GETTING COLD FEET
Parties are nervous about falling popularity and want to delay polls
EDITORIAL PAGE 2

A SPOT OF BOther
A state of statelessness in the plains is helping extremists
BY THE WAY by ANURAG ACHARYA PAGE 3

INSECURE ELECTIONS
If we must have elections in November, they better be proper elections
GUEST COLUMN
by BIHARI KRISHNA SHRESTHA PAGE 19

WIRED
Nepal’s old media must adapt to a more online readership or wither away
by BHRIKUTI RAI PAGE 16-17

THE ONLINE SINGING SENSATION
by DEVAKI BISTA PAGE 8-9

The Himalayan Bank American Express® Gold Credit Card for domestic use
- Fabulous savings of up to 20% on shopping, dining, hotels & spas
- Complimentary access to the Radisson lounge at the international airport in Kathmandu and to Altitude lounges at domestic airports in Delhi & Mumbai*
- Privileged access to world-class golf facilities at the Gokarna Golf Resort and the Royal Nepal Golf Club

To apply or to know more:
Visit www.himalayanbank.com or call our toll free number: 1800-20-12000

*Coming Soon

American Express is a registered trademark of American Express. The Himalayan Bank American Express® Gold Credit Card is issued by Himalayan Bank pursuant to a license from American Express.
For a party to refuse to go to the polls because it may not fare well, undermines democracy and its own credibility

by Amal Gurung

A Nepali tries to help food victims in quake-hit region. He is a true son of his motherland. Let us support such a brave son of Nepal.

Shaili

ECONOMY, STUPID

The author makes some excellent points about how to improve Nepal’s economy by boosting investments and demands. “Believing Mr Srinivasamadhavan, (‘Economy, stupid,’ Editorial, #667).” However, I feel that most of the recommendations are closely linked without improving tax collection and proper tax utilization. I don’t see many of the falling things in other places.

Morton Roisted

SINGU NUN

Watching Ani Choying Drolma perform alongside AR Rahman was like seeing contemporary art and traditional Tibetan art come to life. “Ani meets AR, Sahina Shrestha, (‘Singing Nun, (‘ECONOMY, stupid,’ Editorial, #667).” Ani truly has a melodious voice which is enhanced by the words of the powerful mantras she sings, and it is all for the success for future performances.

Tashi Lama
I

n the good old days, people from outside Kathmandu Valley used to refer to the capital as Nepal. And over the centuries, the high and mighty in Kathmandu took that literally to ignore the rest of the country. Even after democracy in 1990, the preoccupation of those who clawed their way to Singha Darbar remained the same. They pushed the country into a bloody conflict and six years ago let the Madhes burn.

As the country prepares for another election, angst is growing again in the plains.

I

n the good old days, people from outside Kathmandu Valley used to refer to the capital as Nepal. And over the centuries, the high and mighty in Kathmandu took that literally to ignore the rest of the country. Even after democracy in 1990, the preoccupation of those who clawed their way to Singha Darbar remained the same. They pushed the country into a bloody conflict and six years ago let the Madhes burn.

As the country prepares for another election, angst is growing again in the plains.

Lack of jobs, crumbling infrastructure, and a sense of being let down by their own leaders have left the region in a state of dangerous hopelessness.

The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly last May dashed Madhesi hopes for autonomy and self-rule, giving impetus to extreme voices calling for a violent uprising against Kathmandu. Extremists and political actors who have nothing to lose have found a fertile breeding ground in this state of statelessness and discontent. However, as with most cases of political extremism, it is not about the welfare of the disenfranchised but exploiting their discontent to gain power.

There are three forces in the Tarai who are against elections. The MJF-Nepal led by Upendra Yadav says it will take part in polls, but has some populist demands to appease the plains constituency. Through the ongoing negotiations with the High Level Political Committee, Yadav is just trying to consolidate his position and will join the election process.

Two weeks ago, Jaya Krishna Goit of the Tarai Liberation Front issued a statement attacking the current breed of Madhesi leaders for betraying the ‘One Madhes’ agenda. But he did not say anything against elections. Most armed groups operating on both sides of the border are not political in nature and chances are that they will be up for hire as campaign muscle. Last week’s attack on MJF-N’s Mahottari leader is a case in point. Some of these groups were hounded by the state during the Madhav Nepal government and feel betrayed by top Madhesi leaders who they believe failed to protect them at the time.

The third force which has the potential to create turmoil in the Madhes before elections is not a group, but an individual. After being released from jail in March, the corruption-tainted JP Gupta has maintained that he was framed by the state for standing up for the Madhes. But he has never bothered to explain the vast wealth he was accused of accumulating in office.

Anurag Acharya is Program Officer at the Centre for Investigative Journalism.
Now that the Baidya Maoists appear to be showing slightly more flexibility, the election for another Constituent Assembly is beginning to look more likely. Various public opinion surveys have shown over the past six months that the people want elections in the fervent hope that it might finally somehow help bring closure to this messy political transition.

This support for election, however, exists even though the people know fully well that the CA-2 will be composed mostly of the very same politicians who couldn’t get the earlier assembly to write a new constitution and used it shamelessly to line their own pockets and fill up party coffers. Despite being badly cheated, voters this time would like to use their franchise to register their disillusionment with politics-as-usual. Provided, of course, they are not terrorised by party cadre.

Which is why a fool-proof and effective security in the campaign period and during voting is of utmost importance if the election is to have any meaning. Our goal should not be elections just for the sake of elections.

Nepali politicians seem too busy with politics-as-usual to notice just how disenchanted the populace is. When cheating and intimidation get votes, the least of their worries is public opinion. The parties now number more than 120 and they are talking once more about a jumbo assembly of 601 members so that everyone gets a piece of the cake. Some parties demand ethnicity-based federalism. Although because donor funding has dried up for this agenda, erstwhile top guns seem to be deserting that particular bandwagon. One survey after another has shown that most people do not want the division of this densely multi-ethnic country into arbitrarily carved autonomous enclaves in the name of federalising the country. But since public opinion doesn’t matter for populist rabble rousers, politicians pretend not to see the writing on the wall.

The root cause for the self-centred nature of our politicians and their chronic lack of accountability is the fact that they come from the ranks of the feudal elite in our traditionally agrarian rural communities who have always imposed their own verdict on their underprivileged and disadvantaged constituents. Their game plan, for elections, as in the past, will consist of vote-buying, intimidating, cheating, and ballot stuffing. And for good measure, they try to stoke ethnic and geographic loyalties for vote banks. The YCL's violence and vandalism in Chitwan this week were reminiscent of the Maoist use of muscle in 2008 and could presage what will happen in November.

Insecure elections
If we must have elections in November, better ensure they are proper elections

Despite vestigial feudalism, however, Nepalis vote intelligently when elections are free and fair, as we saw in 1991 and local elections thereafter. Two Nepali innovations, forest user groups and mothers' groups, also show that grassroots democracy is alive and kicking in this country. Direct stakeholders in the communities irrespective of their caste, class, and gender differences are already empowered to participate in their own decision making.

As things stand, going by the various poll results, the contest in the upcoming election is going to be mainly between two positions: one favouring federalisation of the country and another against it, the latter favouring devolution of authority to the grassroots for accelerated local development.

Therefore, in order to enable people to cast their votes freely, security arrangements for November must be of the top order. But the police, Armed Police, and Nepal Army may not be up to the task. At present, security personnel are so demoralised that they act as bystanders when political goons hold entire districts hostage.

On the geopolitical front, neighbours India and China which purportedly want to see a politically stable Nepal, must coordinate the leverage with the parties so that they behave themselves. The aim should be to try to have a deal on the main facets of the constitution even before elections so it won’t really matter who wins. That is the only way to avert another stalled CA.

Insecure elections
If we must have elections in November, better ensure they are proper elections

Independent election observers too must do their homework early and not behave like the parachutists of 2008 who were so eager to see free and fair elections that they ignored evidence to the contrary.
Taking off with China

China’s Exim Bank is going ahead with a Rs 15.5 billion loan for the much-delayed new airport in Pokhara and extending another loan for the purchase of Chinese-made turboprop aircraft for Nepal Airlines’ domestic operations.

Officials from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Aviation, Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN), and Nepal Airlines held talks with a Chinese delegation led by Exim Bank’s Deputy General Director Lee Dan on Tuesday in Kathmandu to finalise the deal.

China CAMC Engineering Company won the bid for the Pokhara airport last year with a quoted price of Rs 28.6 billion. However, when it was found that this was almost double the estimate by previous consultants, CAMC agreed to the lower amount. CAAN is now evaluating the CAMC feasibility for the airport and will come up with changes in the final project before construction begins. Only Chinese companies were allowed to bid for the project.

Nepal Airlines is also going ahead with the acquisition of four Y-12A STOL and two MA-60 turboprops from Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) Holdings for US$ 30.5 million. The MA-60s were originally ordered for Nepal Army during the conflict and an advance had already been paid when there was regime change in Nepal in 2006 and the deal fell through.

Under the re-negotiated contract, China will provide one MA60 for free and Nepal Airlines will buy three Y12As and get one free.

Under the re-negotiated contract, China will provide one MA60 for free and Nepal Airlines will buy three Y12As and get one free. The state-owned airline plans to use MA-60s for trunk routes like Pokhara, Bhairawa, Biratnagar, Dhangadi, and Nepalganj and fly the Y12s to short remote area airstrips. But even here, CAAN needs to first provide airworthiness certificates for both planes.

Smart paint

Pushpapaints recently launched a smartphone app that will enable customers to select the colour of their choice within the comfort of their homes. The app also carries detailed information about the company’s dealers all over Nepal and is supported by both iOS and Android devices.

Winning numbers

The winners of Rs 100,000 for the final week and the bumper prize winner of Pepsi 20-20 campaign have been announced. The weekly winners are 487942X, 814270L, 200006F, 824910T, 244909G, 344018Y, 999275R, 3738917U while the winner of the grand prize worth Rs 2 million is 487669X. The seven-week campaign concluded on 6 August.

Better savings

Everest Bank launched a new deposit product called Asha 2070 fixed deposit. The product is targeted towards individuals who desire higher return than the regular fixed deposit rates the press release.

New offer

Himalayan Bank inaugurated its 40th branch office at Betrawati in Nuwakot. The bank has so far mobilised Rs 41.05 billion in deposits and disbursed Rs 41.05 billion in loan and advances. Himalayan Bank and American Express have launched Himalayan Bank American Express Gold Credit Card in Nepal. The card is available in two variants – domestic (India and Nepal) and international. According to the press release the domestic card also offers discount on hotels and spas.
The Nepali make up

Is our sense of Nepali identity so fragile that we need to get worked up about every perceived slight against our nationalism?

When MTV Coke Studio released a teaser for the song Zariya, a collaboration between AR Rahman, Ani Choying Drolma, and Jordanian singer Farah Siraj on 1 August, social media in Nepal was abuzz. Most seemed impressed by how effortlessly Rahman and his international team transcended national and cultural boundaries. But there was a smattering of Nepalis incensed by the studio’s description of Ani Choying as a ‘Tibetan Buddhist’ nun. ‘How dare they? She is a Nepali, she is ours’, they screamed on social networking sites. This was taken as another example of a deliberate affront to Nepal’s pride and of Indian hegemony.

Next day, Coke Studio backed down and changed Ani Choying to ‘Nepali nun’. But this week, when a monk set himself ablaze at Boudha, no one was in a hurry to claim him as one of our own. He was just a ‘Tibetan’, an outsider.

What made Ani Choying distinctively Nepali in the public psyche but not a self-immolator? While Choying is a Nepali citizen of Tibetan ethnicity, perhaps she thinks of herself as a Tibetan first and agrees with Coke Studio’s original label. If she was any ordinary person, her dual identity and loyalty would have immediately raised red flags and caused us to be circumspect. But since she is a celebrity, her multiple identities posed no threat to our fickle nationalism and fragile self-esteem, so she was exempted from public scrutiny.

It’s not surprising that seven years after Nepal became a secular republic and despite provisions in the citizenship act of 2006 for certificates to be issued based on a mother’s papers, officials at District Administration Offices frequently turn women away. Having a Nepali father is still the easiest way of gaining citizenship.

Our severely circumscribed definition of who we deem to be a fellow ‘Nepali’ stems in part due to fear of the ‘other’ inculcated by the state. Governments abhor ambiguity, so the more people fit into neat boxes, the easier it is for them to control the population. Nepal’s rulers have been no different.

Pseudo-patriots tweeted profanities and attacked Sarita Giri, president of Nepal Sadbhawana Party, this week for suggesting that the government declare the dhoti as the national dress and Hindi the national language of Nepal. While Giri’s recommendation only serves to replace one obsolete version of nationalism with another, the online outbursts remind us of how weak our sense of Nepaliness is. Even the thought of having to think outside of the box seems unacceptable.
The major monsoon build up in the Bay of Bengal will continue to bring more rain over the weekend. Expect heavy precipitation as thunderstorms continue to intensify in many parts of eastern and central Nepal with temperatures dipping to 16-18 range. Cloud cover will continue in the day time with light showers.

KATHMANDU

SURYA KARKI
nepalitimes.com
See photo gallery

As a kid, long before she was a household face in Nepal’s living rooms, Reecha Sharma would sit in her living room watching Bollywood movies for hours. In school she took part in almost every acting competition and won as many awards. Little did she know her religious devotion to cinema would one day help her seal the top spot in the industry she had grown to love.

Although Sharma’s father wanted her to become a nurse, he had a dramatic change of heart after watching her music video and realising just how good she was. “I am just happy to be here,” beams the former TV artist who even after three successful movies in a row - Uma, Loot, Highway - shows no signs of smugness. Her stellar performance as a young girl forced to join the Maoists and take up arms against her brother in Tsering Bhutan Sherpa’s Uma won her the love of critics and ordinary Nepalis alike. “Out of the six films I have completed, I enjoyed working on Uma the most because Tsering was immensely encouraging,” admits the star.

Sharma made her big screen debut in 2009 with First Love, a film about friendship, love, and betrayal. “When I look back, I am surprised by how much I have grown since then,” she says. She truly has. From playing a caring mother who’s forced to take up prostitution in Deepak Rauniyar’s Highway to her much talked about role in Uma, Sharma has shown her range as an actor and has emerged as the go-to star for filmmakers who want to try something ‘new’. “It’s good to be a part of the industry at a time when people are willing to experiment and not just rely on age-old formulas of song-dance-romance,” says the 28-year-old.

In her five years in Kollywood, Sharma has also learnt to be more cautious when it comes to selecting scripts and bemoans a bad habit among producers and directors of handing out scripts to actors just weeks before shooting. Preparation she believes is a key to good performance. “I turn down last minute scripts because I believe in becoming the character, not acting it out,” she explains with refreshing candor.

Reaching for the stars

At times she finds it a bit disheartening to see actors both in films and theatre not getting the respect and recognition they deserve. “When the cricket or football team return after playing abroad, people queue up outside the airport,” she says. “But when we return from international shoots or award festivals, no one bothers. Maybe as the industry progresses, Nepalis will start appreciating our hard work and have a better opinion of the profession.”

For aspiring actors and actresses, she has one simple advice: “Acting is not only about attitude and talent, but also about technique. Make the effort to learn basic concepts and theories, go to acting school.”

For the success of Uma, Reecha Sharma is now one of the most sought after actor in Kollywood.
EVENTS


A Step for Freedom, a painting exhibition by eight young upoming women artists from Pokhara. Runs till 21 August, 12 to 6 pm except Saturdays. Artist Proof Gallery, New Orleans, Pulchok, Lalitpur


A People War, an exhibition of photographs that portrays the reality of Nepal through 10 years of insurgency. Everyday except Tuesdays, 11 am to 4 pm, (01)5549948, www.madanpuraskar.org

BOTTOMS UP, take your taste buds and olfactory nerves on a joy ride at the 10th Annual wine tasting festival at Kilroys. Rs 200 per glass, Rs 800 per half litre. July to August, Kilroy’s, Thamel. (01)4241461

FRIEND’S CAFE AND BAR, new address for Spanish delicacies. Thamel

Tushita Restaurant, offering a mix of Nepali, Indian, Chinese and continental dishes, pleases everyone. Lajimpat

Gunla, the Newari month of festivities begen, be alert with your cameras to take great photographs. 7 August to 6 September

VISIONS, exhibition and sale of 55 photographs and artwork by Thymi, Momo, and Yusha. 8 to 10 August, 12 to 8 pm, Trisara Garden Restaurant, Lajimpat, (01)4410200, 9818097880


With love from blank to you, join Katha Satha and Word Warriors to write your own love notes and share your tale of love and longing in a three-day writing workshop. Rs 150, 12, 14 & 16 August, 2 to 4 pm, photo.circle, Arun Thapa Chowk, Jhamsikhel

A Step for Freedom, a painting exhibition by eight young upoming women artists from Pokhara. Runs till 21 August, 12 to 6 pm except Saturdays. Artist Proof Gallery, New Orleans, Pulchok, Lalitpur

Cut a script, win $2700 prize money, and make your own movie. Deadline 15 August. www.newnepalicinema.com/script2013

A People War, an exhibition of photographs that portrays the reality of Nepal through 10 years of insurgency. Everyday except Tuesdays, 11 am to 4 pm, (01)5549948, www.madanpuraskar.org

With love from blank to you, join Katha Satha and Word Warriors to write your own love notes and share your tale of love and longing in a three-day writing workshop. Rs 150, 12, 14 & 16 August, 2 to 4 pm, photo.circle, Arun Thapa Chowk, Jhamsikhel.

Apply here goo.gl/VTyCPW by 11 August

RED MUD KITCHEN, enjoy a cup of coffee after work before going back home. Thapathali

THE YELLOW HOUSE, the sumptuous breakfasts on offer here is probably one of the best in town. Sarangkot

Mama’s curries, if you like curry and want to avoid inflated menus, this is the perfect place to go. Jhamsikhel

Marronier, visit this restaurant for a taste of Western cuisine as seen through Japanese eyes. Pulchok

Café du Temple, spectacular food, better view. Patan Darbar Square

bottoms up, take your taste buds and olfactory nerves on a joy ride at the 10th Annual wine tasting festival at Kilroys. Rs 200 per glass, Rs 800 per half litre. July to August, Kilroy’s, Thamel. (01)4241461

Friend’s Cafe and Bar, new address for Spanish delicacies. Thamel

Tushita Restaurant, offering a mix of Nepali, Indian, Chinese and continental dishes, pleases everyone. Lajimpat

Gunla, the Newari month of festivities begen, be alert with your cameras to take great photographs. 7 August to 6 September

VISIONS, exhibition and sale of 55 photographs and artwork by Thymi, Momo, and Yusha. 8 to 10 August, 12 to 8 pm, Trisara Garden Restaurant, Lajimpat, (01)4410200, 9818097880

EVENTS

GOALMARI, BANGLADESH’S OWN ISLAND, a photo exhibition by Bangladeshi photographer Munem Waqif on Bangladesh’s water problems. 23 July to 25 August, 10am to 6pm, Alliance Francaise, Teku road, (01)4241163/4242832

Photography Workshop, learn the tricks of basic photography with in-class lectures and practical shooting assignments. Rs 4000, 21 July to 14 August, Sundays and Wednesdays, 5 to 7pm, photo.circle HQ, Jhamsikhel, learning@photocircle.com.np

Open day, clearance sale, photo exhibition and film show. 10 August, 10am to 7pm, Café Mitini, Lajimpat, (01)4002070, nepalseacenter@gmail.com
**MUSIC**

**LIVE AT CAFE 32**, live music and delicious food every Friday. 6pm onwards, Cafe 32, Battisputali, (01)4144732

**MUSIC JAMS**, enjoy great live music every Tuesday. 7pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

**Earthwatch**, live music over dinner every Friday. 7pm, Moksh, Jhamsikhel

Live music at Jazzabell, drink, eat, and enjoy live music with old friends every Wednesday and Friday, Jazzabell Café, Patan, (01)2114075

**RELAX, YOGA**, detox and ayurveda treatment in a quiet corner of Kathmandu, Himalayan Peace and Wellness Center, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, (01)4375392, 9801066612, peace@wellness.com.np

Shivapuri Cottage, escape the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu and enjoy peace, tranquility, good food, and fresh air. Rs 3,000 per night inclusive of dinner and breakfast. Budhanilkantha, 984137927

Haatiban Resort, climb up to Chandragiri in the morning for a royal view of Kathmandu valley and jog down to the hotel for a relaxed evening. Pharping, Kathmandu, (01)4371537/56

**GETAWAYS**

Waterfront Resort, stay away from the crowds and revitalise your Pokhara trip. Rs 4,444 for twin sharing bed & Breakfast, Sedi Height, Lakeside Road, Pokhara, 16148670719, reservation@waterfronthotelnepal.com. www.waterfronthotelnepal.com

**RELAX!** YOGA, detox and ayurveda treatment in a quiet corner of Kathmandu, Himalayan Peace and Wellness Center, Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha, (01)4375392, 9801066612, peace@wellness.com.np

**Belle France**

Another month, another host of events at the Alliance Francaise Centre:

15 August, Les chansons d’amour, a film on the trials of love by Christophe Honoré, 7pm, Free entrance

23 August, Le banquet des anges, a concert by Aurelie Karbelin and Nicolas Meyer, 6pm, Free entrance, Russian Culture Centre

18 to 27 August, ‘Around the Buz in 80 Years’, conference, dance workshop and performance, Free entrance, Alliance Francaise Centre

**A MONTH OF JAZZ**

Good news for music students, Sonia Megias will be holding composition, arranging, and choir classes throughout August. Megias began composing at a very early age and is a Fulbright Fellowship student. She currently lives in Madrid, where she conducts the choir Coro Delantal and teaches composition at Centro Superior Katarina Gurska.

Date: 9 August – 4 September
Time: 11 am onwards
Venue: Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamikhel
Fees: Rs 5,000
www.kajazz.com.np
www.soniamegias.es

**RANDOM REVERIES**

Bikalpa Art Centre presents an exhibition of the work of three women artists Bidhata KC, Kurchi Dasgupta, and Pramila Rajacharya. KC centres her work on nature, Dasgupta’s paintings deal with urbanisation and women, while Rajacharya works with feminine figures and urban landscapes.

Go see how contemporary women artists with divergent styles deal with a wide variety of subjects.

Date: Runs till 14 August
Time: 11am to 6pm
Venue: Bikalpa Art Centre, Jhamikhel
(01)5013524, www.bikalpaartcenter.org
China prepares to make its mark on the global sporting map... once again

TRISHNA RANA in NANJUNG

2008 Summer Olympics, 2010 Asian Games, 2013 Asian Youth Games, 2014 Youth Olympics: China is putting itself on the global sporting map and how. From 16-24 August around 3,000 athletes from 45 countries, including 13 from Nepal, will descend upon Nanjing, capital of Jiangsu Province, for the second edition of Asian Youth Games (AYG). Like the inaugural AYG in Singapore in 2009, this year’s event will serve as a curtain raiser for the Summer Youth Olympics.

Nurtured by the Yangtze River for centuries and home of the Ming dynasty, Nanjing is not only one of the oldest cities in China, but also its fastest growing, next only to Beijing and Shanghai. However, unlike its prodigal cousins Beijing (Olympics) and Guangzhou (Asian Games), the city doled out a relatively modest budget of $160 million for the games and still has managed to set high standards.

“Our main goal in hosting the games is to open up Nanjing to the outside world and spread the Olympic spirit of friendship and mutual understanding,” says Yang Weize, party secretary of Nanjing Municipal Committee. “We also wanted to show that these targets could be achieved not through extravagant spending, but by making best use of available resources.”

Keeping with its cost-conscious policy, instead of constructing new stadiums the municipality kept itself busy in refurbishing and upgrading existing sporting facilities like the Nanjing Olympic Sports Centre which was built for China’s National Games in 2005. A 40 minute drive from downtown Nanjing, the centre is one of the 15 sporting venues that will be used for the games and will host the opening and closing ceremonies as well as competitions in track and field, handball, diving, swimming, and sepak-takraw.

The main stadium has a capacity of 62,000 with a gymnastics, natatorium, tennis court, and an IT hub in its vicinity. The tracks and seats have been scrubbed, painted, and polished and with new lightings, the complex looks as good as new.

The only building to be literally built from barren land is the Athletes Village in the western part of the city. Housed within the grounds of Nanjing University of Technology (NUT), the 22 dormitories will accommodate all the teenage athletes and team officials for two weeks in August. Once the games are over, they will be handed over to the university and turned into staff quarters.

What has been most impressive about the lead up to the games is the organisers’ efforts in promoting educational and cultural exchanges between the athletes and young students of Nanjing and getting them involved in promotion and preparation. Under the ‘Heart-to-Heart’ program, 45 primary and secondary schools in Nanjing paired up with a member country or region in Asia to learn about the history and culture of their ‘adopted’ countries. AYG is meant for the youth and we have so many talented young adults. So instead of international celebrities, we decided to let local

NEPAL’S YOUTH BRIGADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRISHNA RANA</th>
<th>Table Tennis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adhi Bhakta</td>
<td>Table Tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manita Chitrakar</td>
<td>Table Tennis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

READY, SET, GO: Municipality workers wash and scrub the athletic track at the Nanjing Olympic Sports Centre (above). Students from a local school light torches at the same-lighting ceremony in Nanjing in May (right).

Nuts about Nattu

As every time Natasha Shah aka Nattu comes on stage – which is quite frequently these days – she immediately cracks a joke to calm herself. But if there are nerves, the audience wouldn’t know. Everything about the 23-year-old singer, song writer, comedian, and aspiring director - the dapper blazer, perfectly spiked gelled hair, and that impish smile - exudes confidence.

Growing up in a musically inclined family, Natasha remembers how she loved being the centre of attention at family gatherings; turning the living room into an impromptu stage, strumming her miniature guitar and belting out her all-time favourite celebrities and characterisitcs just a few strokes of the brush.

SHREYA RAI

Shreya Rai

Shreya Rai from the UK, has been uploading covers of her favorite songs on YouTube for the past three years. She is known for her perfect rendition of old classics. Her cover of ‘Yo Jindagi’ originally sung by Anu Malik and Shreya Ghoshal was shared by the man himself and the audience.

PARCHA PRODUCTIONS

Parcha Productions has co-organised Nepathya’s concert at Wembley, and is also the makers of twisted, if somewhat loud, parodies and music videos that appeal to the Nepal diaspora living in the UK and elsewhere.

PRIME TIME

Promise Tamang

Promising him to be the second most subscribed make-up artist on YouTube. Although not formally trained, her free skills have earned her subscribers virtually from every corner of the world. Tamang is known for her chameleon like personality, transforming into famous actors

SUNAINA RANA

Nepathya

Promise Tamang is the second most subscribed make-up artist on YouTube. Although not formally trained, her free skills have earned her subscribers virtually from every corner of the world. Tamang is known for her chameleon like personality, transforming into famous actors...
students carry out the ceremonies and help with the games,” explains Weize.

While students from the School of Design at Nanjing University of Arts assisted with designs for the emblem, slogan, and posters, over at NUT more than a 1,000 volunteers were trained over five months as language assistants, medical staff, MCs, and paramedics. Says Vice-President Gao Ming, “Our students have a unique opportunity to make friends with people their age and learn about different cultures. It will also be a good experience for the athletes to interact with local students and know China a little better.”

“It’s time for the fun and games to begin. www.nanjing2013.org

Nepali Rap Made in Nepal

The young singer would often accompany his uncle Deepak Thapa of Bidesh Janey mayalu fame to his studio where she says she began to understand the intricacies of the business.

In school she bagged lead roles in musicals every year, winning the talent competition in Grade10 being one of her most cherished memories. As the lead singer of her college band, she would always be the first person to get her group registered for gigs and competitions around town where she mainly played metal and heavy rock for the first year and later shifted to more calming rock and roll.

Like most young artists today, Natasha began her musical career on YouTube. In 2004 she posted an original number called Ma dherai maya garchu (Natru’s song) which went viral and racked up close to 200,000 views. But she only found out about her celebrity status four years later when she was in London studying for her diploma in music.

Encouraged by the positive response, she uploaded more acoustic covers as well as original numbers like Pahilo maya, one of her most popular songs. Within a year, Natasha had built a small but loyal following in Kathmandu with more than one million views and 4,000 subscribers to her channel.

“Performing in London was definitely easier because Nepalis there always cheered me in unison. I was one of them,” she admits. “In Kathmandu, I am judged, sometimes unfairly, by a small number of music lovers and critiques, it is difficult to please all of them.”

Natasha released her self-titled debut album in May this year. The seven tracker, an interesting hybrid of English and Nepali pop ballads on love, heartbreak, friendship, escapes the derivative nature of the genre through her sheer conviction and individuality of voice. “I don’t like following the crowd, that’s not my style. Even though I am most performing comfortable acoustic, I experimented with a lot of different instruments for the album,” she explains.

You can catch Natnu on Friday nights at popular hangouts in the Valley jamming with band mates Ajit, Kishor, Birat, and Prina. And when she’s not practicing and performing, you’ll find her riding her Suzuki DR around town or writing scripts for comedy videos.

“I have been singing for as long as I remember, but I feel my real calling in life is to make movies. I want to become the Farhan Akhtar of Nepal. I adore his talent and versatility,” she says about the Indian actor, director, singer as she breaks into a wide grin. www.nepaltimes.com Watch Natnu’s video
BEFORE MIDNIGHT

Once in a while you come across one of those special films that tackle important subjects with fierce passion. Richard Linklater’s three films Before Sunrise (1995), Before Sunset (2004), and now Before Midnight (2013) all tackle the issue of romance. Granted this overarching, exalted idea of ‘romance’ evolves over the course of three films into a real pondering over the nature of long-lasting relationships; still, I would say that the three main writers do have a palpable, quite touching belief in the true possibility of romance over the course of a single relationship, however intermittent and difficult to maintain. Perhaps what is so special about these films, in addition to their real, unaffected charm, is the incredible collaboration between the director, Linklater, and his two actors, Julie Delpy, who plays Celine, and Ethan Hawke, who plays Jesse. Delpy and Hawke have worked with Linklater on writing the latter two of the seemingly simple, but actually incredibly sophisticated scripts and it is without a doubt that none of these three films could have been made without any one of the trio.

In Before Sunrise, Celine and Jesse meet on a train while travelling in Europe. As one is wont to do as a young adult, the two talk all night, falling in love with each other’s ideas. These two young beautiful people are markedly more tempered when they meet again, nine years later in Before Sunset when Jesse, now a successful writer, visits Paris, where the very French Celine has been living. She visits the bookshop where he is speaking and the two embark again on yet another day marked with long playful philosophical conversation.

Nine years later we have Before Midnight. Jesse has indeed stayed with Celine, they have two astonishingly cute twin girls and they are on summer vacation in Greece. Jesse is still a successful novelist, but Celine is at a crossroads in her career.

The two are clearly past their ‘honeymoon’ period, struggling between their work, bringing up the twins, and the departure of Hank, Jesse’s son, who has just spent his summer holidays with them and is going back to Jesse’s former wife who loathes both him and Celine even nine years after the fact.

The film begins with Jesse and Celine driving back from the airport after having dropped Hank, with the twins asleep in the back. Their conversation turns alternately sour, sweet, playful, teasing, deadly serious, and reverts to an easy, comfortable exchange that is emblematic of their relationship.

The writing is so sharp and sure that this first scene quickly lays the groundwork for the exchanges that is emblematic of their relationship.

The dialogue, though it deals quite viscerally with the twins, and the departure of Hank, Jesse’s son, who has just spent his summer holidays with them and is going back to Jesse’s former wife who loathes both him and Celine even nine years after the fact.

On the bottom of the screen, an information button shows you the current authorised rates for day-time and after-hours. Clicking on the policeman icon gives you an option to send complaints to Kathmandu Metropolitan Traffic Office via SMS.

But the most impressive feature of the app is that users can find out the fare from point A to point B, lets you zoom in and out, and set markers for both points. There’s plenty of room for improvement though, because the shortest route sometimes can guide you wrongly through a one-way street or a normal ride through town will take a Ring Road detour.

Another fault its makers will surely better in coming days: a shortage of options in the start and destination boxes. Ideally you should be able to go to and from anywhere in Kathmandu, but this isn’t the case. For example, if you select ‘Airport International’ as your starting point you can only choose, for some reason, ‘Naya Bus Park’ as your end point. Bizarre, really. When Yantrick took a taxi to Patan Dhoka, the app got lost before we even made it to Bagmati Bridge.

Minor glitches aside, the greatest thing about this app is that users can finally calculate the exact distance of their rides and do the math without worrying about whether taxi drivers are ripping them off. From her experience, Yantrick has found out older drivers will agree to go by untinkered meter and it’s usually the younger ones who have the nerve to be reckless.

The app is available on both Android’s Play Store and Apple’s App Store and will take less than a minute to download (absolutely free).

Yantrick’s verdict: it’s still early days, but at least with this app you can find out an approximate fare before you even hit the road.

Not a usual resort...........refresh yourself

Cab convenience

Every morning as Yantrick leaves for work, Kathmandu’s traffic does its best to discourage her from taking the bus. At rush hour 750,000 vehicles claim first-come rights on any strip of tarma, compelling her to hail down a cab and be taken for a ride again and again.

Well, Appi Kal’s Taxi Fares Nepal is here to save our lunch money. The app designed by a group of Nepali software engineers does just what its name suggests – calculates the fare from your starting point to your destination in the Valley. If the fact that its website is down because of high traffic is any indication, it seems Kathmandu’s crawlers have long been waiting for an app of this kind.

The app is very minimal and, owing to its small size, loads almost instantly. At the first interface you are asked to choose where you are taking your taxi from, where you want it to end up, and bam, you have the bill on your palm before you even step into a cab.

The app is available on both Android’s Play Store and Apple’s App Store and will take less than a minute to download (absolutely free).

Yantrick’s verdict: it’s still early days, but at least with this app you can find out an approximate fare before you even hit the road.
The Kingdom at the Centre of the World: Journeys in Bhutan, by Omar Ahmad, Aleph Book Company, 2013

To his credit, Ahmad does have a go at setting the scene for the inevitable discussion of ‘the Nepali issue’. Several chapters explain Bhutan’s anxiety regarding its independence and national character because Ahmad works up the nerve to address the question of the Lhotstamps, the ethnic Nepalis who comprised a third of Bhutan’s population before approximately 100,000 left to become refugees in Nepal from the late 1970s onwards.

Ahmad describes the escalation of conflict between overzealous but non-violent Lhotstampa revolutionaries and suggests that those ethnic Nepalis who doubted their ability to cope left while many others stayed on. One senses that Ahmad is trying to be balanced, but in supporting the hypothesis that the vast majority of those in the refugee camps were Nepali, he risks dismaying the reader looking for a solid analysis of what Gross National Happiness might offer as an alternative to Gross National Product, merely the banal claim that Bhutan has decided to prioritise the happiness of its citizens. Why should state authorities seeking nationalistic ordinances and violent state authorities seeking to implement nationalistic ordinances and violent Lhotstampa revolutionaries be more appealing to the mainstream reader than a more balanced rational analysis?

Ahmad describes the escalation of conflict between overzealous but non-violent Lhotstampa revolutionaries and suggests that those ethnic Nepalis who doubted their ability to cope left while many others stayed on. One senses that Ahmad is trying to be balanced, but in supporting the hypothesis that the vast majority of those in the refugee camps were Nepali, he risks dismaying the reader looking for a solid analysis of what Gross National Happiness might offer as an alternative to Gross National Product, merely the banal claim that Bhutan has decided to prioritise the happiness of its citizens. Why should state authorities seeking nationalistic ordinances and violent state authorities seeking to implement nationalistic ordinances and violent Lhotstampa revolutionaries be more appealing to the mainstream reader than a more balanced rational analysis?
A s Nepalis are forced to pry themselves off chicken momo and chicken chilli once again, the question on everybody’s mind: what exactly is the difference between regular flu and bird flu? Well for starters seasonal flu comes around mostly in winter and can potentially be prevented through vaccines. Avian influenza, on the other hand, is more lethal. This type of flu is so notorious that it is often compared to the Spanish flu of 1918-19, another avian strain, which spread across the globe in a mere three months and wiped off almost 50 million.

In May 1997 a child from Hong Kong died of H5N1, a common strain of bird flu, becoming the first known human victim. After 18 cases and six deaths in Hong Kong, the virus appeared to be under control and possibly eradicated by the end of 1997. However, it reared its ugly head again in 2003 and has continued to evolve and spread. More worryingly, a new strain of virus called H7N9 was detected in China earlier this year, but quick action from the Chinese government meant that the number of cases after April dropped drastically.

The virus lies in its inability to be transmitted from human to human. Humans are infected only when they come in contact with diseased birds making poultry farmers, butchers, and cooks who deal directly with livestock and raw meat most vulnerable. Among the more than 600 confirmed cases reported worldwide through July 2013, nearly all were acquired by direct contact with poultry, with person to person spread being almost non-existent.

Aside from agricultural intervention (i.e. culling the birds), the other means of control is vaccines and antiviral agents. If oseltamivir (an anti-viral agent) is started within the first 48 hours of symptoms, the benefit is significant. But cost and availability of the drug are impediments. While countries in the west have hoarded vaccines in case of an epidemic, they are not available here in adequate doses. So what should those of us in Nepal do?

Proper cooking kills the virus so we should only eat meat that is fully cooked and served hot. If eggs are consumed, they should be hard cooked and certainly not runny. Eating or drinking dishes that include blood (‘ragati’) from any animal is highly discouraged.

Since 95 per cent of viruses like bird flu enter our bodies from contact between our fingers and the mucous membranes of our eyes and nose, maintaining good hygiene and cleanliness is imperative. Washing hands often with soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser is a good idea as is covering our mouths and noses with a tissue or sleeve (not our hands) when coughing or sneezing.

In May 1997 a child from Hong Kong died of H5N1, a common strain of bird flu, becoming the first known human victim. After 18 cases and six deaths in Hong Kong, the virus appeared to be under control and possibly eradicated by the end of 1997. However, it reared its ugly head again in 2003 and has continued to evolve and spread. More worryingly, a new strain of virus called H7N9 was detected in China earlier this year, but quick action from the Chinese government meant that the number of cases after April dropped drastically.

The virus lies in its inability to be transmitted from human to human. Humans are infected only when they come in contact with diseased birds making poultry farmers, butchers, and cooks who deal directly with livestock and raw meat most vulnerable. Among the more than 600 confirmed cases reported worldwide through July 2013, nearly all were acquired by direct contact with poultry, with person to person spread being almost non-existent.

Aside from agricultural intervention (i.e. culling the birds), the other means of control is vaccines and antiviral agents. If oseltamivir (an anti-viral agent) is started within the first 48 hours of symptoms, the benefit is significant. But cost and availability of the drug are impediments. While countries in the west have hoarded vaccines in case of an epidemic, they are not available here in adequate doses. So what should those of us in Nepal do?

Proper cooking kills the virus so we should only eat meat that is fully cooked and served hot. If eggs are consumed, they should be hard cooked and certainly not runny. Eating or drinking dishes that include blood (‘ragati’) from any animal is highly discouraged.

Since 95 per cent of viruses like bird flu enter our bodies from contact between our fingers and the mucous membranes of our eyes and nose, maintaining good hygiene and cleanliness is imperative. Washing hands often with soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser is a good idea as is covering our mouths and noses with a tissue or sleeve (not our hands) when coughing or sneezing.
If the new budget is actually implemented, 20 per cent of the schools in Nepal may soon have computers and internet connections. Finance Minister Shankar Koirala set aside a whopping Rs 1 billion to hook 7,123 schools to the net in the coming year.

Although this is a small proportion of the 35,000 government schools in the country, the decision was extraordinarily bold and ambitious. Providing support for rural community schools to leapfrog into the age of the internet is laudable, but the Department of Education (DoE) which is supposed to implement this plan is woefully unprepared.

The DoE has been a perennial underachiever. Just look at its record of annual non-delivery of text books to schools around the country. If the department can’t deliver books, how can it deliver computers? The dismal SLC pass rate also points to the shameful failure of the education bureaucracy. How can a country move forward when 72 per cent of high school graduates are labeled ‘failures’? Even if we ensure computers and internet in the classroom, how are they going to change that result?

Many teachers and district education officials erroneously equate learning with typing on a computer. The government’s hefty budget allocation, one hopes, is not limited to teaching children keyboard skills and allowing teachers to hook up on Facebook, but to expose them to computer-aided teaching and learning. Before sticking a computer to every classroom, DoE officials have to be first helped to develop digital learning content for different subjects and grades so that the machines will be a meaningful resource for both teachers and students.

ICT integration into classrooms will require teacher training to integrate computer-aided learning. But the SLC results this year shows that teachers lack training and motivation even for rote learning, let alone producing critical thinkers. This is the collective failure and indifference to the Department of Education and most District Education Offices to quality in the classroom.

Nepal’s politicised teaching fraternity has other priorities besides raising students with an all-round education relevant to their community and society. Teachers all moonshine as political cadre, union activists or have NGOs. And with elections coming up they are also mobilised for other duties like polling and census data gathering.

The problem is not hardware. It is the software: computer literate and enthusiastic teachers who can motivate and inspire children to use the vast knowledge base in the internet to expand their horizons and make a difference in their learning environment. Just putting a computer in the classroom will be a colossal waste of money.

Computers also need electricity and even schools that have power don’t have lights for most of the day. Government schools will get Rs 160,000 from the state for computers and printers and will have to add another Rs 40,000 from local resources. There seems to be no allocation for internet fees, maintenance, upgrading computers, and running costs.

The government hasn’t done its homework on integrating computers into schools. It simply seems to want to spend a lot of money for a showpiece program that is neither cost-effective nor sustainable.

Sunil Pokhrel is a curriculum expert at Open Learning Exchange (OLE) Nepal.
A quarter of Nepal’s population is now online and traditional media is being left behind

online media has been encouraging, but all we need to do is tap into the readers’ pulse that is turning towards multi-media content,” explains Dharma Raj Bhushal who founded Onlinekhabar and edits it.

Appetite for multi-media content among internet users in Nepal has spiked as connectivity spread and bandwidth increased across the country. Nepal’s telecom companies and internet service providers (ISPs) paid Rs 3.76 billion to international carriers in bandwidth fees alone in the last fiscal year, up from Rs 2.58 billion in 2011-12.

However, not everything is smooth sailing in cyberspace. Although the readership has increased dramatically, online ad sales are still negligible. This brings up the issue of sustainability and could mean that the sudden surge of readership could be a flash in the pan as online news ventures come and go.

In fact, digital media experts say most Nepali news portals are still not using the full potential of online sites for interactive, dynamic, multi-media content. “It is hard to recall having come across any exclusive online journalism pieces showcasing full multi-media potential available today,” says Dharme Adhikari of Media Foundation, a research and policy institute.
Senior editors say even younger journalists don’t come with digital and multi-media knowhow. And even if they do, young reporters and bloggers enter a rigid newsroom hierarchy where the gatekeepers have an archaic perspective on journalism. “Publishers know the tide is turning, yet they are reluctant to invest in the medium and take advantage in the shift,” says Umesh Shrestha of www.mysansar.com, one of the most popular Nepali language blogs. Shrestha who used to work as a reporter and online coordinator for Nagarkot says: “New York Times’ Snow Fall project showed the potential of multimedia storytelling. Nepali journalists also need to start looking for innovative storytelling ideas online,” says Rajneesh Bhandari, who worked at Kantipur Television for seven years before starting out as multimedia journalist.

It’s not just established newspapers that are going digital-first. Nepal’s FM radio networks have also extended their reach worldwide through live streaming with integrated newsmore for text, audio, and video production. Ujyaalo 90 national radio network’s www.uyyaalonline.com integrates its radio content (see videos) for online not just in text and podcasts, but also through video. “Our reporters go to the field and bring content for all three types of media,” says Suman Jha, managing editor of Ujyaalo. “The aim is not just to get ahead in the news breaking business through online, but to create dynamic content to keep the readers engaged and active.”

Recognising the growing presence of online news portals in Nepal’s changing media landscape, the Federation of Nepalese Journalists has formed the Digital Media Committee. Last week the committee organised the first national seminar to discuss the state of online media in Nepal and decided to draft a code of conduct for online journalists. A five-member committee led by Amrut Dhakal, editor of www.setopati.com, will prepare draft of the code of conduct and another 10-member committee led by Anu Baral, editor of Onlinekhabar will make necessary recommendations to the FNJ Digital Media Committee to resolve legal provisions concerning online media.

Younger readers are moving to online, but advertisers are still stuck mainly with print. Advertising Association of Nepal has lumped online medium in the ‘other’ category since negligible per cent of Nepal’s Rs 3 billion advertising pie today goes to online. “Even after eight years in the business the online model is still trying to find a sustainable business model,” says Gopal Guragain, founder of Ujyaalo 90 Network.

Experts say the online revenue is a global one and will require sector study and business plan to address market needs. Says Ujjwal Acharya, digital editor at Annapurna Post. “Nepal’s online media is still in a trial and error phase, we are still trying to find a sustainable business model.”

This week, the online company Amazon’s founder Jeffery Bezos bought the family-owned old media, The Washington Post. Such an acquisition may still be a long way off in Nepal, but old media here must also adapt to a more online readership or wither away.

ELECTION FEVER

With elections due in November, media critics have their eyes set on the online media. In the run up to the constitution deadline there was a spike in podcasts and the internet became a virtual battleground as netizens engaged in debates on federalism based on ideology. This time, online will be an even bigger virtual battleground in the campaign period. “The most accessible medium is usually the most contaminated,” says Dharma Raj Bhushal of Onlinekhabar. “With the presence of party mouthpieces online this election is going to get nasty.”

But experts say this is where online media really needs to be let loose to readers and users navigate the information clutter and try to separate facts from propaganda and choose between platforms. Online media may still reach a fraction of the readership, but because journalists depend on Twitter, Facebook and blogs, these are multiplier effects.
Justice delayed and denied

Rameswor Bohara's blog, himalkhabar.com, 4 August

For Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya Adhikari, who were on a hunger strike outside Bir Hospital and Baluwatar asking for investigation into their son’s murder, 7 July brought devastating news. After their case was taken up by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and presented to the government, Home Minister Madhav Ghimire told them flatly that his government couldn’t apprehend the guilty.

“There are legal difficulties to this case, which is why we can’t investigate,” Ghimire told the Adhikari couple and the NHRC at Singha Darbar on Wednesday. Such a statement, from a minister whose job is to look after people’s security, is sure to be the end of the line for the Adhikaris. In June 2004, their son Krishna was dragged from his home in Pinjol of Gorkha district, taken to Chitwan, and killed brutally by the Maoists. Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya have spent the past few years going from one government office to another seeking justice. When they started a hunger strike outside Baluwatar at the time Baburam Bhattarai was prime minister, the police forcibly admitted them into a mental asylum. In March, the NHRC had recommended that the government put the guilty on trial, provide compensation to the couple, and ensure they return home safely. But Bhattarai ignored the directive, arguing that this was an insurgency-related case and swept it under the rug like many other wartime atrocities committed by both sides.

According to the complaint the Adhikaris filed at the District Police Headquarter in Chitwan, Januka Poudel and other Maoist cadres involved in the murder, Poudel was Hisila Yami’s assistant while Bhattarai was in Baluwatar. When the Adhikaris came to Kathmandu to seek justice, the PM did everything in his government’s power to quash the investigation.

Right now, a chief justice leads the government and the Adhikaris had hoped his meant the Regmi government would listen to their plight and deliver justice. After Ghimire’s statement, all their doors are shut and there is no hope left.

Ghimire says his hands are tied by the government’s interpretation in 2006 of the ‘Terrorist and Destructive Activity Punishment Act’ 2038. Although Ghimire voted to do away with this law, the government can’t compensate and rehabilitate the couple, they haven’t asked for money, they just want justice.

Minister Ghimire’s answer sounds like an excuse not to address conflict-era crimes because of the personalities involved. But it ignores the Supreme Court’s decision which sets a precedent that nothing should stop investigation of crimes against humanity committed during the war. A SC bench, with Regmi on it, had pronounced a life sentence on Maoist Bal Krishna Dhungel for using war as an excuse to commit murder. But the Maoists pardoned him, and nominated him to the CA.

Now, the Adhikaris’ failed struggle for justice has put a moral question mark on a government headed by a chief justice.

Baidya’s demands for CA Elections

Himalkhabar.com, 7 August

1. Terminate the 25-point deal
2. Dismantle the HLP, C and bring every party for a roundtable meeting
3. Postpone elections
4. Create a national unity government
5. Explain why the constitution could not be written in 2012 and guarantee that the same mistakes won’t be repeated
6. Sign previous agreements and decide remaining issues through the CA
7. Agree in principle about major contentious issues
8. Guarantee to decide other issues through democratic means
9. Constitution must include a clause which prevents heads of the government from dissolving the parliament
10. Enforce all agreements regarding human rights, marginalised communities, and enforce inclusiveness
11. Agree on proportional representation on multi-party democracy principles
12. Elections should be to a fully proportional basis
13. Scrap the Citizenship Act so that foreigners may not get Nepali citizenship
14. Scrap decisions taken against national interest
15. Scrap humiliating Nepal-India treaties
16. Follow up on previous agreements in which the government agreed to scrap various laws
17. Investigate missing persons, recognising merits of Jana Andolan
18. Enforce the Citizenship Act so that foreigners may not get Nepali citizenship
19. Scrapping various laws
20. Return people’s rights to the Constitution
21. Decide remaining issues through a roundtable meeting
22. Agree in principle about major contentious issues
23. Enforce the constitution
24. Decide remaining issues through a roundtable meeting
25. Agree in principle about major contentious issues
26. Enforce the constitution
27. Decide remaining issues through a roundtable meeting
28. Agree in principle about major contentious issues
29. Enforce the constitution
30. Decide remaining issues through a roundtable meeting

68% of parties want a roundtable meeting, 23% want a new constitution.

If the four parties pay attention to our demands, there will be elections. If not, then no polls.

MPT Chairman Upendra Yadav, Naya Patrika, 7 August

WEEKLY BAZAR POLL #22

In weekly polls conducted with the support of The Asia Foundation, Nepal, 375 respondents in 12 cities across Nepal every Monday for their opinion on contemporary issues. This week’s result is an opinion is about Nepal’s head of state.

Is there a need for a new head of state?

Yes 72%
No 25.3%
Don’t know 2.7%

What was it that made you ill?

Accidents 30.4%
Diarrhoea 20.7%
Headaches 10.7%
Cold and cough 8.9%
Diabetes 8.9%
Accidents 6.7%
Sore eyes 1.9%
Don’t know 1.5%

If we could delete all our organs, these micro-drivers would have our limbs, and all of them dismantled. Micro-drivers would have our limbs, but you have to pay them.

Winning the election as the head of state is a gutsy challenge. The Prime Minister is a gutsy challenge. The Prime Minister is a gutsy challenge. They smoke, drink, and chew tobacco, but you have to pay them.

We can’t be sure whether elections will take place on 19 November, but the achievements made by the EC so far have been rather impressive. The bottom line, however, is that there is no real alternative to polls so all the existing hurdles need to be overcome for free and fair elections to happen on time.

More than 500,000 people who voted in 2008 haven’t applied for voter ID cards. Studies estimated that there would be at least one million new voters since the last election in 2008, but instead we are down by five million. Experts point out that this

No voter left behind

Editorial, Nepal Samacharpatra, 6 August

The EC’s own records show that altogether 1.2 million Nepalis are eligible to vote. Three million are working abroad at the moment, whereas in 2008 the number was 1.9 million. And those who are 18 or older stands at 16.4 million. This means up to 700,000 citizens are still missing from the electoral list. It would be a travesty if so many citizens are denied their right to vote. So while the government’s willingness to extend the registration deadline after the EC’s meeting with Khil Raj Regmi this week is a welcome sign, it must first find out why these people haven’t applied for voter ID cards.
Nepal’s political cartoonists are having a field day with Baidya Maoists’ ever-changing stance. Ever since April Fools’ Day when Khil Raj Regmi became head of the government, CPN-M has become a master of double speak, circulating wildly contradictory statements about the CA elections in November. One day they say they will take part, next day they pull out because the government sent them a ‘humiliating’ letter. Everyone thought it had come to an end when party secretary Ram Bahadur Thapa smashed a mock ballot box with a hammer on stage, much to the delight of his comrades. Not one to let sideshows flatter him, Chairman Baidya again told the press that his party was positive about talks because – surprise, surprise – it had received a more ‘respectful’ request. Here’s what cartoonists came up with this week:

“Push the elections away and we can talk.”
Basu Kshitiz in Annapurna Post, 4 August

Baidya: “We warn you not to hold elections … or else … we’ll be obliged to enter talks.”
Basu Kshitiz in Annapurna Post, 6 August

“That’s Marx, that’s Lenin, that’s Mao… and who’s this one wearing a crown?”
Abin Shrestha in Kantipur, 26 July

People’s Nationalism
Rabin Sayami in Nagarik, 30 July

“Talks between high level politicians and the disgruntled parties.”
Rajesh KC in Nagarik, 6 August

---

CELEBRATING MORE THAN 5000 HYUNDAI i10 ON NEPALESE ROADS

History is Being Created.
Thanks to all the i10ers for making this possible.

Laxmi Hyundai proudly announce XCLUSIVE BENEFITS to celebrate this milestone.

For Existing i10ers
Bangkok-Pattaya Trip for 5 Couples
Free Service Voucher worth Rs. 5000 for 100 i10ers

Register yourself in Hyundaii10 Nepal or www.laxmihyundai.com or nearest Hyundai Dealers and Win the above benefits through Lucky Draw.

For New i10 Buyers
Rs. 126,600* Savings

Laxmi InterContinental Pvt. Ltd
An entity of Laxmi Group, Nepal.

For Sales Inquiry:
Kathmandu: 01-4101683, 4101598, 4101387, 4101698
Awesome’s other mistakes

I was bound to happen sooner or later: the Dash Baddies have brought out a list of the most corrupt among their erstwhile comrades-at-arms in the rival Cash Baddies. No prizes for guessing who are the Top Three on the list:

1. PKD
2. HYB
3. KBM

But you are surely not going to see any of these klepto-komreds any time soon. Apparently the Dashies did an asset search of the Cashies and found that the row of high rises on the airport road from Maiti Ghar to Tin Kune gave a whole new meaning to the term ‘Prachanda Path’.

Some confused readers have written in to ask the Donkey to print a glossary of all the code words used in Backside to describe various Mau Mau factions, just so it’s easy for them to tell who’s who.

I think it was bound to happen sooner or later; the Dash Baddies have brought out a list of the most corrupt among their erstwhile comrades-at-arms in the rival Cash Baddies. No prizes for guessing who are the Top Three on the list:

1. PKD
2. HYB
3. KBM

But you are surely not going to see any of these klepto-komreds any time soon. Apparently the Dashies did an asset search of the Cashies and found that the row of high rises on the airport road from Maiti Ghar to Tin Kune gave a whole new meaning to the term ‘Prachanda Path’.

Some confused readers have written in to ask the Donkey to print a glossary of all the code words used in Backside to describe various Mau Mau factions, just so it’s easy for them to tell who’s who.

Well, here goes:

- Dash (Baidya)
- Cash (Prachanda)
- Rash (Baburam)
- Hash (Mahara)
- Bhash (Narayankaji)

In the old days, there used to be strict guidelines about keeping His Majesty the King’s pictures in government offices. And the more sycophantic ones would add a portrait of Her Majesty as well. Some Panchayat ministers would get so carried away they’d also hang pictures of the Father of Nation, His Majesty King Tribhuvan, and a likeness of Grandfather of the Nation His Majesty Prithvi Narayan the Great. But after 2006, there are no hard and fast rules about which portraits should adorn the walls of government offices, so it is usually posters of film stars and other goddesses of the Hindu pantheon.

There is a vague rule that civil servants can hang either a map of Nepal, or a poster of a martyr of their choice. But in the absence of clear guidelines and because all government positions today are a result of band-fand between the four-party syndicate anyway, officials have started putting up photos of their party mentors. During the Panchayat, heads of the Sports Council used to be die-hard Mandalays and now they are dyed-in-the-wool Mao Baddies.

Not surprising, therefore, that the new head of Khel Kood Parisad has pictures of Comrades Awesome and Lahitlou hanging on his wall. The man must have a pretty good idea which side of his toast is buttered because he is now making way for Dear Leader Comrade Prakash to gain Council membership as the head of the recently registered Nepali chapter of the World Pentathlon Association. And that was when the world finally found out that Awesome Jr’s real name is Sakar. Not Sarkar, Sakar.

Now that all our political leaders are on FB and Twitter, the job of a political reporter has been made much easier. We no longer have to go to the news, the news comes to us. The most prolific among them is @BBR_laldhwoj, and one wonders why Regmi Sir also doesn’t follow suit and get a Twitter account. Since we all know his handlers are researchers and analysts, here is a great Twitter handle for him: @KRR_baldhwoj. But politicians should take a few lessons on how to tweet responsibly and follow the soon to be drawn up Code of Ethics for online users. Politicians should tweet information only on a need to know basis. For instance, why is it absolutely necessary for Nepalis to know that RCP is ‘undergoing’ treatment for a severe case of asthenoids?

Soon after PKD accused the other parties of being ‘chicken’, across the country chicken are being slaughtered and buried. Is there a message there? Awesome also compared his party to ‘eagles’ and instructed the YCL to pounce like ‘lions’. Who does he think he is, Farmer Jones? And what is this, Animal Farm? Comrade Chairman was in a confessional mood the other day and admitted to having committed Four Mistakes. This self-criticism shows that PKD is a true blue Maoist because Mao was in the habit of getting his colleagues to confess to a list of Six Deviations and launch Five Anti-Campaigns before sending them off to die in plane crashes. Our own Heilmsman was being a bit modest and left out a whole bunch of other mistakes he has made:

- Brag about taking the UN for a ride in the Shaktihkor tape (should have also confessed to siphoning 5 billion from combatant allowance)
- Send goons to kick Ass’ ass in 2008
- Say different things to different people (should have said different things to the same people)
- Raising $3 billion for Lumbini (should have raised $6 billion)
- Missing out on saying “Hi” to Sonia Ji in Delhi (ask her to be FB friend)
- Should never have agreed to the 12-point, 7-point, 11-point, and 5-point agreements
- Having Prakash as son (and not Pulam Kunwar)
- Sending 16,000 people to heaven (should’ve asked God first)

FROM KATHMANDU TO DOHA, CONNECTING NEPAL TO OVER 123 DESTINATIONS WORLDWIDE

Explore the world’s fastest route of 60,000 flights, fly via Doha, your gateway to journeys on reward points you’ve earned.

To book your ticket, visit qatarairways.com/un

QATAR