-Higher Level Politicians Mechanism (E-HLPM)’?

So it looks like the Traffic Police are finally serious about making Nepalis less horny. This week alone, they amputated 1,000 horns from buses and trucks plying Kathmandu streets.

Bridges help people cross rivers

Man Accused of Killing Lawyer Receives a New Attorney

CPN-M ‘welcomes’ HLPC invite; seeks open talks

CPN-Maoist rejects offer for talks; says ‘no need’

Unusually reliable sources tell the Ass that the real power struggle within the Cash Baddie Party is not about posts but is a race between PKD and BRB to be president of the republic one day. Having both been prime minister once, they have been there and done that. Therefore, the possibility of a party reunion, whether or not Baidya Bah will try to foil voting in November, indeed whether there will be elections at all, now hinge on the outcome of the Plenum that starts, even as we speak, on Friday.

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