THE PRICE OF PEACE

The war came at a heavy cost, but Nepalis are also being made to pay for peace. The peace process so far has cost the national treasury Rs 20 billion, a lot of it wasted or embezzled.

by RAMESWOR BOHARA
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MORAL BANKRUPTCY

The war may have ended, but the wounds have not healed. Especially on the part of the leaders of the former Maoist parties. The integration of the former Maoist combatants has come to a whopping Rs 20 billion: more than the country’s annual defence budget.

One could argue, as some have, that peace doesn’t have a price. Actually, if we are honest about it, the war already came at a heavy cost. Nepalis shouldn’t be forced to pay for the peace as well. Especially not if those brave men went to line the war chests of the comrades who cheated not just the people, but also their own fighters.

As Rameswar Thapa’s investigative story on page 16-17 reveals, much of the Rs 20 billion was siphoned off, embezzled, double-billed, or over-invoiced, or simply stolen. The largest chunk went for the allowance of phantom Maoist ‘combatants’, whose numbers were vastly inflated to make sure there would be more to steal. Every ex-combatant also had to pay a levy to the party amounting to a significant portion of their monthly allowance.

When UNMIN left, the re-verification team found that 2,411 so-called ‘ex-guerrillas’ had gone ‘missing’. Maoist administrators in the camps had been collecting Rs 4 billion in allowances for fighters who didn’t exist for four years. The only tangible benefit that the state accured from the Rs 20 billion was the 1,421 ex-guerrillas who were categorically named as ‘conscripted Nepali laborers’. If you want to understand why Nepal is still poor, there is your reason. With this kind of plunder and impunity, the country doesn’t stand a chance.

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Who will bell the cat?

All political actors want polls postponed, but no one wants to come out and say it outright

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A mong the main reasons given for the dissolution for the first Constituent Assembly last May was the deadlock over the demand for federal units based on single-ethnic identities. But the endless political tug-o-war among the 601 honourable members of the Assembly during its four-year tenure, makes it clear that the most exclusive legislature ever elected in Nepal’s history had its limits. The House served as a proxy battleground for the parties and most representatives were simply pawns at voting time. There were strong demands relating to class, caste, ethnicity, gender, and region, which, although premised on historical political ostracisation, the parties stoked populist sentiments. The revolutionary communists demanded the drafting of what they called a “people’s” constitution, while at the other extreme some felt even reverting back to the 1990 Interim Constitution. But blaming the Assembly may not be wholly justified because it was allowed to lapse by powerful forces which prevented it from working out a political compromise. The new Assembly, if it is ever elected, seems similarly doomed because the political actors are the same, the issues are the same, and there has been no work done to come up with a meeting point. In fact, positions have become even more entrenched, demands have hardened, the largest party has split, and new ethnicity-based parties have been formed. The opposing political parties have already demarcated their manifestos ahead of the elections, making self-fulfilling prophecies that the new CA will also not succeed if their demands for provisions in the new constitution are not met. The only reason is that number of the HLPC’s negotiating role. Neither the incumbent government nor the political parties have any political and constitutional legitimacy to address these demands, however. So why the travesty of talks, then? The only reason is that the new CA will also not succeed if their demands for provisions in the new constitution are not met. The opposing political parties have already demarcated their manifestos ahead of the elections, making self-fulfilling prophecies that the new CA will also not succeed if their demands for provisions in the new constitution are not met. The opposing political parties have already demarcated their manifestos ahead of the elections, making self-fulfilling prophecies that the new CA will also not succeed if their demands for provisions in the new constitution are not met. The opposing political parties have already demarcated their manifestos ahead of the elections, making self-fulfilling prophecies that the new CA will also not succeed if their demands for provisions in the new constitution are not met. The opposing political parties have already demarcated their manifestos ahead of the elections, making self-fulfilling prophecies that the new CA will also not succeed if their demands for provisions in the new constitution are not met. The opposing political parties have already demarcated their manifestos ahead of the elections, making self-fulfilling prophecies that the new CA will also not succeed if their demands for provisions in the new constitution are not met.

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Strangers in a strange land

Migrants face countless perils. Vicious mafias smuggle them across borders with reckless disregard for their lives. Rapacious recruiters fleece them of their earnings. Abusive employers exploit their labour. And anti-immigrant sentiment erodes the political will to confront these challenges.

The plight of migrants is particularly tragic when its source is violent conflict, like in Syria and Libya. Libya’s civil war placed the vulnerability of migrants in stark relief, with hundreds of thousands caught in the crossfire. And while Libyans were badly affected by the war, foreign workers including thousands of Nepalis were even more vulnerable, as they were largely left out of schemes aimed at protecting civilians. Most were left to their own devices to escape the violence and many died trying. Some were killed after being falsely targeted as mercenaries (largely owing to the colour of their skin). Other groups, however, fared better. High-skilled migrants employed by Western oil companies, for example, were airlifted to safety. Nationals from countries with robust protection protocols and sufficient financial resources were efficiently evacuated (the Philippines was exemplary in this regard).

Libya was thus a vivid reminder of the serious gaps that exist in helping migrants in life-threatening situations. Their vulnerability is heightened due to their legal status and other obstacles – restrictions on exercising their fundamental rights, language barriers, constraints on their movement, and limited social capital and networks. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the UNHCR, the United Nations’ refugee agency, were heroic in going above and beyond their mandates to protect migrants at risk in Libya, as were many NGOs. The World Bank also acted quickly to provide funds to evacuate Bangladeshi nationals.

But international organisations alone cannot solve the problem. Before the next crisis erupts, we need to clarify the critical roles that all key actors – including countries of origin and destination, neighbouring states, businesses, and civil society – should play. The first step then is for states and others to define a framework for action on helping migrants caught in crisis situations. It would include a set of principles, such as this fundamental one: during a crisis emergency assistance should be afforded to citizens and migrants alike, without discrimination.

Countries that are especially experienced in protecting their workers abroad before, during, and after crises offer a blueprint for action. An early warning system in the Philippines, for instance, mobilises government agencies to react quickly to crises, while a special fund pays for emergency evacuations. The government also provides compulsory pre-departure and post-arrival orientation, so that migrants know what to do in an emergency. Registration systems, such as Mexico’s matrices consular, help to ensure that countries know the location of their migrants – including those who are undocumented – in a crisis.

Destination countries have equally profound responsibilities in crises. Evacuation from danger zones and humanitarian aid should be provided regardless of legal status – as the United States did last year in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. Migrants also typically need emergency travel documents after a crisis, as well as legal assistance to help them recover lost assets. Neighbouring countries have a vital role to play, too – for example, by keeping borders open so that migrants do not become trapped, as Egypt and Tunisia so generously demonstrated during the Libya crisis. Employers, meanwhile, are linchpins during a crisis. They should be obliged to repatriate foreign workers, as required in the standard migrant employment contract used by the Philippines. They also should have evacuation plans for employees at all levels, not just executives.

The principles and plans that we put in place to protect migrants in life-threatening situations eventually could – and should – be expanded in order to protect a much broader array of vulnerable migrants.

Peter Sutherland is a UN Special Representative for International Migration and Development and former Director General of the World Trade Organisation. www.project-syndicate.org
 Leather desire has opened its new outlet in New Baneshwor. Customers can purchase leather purses, jackets, bags, and shoes at 15 per cent discount reads the press statement.

Pooja International Nepal, authorised importer of Volkswagen celebrated the sale of 1000th Volkswagen in Nepal on Monday at its showroom in Lajimpat. Chief guest Henning Hansen, Chargé d’Affaires of the German Embassy, handed over the key to owner Jimmy Shrestha. The company plans to launch a new variant of Polo during the NADA auto show.

Kusom (Kathmandu University School of Management) has restructured its MBA program starting September. “The new MBA program is in response to the emerging trends and needs to modernise learning and delivery methods,” said KU.

Carlsberg and the Premier League have signed a three year deal for Carlsberg to be the Official Beer Partner of the Barclays Premier League. The deal will run from the 2013 to 2016. Phillip Norley, managing director of Gorkha Brewery said, “Our partnership with the Premier League will provide us a good platform to reach out to football fans at the local level.”

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SMART TV, MADE EASY
VEERA brings smart operation to its versatile smart TV brandname. "my Home Screen" provides instant access to your favorite content on a personalized TV screen. "Voice Interaction" lets you intuitively control the TV and "Share & Share 2.0" makes it easy to link the TV with a smartphone or tablet and share photos, videos, and web pages with family and friends. VEERA’s new viewing and operating styles make your TV entertainment even more comfortable, and lots more fun.

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Welcome to the new Mahindra e2o. An electric, automatic vehicle that can run on clean energy. Beyond being a clean drive, it’s completely petrol-free, needs no maintenance, and comes packed with a whole range of innovative features that make it convenient, connected, cost-effective and great to drive. So come experience the difference today, and join us in building a better tomorrow.

ASK, AND YOU WILL RISE.

Mahindra Reva unveiled its electric vehicle Mahindra e2o in Kathmandu. It is fully automatic and powered by lithium-ion batteries and a three phase induction electric motor. The Mahindra e2o is priced at Rs 2.25 million and will be available at Agni Energy’s exclusive showroom of Mahindra Reva in Kathmandu.
D alit journalists in India believe caste-based discrimination and antagonism against them are pervasive in the mainstream media.

Over the last three months, I interviewed students who were admitted to Indian media institutes in the ‘reserved’ category and, as I spoke to Dalits who were active in the profession, I was surprised at how their struggle and discrimination in the village gave them an inner strength that helped them survive the rigours of Kathmandu. With his closest friend, Rem, Bhishoworkar, Suvash sold watches and hawked newspapers to earn money and survive in the city. They put themselves through college and dreamt big of a Nepal where everyone was equal and treated with dignity.

Suvash, Rem, and a few others established Jagaran Media Centre with help from Padam Sundar and Binod Pathak, both of whom were to play a very influential role in Suvash’s life over the next decade. Suvash changed the world, but he did not let his success change him. He remained the same model, good humoured, patient, diligent, responsible, and principled man.

When I married him I was already quite prominent and I watched him rise further in the Dalit movement. He was always a caring family man who doted over our daughter. He was also a true believer in loyalty, commitment, sense of purpose, his capacity to bring people together, his ability to stand above social classes. His willingness to reach out to opponents, and his steadfast resolve to secure justice for all will continue to inspire all those who had the privilege to know him and work with him.

I miss him and Nepal misses him.

www.samatafoundation.org
www.jagaranmedia.org

Sarita Pariyar is a board member of Samata Foundation and Suvash Memorial Trust.

It’s the same story in India

Discrimination against Dalits in the Indian media is the norm

Suvash Darnal

This week was the second anniversary of the tragic death of Suvash Darnal, prominent journalist and leading cri- tiquer of the caste system. He was the leading defender of the dignity and rights of the Dalit people. Suvash came to Kathmandu for higher studies from Palpa when he was 18 and realised that he could use the power of media to fight the entrenched structural discrimination within Nepal society of his community. After being trained in media studies at the Nepal Press Institute, Darnal worked briefly at Himal Khabarpatrika covering Dalit and social justice issues. He later worked for All Action Foundation. He set up the Jagaran Media Centre to train Dalit journalists and also worked at the NGO, COCAP, for two years. Then he moved to the United States last year for a Stanford University Draper Hills Summer Fellowship and had just flown back to Washington in April when he was attacked.

Suvash was killed for his race. He was not just a Dalit journalist. He was a Dalit voice. He was an elder sister of the Dalit community. He was an elder sister of the Dalit media. He knew for four years that he had not been in the city two years since he lost his life, I have been learning of his part in the lives he touched.

Suvash was born in 1980 in Mungo of Palpa in a humble Dalit family and because of this he has a life of struggle, hardship, and discrimination. As the eldest son, he had a strong sense of responsibility and he worked hard cutting grass, collecting firewood, fetching water, and other household chores to help his mother Sarita. His mother inculcated in him values that were to serve him well and earn him respect in the years ahead.

Food was scarce in the household, but somehow Suvash found time and the will to excel in school. He also managed to spend a lot of time at the Thatti, a public place in the village where people gathered, had local conversations, and developed social relationships. There was a special place in Suvash’s heart for the Thatti in Mungo.

Suvash had a presence in the world that was special. People were drawn to him, strangers helped him, and he had a gift for leadership that was undeniably appealing. This quality had a lot to do with the time he spent at the Thatti where he developed the style of interaction in which the people respected him because he respected them. Suvash’s leadership qualities come from his home village of Mungo.

Instead of weakening him, the years of struggle and discrimination in the village gave him an inner strength that helped him survive the rigours of Kathmandu. With his closest friend, Rem, Bhishoworkar, Suvash sold watches and hawked newspapers to earn money and survive in the city. They put themselves through college and dreamt big of a Nepal where everyone was equal and treated with dignity.

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www.samatafoundation.org
www.jagaranmedia.org

Sarita Pariyar is a board member of Samata Foundation and Suvash Memorial Trust.

Bigotry in real life

M aya Sarki from Belbari of Morang district was in the national news for days last month when she became the victim of a mob attack after she protested to police for a sexual assault.

She was a Dalit and a police complaint naming Jhawan Bhetwal, whom she suspected of attacking her a day earlier with the intent of rape. But a preliminary investigation showed Jhawan was innocent and Maya apologised for wrongly accusing him.

Maya is a Dalit and Jhawan’s mother slapped her and threatened revenge. The next morning a village meeting was called at a school playground and the villagers reached the venue upper caste villagers beat her, tore her clothes off, blackened her face with soil, and paraded her with a garland of shoes.

A video of the mob assault went viral on the internet and local authorities were forced to take action. More than two weeks after the incident, 18 people involved in the mob assault on Maya have been booked under public offence and caste-based discrimination and untouchability charges.

“We have arrested six people while the remaining are on the run,” says Bishwaraj Pratihari, SP in Morang. Two local journalists have also been booked under Electronic Transaction Act for provoking the attack, filming it, and uploading it on YouTube. Krishna Sunda, 30, who sullied is also in police custody.

After the incident Maya Sarki is staying with her influential role, WOREC, in Biratnagar, Bhaktupur.

Looking back, I can now see how the man I knew for four years of my life had no idea what he was in the two years since this last told me. I have been learning of his part in the lives he touched.

Suvash was in those four short years I came to know a visionary flying home. There was no premonition, no vision of truth. The man I knew for four years was shaped by the previous 27 lives he touched.

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Low pressure over the Gangetic plains brought more rain over the Mahabharat the previous week. Drawn by a big low pressure trough over Bihar, moisture laden clouds will be shedding rain as they move from east to west. It is when these monsoon pulses get stuck and linger that we have cloudbursts like the one last week. Expect these to fall as evening or night rain for the most part. After hot and humid sunny intervals through the weekend, there'll be more early rain next week.

KATHMANDU

Horns shaped like dragon heads, stringed instruments profusely decorated with carvings of gods and goddesses, rows of neatly stacked guitars, drum sets, and keyboards, the Nepal Traditional Music Centre in Mangal Bajar is more a museum than a shop. Run by Hari Kul (pic, above) and his family, the store has been manufacturing, selling, and repairing traditional instruments that most Nepalis have forgotten about alongside more popular western contraptions since four generations.

This combination of tradition and modernity, says Hari, is meant to help conserve Nepal’s unique musical heritage. “Young Nepalis don’t want to pick up a sarangi or a madal, but we can attract them through a fusion of the old and new,” explains the 50-year-old who also runs a music academy housed right above the shop.

His students include 60-year-olds who come to learn classical instruments as well as those wanting to study modern music. In order to encourage youngsters to take up Nepali instruments, Hari accommodates both western and traditional music styles at the academy. One way he does this is by using madals in the formation of a drum set. “Learning any instrument is not hard. But you need complete dedication and understanding,” he says.

The veteran first learnt to play and build instruments from his father. He joined the army in 1974 as a musician where he played the drums and Nepali percussion instruments in the marching band. After retirement in 1998 he returned to Patan to take care of family business. Hari mostly designs and builds percussion equipment like madals, sarangis, drums, and arbaja, a unique instrument once played by the Gandharvas. Once students master their instrument, he teaches them how to make one. The madals produced here take at least three years to complete and are one of the best in the country because the shop uses only seasoned wood. “If the wood isn’t seasoned, the madal will not last nearly as long and sound quality won’t be good,” he explains.

Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, Aashish Kul (pic, left), 22 has quickly picked up tricks of the trade and is an expert instrument maker and salesman himself. “So far our business has done very well. Now I want to introduce Nepali instruments to the outside world,” says Aashish.

While most music stores in the Valley rely heavily on western instruments to boost sales, the Kul family has shown that it is possible to make a profit and maintain a balance between local and global styles at the same time. “Music will always be around. Even if it disappears now, it will come back later; it is that powerful,” says the senior Kul.

Nepal Traditional Music Centre
Mangal Bajar
(01)5532947

A music shop in Patan is helping preserve and promote traditional instruments

MUSICAL GEMS

ARBAJA
Nepal-styled banjo once played by the Gandharva community. Not in common use anymore.

NAAGBELI
Nepali horn instrument that is shaped like a dragon. Not in common use anymore.

SARANGI
Common Nepali stringed instrument. Popular in folk music.

DHIMEY
Drum hung around the neck, used during Newari festivals.

PURANO SARANGI
An older version of the sarangi, not in use anymore.

KHALADI
Traditional Nepali-styled tambourine, completely hand-made using ox hide, seasoned wood, and bronze. Today it has been replaced by plastic tambourines.

Horns shaped like dragon heads, stringed instruments profusely decorated with carvings of gods and goddesses, rows of neatly stacked guitars, drum sets, and keyboards, the Nepal Traditional Music Centre in Mangal Bajar is more a museum than a shop. Run by Hari Kul (pic, above) and his family, the store has been manufacturing, selling, and repairing traditional instruments that most Nepalis have forgotten about alongside more popular western contraptions since four generations.

This combination of tradition and modernity, says Hari, is meant to help conserve Nepal’s unique musical heritage. “Young Nepalis don’t want to pick up a sarangi or a madal, but we can attract them through a fusion of the old and new,” explains the 50-year-old who also runs a music academy housed right above the shop.

His students include 60-year-olds who come to learn classical instruments as well as those wanting to study modern music. In order to encourage youngsters to take up Nepali instruments, Hari accommodates both western and traditional music styles at the academy. One way he does this is by using madals in the formation of a drum set. “Learning any instrument is not hard. But you need complete dedication and understanding,” he says.

The veteran first learnt to play and build instruments from his father. He joined the army in 1974 as a musician where he played the drums and Nepali percussion instruments in the marching band. After retirement in 1998 he returned to Patan to take care of family business. Hari mostly designs and builds percussion equipment like madals, sarangis, drums, and arbaja, a unique instrument once played by the Gandharvas. Once students master their instrument, he teaches them how to make one. The madals produced here take at least three years to complete and are one of the best in the country because the shop uses only seasoned wood. “If the wood isn’t seasoned, the madal will not last nearly as long and sound quality won’t be good,” he explains.

Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, Aashish Kul (pic, left), 22 has quickly picked up tricks of the trade and is an expert instrument maker and salesman himself. “So far our business has done very well. Now I want to introduce Nepali instruments to the outside world,” says Aashish.

While most music stores in the Valley rely heavily on western instruments to boost sales, the Kul family has shown that it is possible to make a profit and maintain a balance between local and global styles at the same time. “Music will always be around. Even if it disappears now, it will come back later; it is that powerful,” says the senior Kul.

Nepal Traditional Music Centre
Mangal Bajar
(01)5532947
DINING

BUBBLY BRUNCH, let the subtleties of Arabian cuisine tease your palate, pasta if you’re not too adventurous and savour a mouthwatering meal at the Bubbly Brunch, 7pm onwards, Chakra Bar, CBB, (01)4817760.

MONGOLIAN BBQ, gobble generous quantities of roasted meat and wash it down with a glass of moktail, with traditional music playing within earshot. Rs 1,099, 7pm onwards, Shangri-La Village Resort, Pokhara, (061)466 303/304, www.waterfronthotelnepal.com.

COSMOPOLITAN CAFE, located in the heart of Basantapur, this cozy cafe offers arguably the best chicken sizzler in town. Basantapur, (01)2325426.

EVENTS

BAGMATI FESTIVAL, celebrate the river that nourishes Kathmandu, with parades, rafting, and cleanliness programmes. Runs till 24 August.

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

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 joint exhibition of four painters Bhawana Manandhar, Rajesh Manandhar, Nigaj Chitrakar, and Ganesh G C. 2 to 19 August, Park Gallery, Pulchok, (01)2552357, www.parkgallery.com.np.


Bottoms up, take your taste buds and olfactory nerves on a joy ride at the 50th Annual wine tasting festival. Rs 300 per half litre, July to August.

Klancy’s, Thamel, (01)420404/94. Swim and lunch, enjoy your weekends with a dip in the pool and savour a mouthwatering lunch with a glass of beer. Rs 999, Saturdays, 11am to 6pm, Waterfront Resort, Pokhara, (061)466 303/304, www.waterfronthotelnepal.com.

‘Around the Boz in 80 Years’, conference, dance workshop and performance. 18 to 27 August, free entrance, Alliance Francaise, Teku.

Voices, a talk by Chandra Mohan on the literary and cultural interrelationships in South Asia. 16 August, 4.30pm, Nepal Bharat Library, New Road Gate.

4th business square, a business presentation and sharing life lessons by entrepreneur of the month Arun Thapa whose online presentation and sharing life lessons by entrepreneur of the month Arun Thapa whose online

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YUWAK YUWATI MELA, meet thousands of Nepali youngsters and hear what they have to say about being young in Nepal, with dance and theatre performances and a number of useful products on sale in stalls. 17 August, 11am to 5pm, Makal, Jhamsikhel.

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

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**MUSIC**

HAMISABAI JUNGALI, catch the band Mukut perform their favourite covers as well as songs from their new album. 16 August, 7pm onwards, House of Music, Thamel, 9849321656

Le banquet des anges, a concert by Aurelie Barbelin and Nicolas Meyer. 23 August, 6pm, free entrance, Russian Culture Centre, Kamalpokhari

Starry Night BBQ, catch Ciney Gurung live as you chomp on your meat stick. Rs 3,299, 7pm onwards, Fridays, Shamshala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4442999 (Ext. 72207/735)

**GETAWAYS**

Relax, get yoga, detox, and ayurveda treatment far away from the noise of Kathmandu. Himalayan Peace and Wellness Centre, Park Village Resort, Bhaktapur, (01)4372180, 9804666066, peace@wellness.com.np

Waterfront Resort, stay away from the crowd and revitalize your Pokhara trip. Rs 4,444 for bed and breakfast on twin sharing. Waterfront Resort, Sedi Height, Lakeside Road, Pokhara, 9849321656, reservation@waterfronthotelnepal.com

**COBWEB LIVE**, Nepal’s oldest rock band are back to spin a few tales and a few hips. 24 August, Swimming Pool, Satalbato

**LETTHE GAMES BEGIN**

The football season is back after a maddening three month break. Catch the first rounds at your favourite watering holes.

17, 18 & 20 August: English Premier League kicks off with Liverpool hosting Stoke City, Arsenal playing Aston Villa, and champions Manchester United visiting the underdogs Swansea. Chelsea play on Sunday, Manchester City, two days later.

17, 18, 19 & 20 August: La Liga champions Barcelona begin their defence at Levante on Sunday, and disgruntled Real Madrid will look to mangle Real Betis the next day.

17 & 18 August: Second round of Bundesliga, will it be Bayern Munich again this year?

24, 25 & 26 August: League football in Italy begins one week later than usual. Milan will want to open with a win and mount a sustained challenge on champions Juventus.

Live coverage on ESPN and Star Sports

**ATTIHI RESORT**, a perfect place to stay, nearby pool, massage, sauna and delicious food of your choice. Shigmastan, Lakeside, Pokhara. (61)466760/463526, info@attihiresort.com

Hotel Barahi, escape the chills of Kathmandu and head to Pokhara to enjoy a great view of Phewa lake along with other charms of the lake city. Lakeside, Pokhara, (61)466760/463526

**GETTING LOUD IN HERE**

Coming to a hometown near you, all your favourite Nepali rock stars:

BUTWAL 17 AUGUST, ANFA Technical Centre

NARAYANGHAT 31 AUGUST, Kampa Chaur

DHARAN 14 SEPTEMBER, Public School

POKHARA 21 SEPTEMBER, Pradhanmani Maidan

KATHMANDU 5 OCTOBER, Da’srath Stadium

**LET THE GAMES BEGIN**

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In his studio in Patan Dhoka, 53-year-old Lok Chitrakar is busy at work. One of the most renowned Nepali paubha artists, Chitrakar is adding last minute touches on a huge painting of Macchindranath, founder of Nath Pantha sect, that will be displayed at Kanzouin Museum in Japan next year. The painting took 11 years in the making.

“I am always excited to show my work to new audiences,” says a delighted Chitrakar whose paubha paintings have found homes as far as Denmark, Germany, Pakistan, US, and the UK. This will be Chitrakar’s third exhibition in Japan. Art aficionados from all over the world come to his studio to train. While most international students see pauba as another art form, for many local students this is their bread and butter.

Born into a family of artisans, where every male member was involved in making religious art, it didn’t take long for Chitrakar to pick up the brush and start painting. After observing his father and uncles at work, the young boy made his first paubha of an Astamatrika (eight female deities) at ten. Four decades to Sundhara – every other shop is now a handicrafts showroom. The boom in tourist numbers in the last six years means that when a grocery shop shifts, it is quickly replaced by a handicraft one. According to the Tourism Ministry, tourist arrival almost tripled in the last 10 years. Nepal received more than 800,000 visitors in 2012 alone. Significantly for Patan’s handicrafts boom, nine per cent of these were Chinese, who are known for their spending prowess.

Sampurna Shakya, who owns a handicrafts shop here, has seen shops mushroom all around him. “With more Chinese buyers, every other shop in the city of Patan is a handicrafts showroom. As motorcycles whiz around the narrow alleys of Patan, Subarna Bajracharya (pic, right), 28, is fixed to his spot beside the door of his uncle’s handicrafts shop. Hammer and chisel in hand, he chips away at a slab before him and stops only to brush away loose bits of stone.

It takes him the best part of a week to carve out these figurines, most of which will be part of larger pieces. Since tourists usually buy trinkets, Bajracharya has been in the business since he was 10, hopes to sell these pieces to foreign businessmen who come looking for Buddhist statues to sell to patrons back home.

But there is stiff competition on the roads that lead you from Patan Dhoka to the Darbar Area and beyond to Sundhara – every other shop is now a handicrafts showroom. The boom in tourist numbers in the last six years means that when a grocery shop shifts, it is quickly replaced by a handicraft one. According to the Tourism Ministry, tourist arrival almost tripled in the last 10 years. Nepal received more than 800,000 visitors in 2012 alone. Significantly for Patan’s handicrafts boom, nine per cent of these were Chinese, who are known for their spending prowess.

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Paubha, #393

Chitrakar who did her PhD thesis on paubha from the Princess School of Traditional Arts in the UK. “The only difference is in the interpretation of religious texts.”

In the past few years, there has been a renewed interest in the art that once was at risk of losing its identity. “More and more people are aware of the difference between paubha and thanka and few people still label it the ‘Nepari thanka’ like they used to even a decade ago,” informs Chitrakar.

The growing significance of the art has also benefited artists and many youngsters now see it as a viable career. Chitrakar who has been teaching students at Kathmandu University is happy with the renaissance and the way business has picked up due to the boost in the number of tourists. Paubha paintings are sold for as much as Rs 1 million. But both Chitrakar and Gurung admit that a piece of paubha can never be commodified as it takes a lot of time and dedication to finish a piece. “I started working on some of my pieces years ago, but they are still incomplete because paubha cannot be hurried. It takes time and a lot of patience,” says Gurung.

Although paubhas were historically painted for spiritual reasons, today many simply see it as an art. “Back then there used to be a relationship between the patron, the artist, and the priest,” explains Gurung. Artists would perform initiation rites before starting, priests would be consulted, and a long ritual would follow. “Contemporary artists rarely follow these guidelines and the method has also changed in the last few decades,” she adds. Although the surge in popularity is encouraging for artists, Gurung worries that commercialisation may lead to distortion.

In her effort to open up paubhas to an international audience, Gurung started a program at the Princess School in July, but was disappointed when no Nepali student turned up. She is hopeful, however, that with discounted fees for Nepalis, the attendance next year will be more encouraging.

Later, the veteran goes about his work with the same enthusiasm.

For long paubha, a traditional Newari art based on Hindu and Buddhist mythologies was seen as a type of thanka painting, which gained popularity because of the West’s growing interest in Tibetan culture.

coming to Patan, everyone wants to enter the business,” he says. Raj Bajracharya owned a showroom in Patan Sundhara but felt the industry passed him by. A month ago he set up shop in Khachi – the previous tenants were tailors – to tap into the Chinese market. “The old one is still open, but I’m counting on this to boost income,” he says.

Last year total export volume of Nepali handicrafts crossed US 6 million, of which 17 percent went to our northern neighbour. Total handicrafts trade to China has increased by 79 per cent from 2011 to 2012, with metal-crafts rising by 98 per cent. This expanding market in China has also spawned imitators there and Nepali craftsmen are even recruited to work abroad. Nand Gopal Maharjan, who used to own a jewellery shop and opened up a handicrafts showroom and metal works 15 years ago, sees this migration of craftsmen as something that has happened for centuries and not without glitches.

“The weather there does not suit the type of traditional Nepali statue-making,” explains Tenzin Rabyang, 29, whose family has been in the business for 45 years. According to Rabyang, traditional Chinese clay work pieces are of inferior quality to Nepali metalwork and plenty of patrons who sell yarsagumba want to buy the gold-worked statues as markers of wealth. As long as this bubble exists, handicrafts sellers from Patan Dhoka to Sundhara, will look to replicate what Lalitpur of yore was known for.

However, paubha derived from the Sanskrit word patrabhattarak meaning depiction of god and goddesses on a flat form, dates back to the 7th century and is a precursor to thankas. “They are basically two children of the same parents,” explains Renuka Gurung, a student of Chitrakar who explained paubha from the Princess School of Traditional Arts in the UK. “The only difference is in the interpretation of religious texts.”

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The Great Gatsby is a pure unaffected throwaway any semblance of wayward animals. Often than not the weather, small casts about trying to assimilate her unknown just as the film director his imagination leaps into the front of the computer on his own, mediums. Among the many that they are entirely disparate burdened by the understanding I hesitate to compare the two, effect. Unfortunately, what he cinematically and to maximum Luhrmann is good at, showing off unexpected panorama. This is what to show yet another entirely suddenly then swinging around rooms and people dancing, from wide vistas into mansion visual senses are overwhelmed. Even without watching the of that great classic novel.

MUST SEE

Sophia Pande

The Great Gatsby

If you have not read

Almost everything that comes

Your head, and for this alone it is

Keeping a tab

The Acer Iconia A1 tablet is no iPad/iPad Mini killer, but it does not set out to be one. From the laptop powerhouse Acer, A1 is a simple tablet, a budget tablet if you will (at Rs 27,000) with a clean design and an uncomplicated interface. Powered by a Quad Core 1.2 GHz processor and a 1GB RAM, the A1 is a tablet capable of breezing through graphics intensive games, HD videos and multiple web pages.

Running on the Android Jellybean Operating Software (4.2.2), Acer has chosen to go with a clean interface with no bloatware, although this is a fully customizable in terms of apps and widgets available from the Google Play Store to suit your needs. While the screen resolution of 1024 pixels x 768 pixels is not the best, the display is still sharp and text, pictures, games, and videos (especially HD) look good on the 7.9 inch LCD screen.

The A1 is available with on board storage of 16GB, although approximately 1GB is available to you in reality because of the space taken up by the operating system and pre-installed applications, which is the same for all tablets and computers. To account for your extra storage needs, a MicroSD Memory Slot is included, which supports memory cards up to 32GB.

As it is also equipped with a micro HDMI out option which lets you watch movies, look at photos, and browse web pages on your HDTVs.

Yantrick’s Verdict: Certainly for those on a budget, but in search of a branded tablet.

THE GREAT GATSBY

What can I say about Baz Luhrmann’s adaptation of that great classic novel The Great Gatsby? As with all adaptations from book to film, I hesitate to compare the two, burdened by the understanding that they are entirely disparate mediums. Among the many differences, the writer struggles in front of the computer on his own, his imagination leaping into the unknown just as the film director casts about trying to assimilate her cast, crew, art directors, and more often than not the weather, small children, vehicles, and occasionally wayward animals.

Perhaps the way to go is Luhrmann’s after all, willfully throwing away any semblance of trying to faithfully adapt a piece of converting F Scott Fitzgerald’s incisive and sometimes gorgeous prose into believable dialogue. Almost everything that comes out of the characters’ mouths are unbearably affected, even when Daisy Buchanan is played by the lovely and charming Carey Mulligan and Leonardo DiCaprio is Gatsby. Nick Carraway meanwhile is played by the unusually great, but this time initially very silly, Tobey Maguire; the only real delight is the newcomer Elizabeth Debicki as Jordan Baker, the bored but lovely socialite golfer. Isla Fischer, meanwhile, is surprisingly good as the trashy but vulnerable Myrtle.

If you have not read The Great Gatsby, I will summarize for you, but, I warn you, my words will be inadequate in summing up the ineffable sense of romance that permeates throughout the story. Jay Gatsby, a mysterious and freakishly rich businessman has become famous for throwing outlandishly lavish parties at his new mansion in West Egg (think West Hampton). Daisy Buchanan who has married into old money in the first World War and before Gatsby went off to fight in the First World War and before Daisy was forced to marry Tom. This is what permeates throughout the ineffable sense of romance, complete with tragedy, deceit, copious amounts of alcohol, pearls, and flapper dresses, set in the splendour of the roaring 20s.

The film is not great, it is a bit too long at 143 minutes, and yet, there are moments that will captivate you with their sheer extravagance and cinematic finesse. Also, surprisingly, as the film rushes towards its tragic end, Tobey Maguire redeems his Nick Carraway, becoming the heart and soul of this mostly empty film, with its empty characters. Watch the film too for its quite amazing soundtrack. Barring a clanking and hubris filled mess from Jay Z, there are some gems from Jay Z, there are some gems from Florence Machine, the xx, Lana Del Rey, and Nero. Long after the film is done, you’ll continue hearing the music in your head, and for this alone it is worth watching this sometimes charming, mostly absurd adaptation.

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Tiffin time

During their three years in Delhi, students Samiksha Rai and Deepika Shrestha often found themselves craving for home cooked meals. They tried out high-end restaurants and local joints, but only the tiffin boxes delivered by the ubiquitous dhaba walas in their crisp white shirts and Nehru caps came closest to giving them a taste of home. Affordable and healthy, the service proved to be the perfect option for the two who were then living as paying guests. Inspired by the business model and wanting to feed hungry office-goers fresh home cooked meals, the cousins started a similar venture in Kathmandu called Pack My Lunch last month. Both Rai and Shrestha are very hand-on with their pet project: from shopping and ordering ingredients, to preparing the meals, the duo has taken care of everything. "We deliver at any time convenient to you," says Shrestha. "You just need to let us know the meal details and we’ll do the rest." The menu is a mix of regular Nepali favourites along with a few home cooked meals that the pair like to experiment with. "Just like the food our mothers make," says Rai. "We keep changing the menu with weekly specials. But if you can’t wait for a taste of home, you can let them pack your lunch right now.

www.facebook.com/packmylunchnepal 9803496546

The first time I stepped into El Mediterraneo was for an evening of beer with friends. Food clearly wasn’t the focus of the night. However, chef and owner Bibushan Raj Joshi kept pouring more wine on our plates, "Why don’t we order something to eat?" he first time I stepped into El Mediterraneo was for an evening of beer with friends. Food clearly wasn’t the focus of the night. However, chef and owner Bibushan Raj Joshi kept pouring more wine on our plates, "Why don’t we order something to eat?" and I, being aforesaid, was convinced that I had to put it on my review list. This week I was wowed by the starters, the vegetarian fideos (Rs 400). Although it was splashed on the rice with an inch-long piece of seafood, it looked like the cook had simply cooked in seafood broth it lacked the sofrito as I took a mouthful. I could feel the ingredients of the seafood in my seafood paella. "Our vegetarian fideos looked quite refreshing, sans the long list of regular Nepali favourites along with Chinese, Thai, and Italian as dished out by most restaurants in Kathmandu. But El Mediterraneo is what it says it is: a Spanish restaurant with tapas. With gazpacho (Rs 220) on the list, we decided to forgo drinks for fresh vegetables in the morning to measuring the amount of oil that goes into each meal to helping with packaging and even making deliveries around town, the duo does everything on their own. "We know the value of being consistent and efficient. And so far the response has been very encouraging. People like our food and are happy with the price," says Shrestha.

In its first month of operation, Pack My Lunch rolled out a limited menu. Lights meals consisting of momo, chow mein, and fried rice are priced at Rs 80 while a vegetarian lunch set costs Rs 100, add Rs 50 for the meat option. A cook prepares all the meals at their kitchen in Bishal Nagar from where the meal gets delivered to different corners of the city. The service runs from Sunday to Friday 7am to 2pm and delivery is absolutely free. But orders (a minimum of five) need to be placed at least a day in advance. "Many people call us requesting for a single meal order but at our price, we can’t do that," says Rai. "Without bulk orders, it will be very difficult for us to sustain," adds Shrestha.

In the coming months, the two aim to upgrade the menu with weekly specials. But if you can’t wait for a taste of home, you can let them pack your lunch right now.

How to get there: take the turn opposite Namaste Supermarket in Pulchok, heading towards Herman’s Bakery. El Mediterraneo is on your left, next to Cafe Soma. Buena suerte! PM

EL MEDITERRANEON

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SLEEP TIGHT

- School-age children (5-10 years) need 10-11 hours of sleep daily, teens (10-17 years) need 8.5-9.5 hours, and adults need 7-9 hours of sleep daily.
- Sleep deprivation impairs attention, memory, alertness, concentration, reasoning, and problem solving leading to poor performance during daytime.
- Lack of sleep stimulates appetite and cravings for high-fat, high-carbohydrate foods leading to weight gain.
- Those who experience chronic sleep loss are at higher risk of heart disease, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, stroke, and diabetes.

SWEETER DREAMS

- Sleep in complete darkness, or as close to it as possible.
- Use earplugs, fans, or recordings of soothing sounds to block out outside noise.
- Make sure your mattress and pillows feel comfortable.
- Keep your room cool.
- Develop a sleeping ritual and stick to it: go to bed at the same time each night and rise at the same time each morning.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol close to bedtime.

Many of us know the importance of a healthy diet and proper exercise, but we pay scant attention to the “chief nourisher in life’s feast”. Even those who are religious about their diet and exercise regimen, treat sleep like a luxury than a necessity. Add to that the incessant noise bowl that is Kathmandu – barking dogs, rowdy neighbours, honking impatient vehicles – and getting a good night’s sleep becomes rather challenging.

Most adults require between seven to nine hours of sleep. Anything less and we build sleep debt that cannot be paid back by ‘sleeping in’ on Saturday mornings. In a country like Nepal where hypertension and diabetes are common, sleep deprivation appears to make us even more susceptible to these ailments. Indeed, even a single night of inadequate sleep can lead to daylong elevation of high blood pressure. Lack of proper sleep also affects the body’s ability to process glucose and can lead to diabetes.

Healthy young men who are deprived of sleep have abnormal glucose levels in their blood. In general, the risks of cardiovascular disease and stroke are higher in people who sleep less than six hours.

And there is more bad news. Several studies have shown an association between insufficient sleep and weight gain. The levels of the hormone leptin, which tells the brain when enough food has been consumed, are lowered in sleep-deprived individuals so it is possible these people eat more. Finally inadequate sleep weakens our immunity, making us more prone to flu and other infections.

Age affects the quality of sleep and the amount of time spent in various stages of sleep. These include rapid eye movement sleep (REM sleep) or dream sleep and the three types of non-REM sleep, the light sleep of Stage 1 followed by relaxed sleep of Stage 2 and finally the restorative, deep sleep of Stage 3. Children spend most of the night in deep sleep oblivious to surrounding noises. But with age, the time spent in restorative sleep diminishes since we become more aware of distractions.

Wearing eye masks when there is extraneous light in the room which we cannot control is helpful in achieving restorative sleep. Ear plugs are also very effective even if they don’t completely block out all levels of noise. For those who are overweight and snore during sleep, sleeping on the side or losing weight can help in reaching stage 3.

Besides noise, night-time distractions can also influence the “chief nourisher in life’s feast” by affecting our appetite and sleep. A single night of inadequate sleep weakens our immunity and can lead to daylong elevation of high blood pressure.

Getting Your Daily Dose of ZZZ ...
HIGHLIGHTS OF INDIA-NEPAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

A multi-layered programme comprising 477 ongoing and completed projects at the cost of over NRs. 65 billion in almost all key economic sectors, based on priorities of the Government of Nepal.

SMALL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (SDPs)

- Cover wide ranging infrastructure development and capacity-building projects costing up to NRs. 50 million
- Cover all districts of Nepal, over 12 million beneficiaries
- 225 school projects ongoing or completed
- 24 hospital projects in progress, 15 under planning or completing
- 2000Hughesbridges ongoing or completed
- Other projects are in critical stages of drinking water, slum upgrading, road work, electrification and capacity development.

Since 1994, India has gifted 381 ambulances and 74 school buses covering 75 districts in Nepal.

Eye care camps organized by Nepal Navta Jyotि Sanstha through funding by the Government of India. Since 2002, a total assistance of NRs. 211 million extended by the Government of India. More than 1,07,000 surgeries performed, more than 77,000 students have been provided with optical spectacles under School Eye Health Care Programme launched in 2007.

MAJOR ONGOING PROJECTS

- Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) are being built at 4 points on the India-Nepal Border namely Raucal (India)-Bheramala (Nepal), Jhaptal (India)-Bheramala (Nepal), Saptari (India)-Mahakali (Nepal) and Bheramala (India) -Kanchanjunga (Nepal). In the first phase, works have been taken up to two of the four ICPs with Indian assistance of NRs. 4.32 billion for the segment falling in Nepal. ICPs would have state-of-the-art infrastructure and will facilitate integrated customs and immigration for smooth cross border movement of people and goods.
- Cross-border railway links being constructed at five locations on the India-Nepal Border namely Jaynagar-Salaulim, Jhapat - Bheramala, Namaste-Pharping, Rupakot-Nepalgunj and New Jaleshpur Kaskikot. Work on Jaynagar-Salaulim and Jaynagar-Bheramala being taken up in Phase I with an estimated cost of NRs. 10.4 billion.
- First phase of Teliyabasti Projects, currently under construction, cover 19 roads of 605 km in 13 Terai Districts worth NRs. 11 billion. Phase II will be followed by Phase III costing Rs 11 bn.
- Super-speciality Trauma Centre in Kathmandu with 260 bed facility at an estimated cost of NRs. 1.96 billion. Tenders out to GOI expected soon.
- 26.8 km long road that forms a part of 62.8 km long Kathmandu-Heradu road connecting the Kathmandu Valley and the Terai region constructed with India assistance. Additional work on the road to commence soon.

- Mansarover Mahalikuri Police Post set up in 2000, became the first police post providing essential services to 3 engineering streams and other vocational courses, Indian faculty support continuing
- 815 Units of the East-West Highway from Mahottari to Madi (Mohandra Regency)
- 22 bridges on Koshiya-Mukha mixed section of the East-West Highway constructed
- 75 km Optical Fibre along the East-West Highway and 80 stations of SDH equipment.

EDUCATION

- One of the top priorities of the Government of India under the Meenakshi Mission to provide free education to the deprived segments of society. 56% scholarships are provided to Nepalese students for studying in undergraduate and graduate courses in India.
- 52% students awarded to Nepalese students for studying in India. The Mission contributes to a COMFEX examination for Nepalese students to study in MBBS/MB BSc/BVSc/BCA/Diploma in Technology/BE (Architecture) courses in India, which has been growing exponentially every year.
- Free education or scholarships are available in India for Government/nongovernment employees of Nepal under FEATCO/Colombo Plan

EX-SERVICEWOMEN WELFARE ACTIVITIES

- Disbursment of pension worth NRs. 22 billion annually to Ex-servicemen
- Welfare Schemes amounting to more than NRs. 10 billion awarded every year
- NRs. 18.2 million spent on educational scholarships for 220 students
- 1,25,000 medicine packets worth NRs. 19.1 million has been distributed this year and 1,26,000 medicine packets work NRs. 26.4 million under consideration for coming year
- 10 Solar projects costing NRs. 332.5 million have been executed benefiting around 0.15 million people
- 2,500 drinking water schemes are functional.
- Medical grants worth NRs. 17.9 million have been distributed is 304 beneficiaries this year.
- Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECCHS)
- A cashless medical treatment scheme extended to Nepal Denominated Indian Defence Personnel (ECCHS) polyclinics being established at Kathmandu, Pokhara and Dharan. Leading hospitals in Nepal will be empanelled for providing free treatment to veterans.
- Disbursement of other than pension (OTP) payments amounting NRs. 5.48 million
- Disbursement of AGM/MHS amounting NRs. 16.2 million

FLAGSHIP COMPLETED PROJECTS

- Goitre Control Programme – Since 1973, Goit has provided assistance of NRs. 554 million for the Goitre Control Programme. Availability of iodized salt at household-level program expanded (99.3% in 2016). As a result, rate of Goitre in Nepal has declined from 55% in 1963 to 8% in 2016.
- Five-star rated OPD complex of the Kathmandu Hospital, constructed with a capacity to accommodate 2300 operations.
- BKPRS, Dharmas, the largest public sector hospital-completed medical college outside Valley. Indian faculty support going on.
A document prepared by the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, which the government has kept under wraps, shows that Rs 20 billion was spent from the state treasury in disarming Maoist combatants after the conflict ended in 2006.

Most of the expenditure is not properly accounted for, the costs appear to be hugely inflated, there is proof of lavish duplication in spending, and instances of outright fraud.

The figures are mind-numbing: nearly Rs 10 billion was disbursed from the Cantonment Coordinator’s Office, the Special Committee spent Rs 8.3 billion, and the Peace Fund spent Rs 1.5 billion. The total is more than the country’s annual defence budget.

The highest amount of Rs 8.15 billion was spent on the golden handshake for the 15,624 combatants who chose voluntary retirement and got between Rs 500,000-800,000 each. The second biggest item was the Rs 5.88 billion spent for the upkeep of the fighters in the cantonments.

After initially claiming that it had a fighting force of nearly 31,000, UNMIN admitted only 19,602 into the cantonments it supervised. But a new verification after UNMIN’s departure showed that there were only 17,246 inmates in the camps. However, the Maoists kept collecting the full amount and party cadre themselves have accused their leaders of pocketing the extra Rs 4 billion.

Even though sub-cantonments were only a short bus ride away, Rs 3 million was paid out for transportation of the fighters for verification, Rs 1.7 million for phone bills and Rs 30 million for water bills.

“The costs are unbelievably high and there has been widespread misappropriation,” says Rajan Bhattacharai of Nepal Institute for Policy Studies. “The lack of punishment for this plunder of the treasury has sent the message that it is ok to steal from the state because no one is ever punished. And the message for the former fighters who returned home will be even more dangerous.”

According to a Special Committee member, the reason for the irregularities was that there was no opposition from other political parties and the donor community for fear of derailing the peace process. Although the Special Committee chaired by the prime minister tasked with looking after the cantonments was supposed to be governed by the interim constitution, the peace agreement, and cross-party consensus, it was effectively controlled by the Maoists who had a free rein over the money.

The decade-long conflict cost the nation dearly. Nepal’s defence budget grew four-fold, development was pushed back decades, infrastructure projects were abandoned, nearly 18,000 people were killed, 9,000 were widowed, nearly 6,000 were maimed, almost 23,000 families were displaced. And there were the indirect costs to the economy.

Coordinator of the Special Committee, Gen Balananda Sharma says: “Some say you can’t measure peace in dollars and cents, but giving Rs 800,000 to someone just because he took up the gun has set a precedent. The main thing is that the violence stopped, the guns and guerrillas were brought under the control of the state, and the rebel party joined the political mainstream.”

Former guerilla commander Chandra Prakash Khanal (Baldev) admits that questions about expenses for the peace process are legitimate at a time when the real goal of writing a new constitution has not been met. He adds, “It was a struggle for a political goal, so money should not be the only issue.”

But even after the war ended, the expenses kept escalating. Ultimately, one could say, the only outcome of the peace process that cost the country Rs 20 billion was that 1,421 ex-Maoists were integrated into the Nepal Army. Besides that, there doesn’t seem to be any other tangible benefit from the war.
THE COST OF INTEGRATION

- **Payment for voluntary retirees**: $81,555,440
- **Monthly allowances**: $58,886,737
- **Roads to Cantonments**: $7,431,540
- **Infrastructure at Cantonments**: $2,180,290
- **Krishna Bahadur Mahara expense account**: $4,610,672

**How much where?**

- **Health**: $331,150
- **Administration costs**: $1,368,108
- **Living costs for combatants**: $27,656,149
- **Drinking water**: $341,460
- **Other costs**: $2,737,105

**How much from where?**

- **Cantonment management office**: $97,968,802
- **Peace fund (except living costs)**: $15,448,150
- **Secretariat of the Special Committee**: $83,735,730
- **Total expense**: $197,152,683

NUMBERS GAME

- **2006 original Maoist claim**: 30,852
- **2007 unverified**: 17,602
- **2011 after verification**: 17,246
- **2013 into Nepali army**: 1,421

OF PEACE

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No room for love

Naya Patrika, 13 August

Binita Duwadi and Biram Bahadur Bhishakarma from Dhading fell in love and got married. The only problem: Binita’s Brahmin family did not approve of her inter-caste marriage with a Dalit boy. They denounced her and threatened to kill the two. The young couple then moved to Kathmandu and remained ‘underground’. Last Sunday, Binita was abducted from her college.

Excerpts from her diary which was found during police investigation:

“Last month I left home and eloped to Kathmandu. The Bhishakarma family had planned to kidnap me. When I told the police that I had married Biram out of my own will, they pressured me to change my statement. I stood my ground. My brother handed me a packet of poison and said I would be better off dead.

In the days that followed my family continued to torture me, sending goons to threaten my life. So once again we had to move and go underground. My parents are now trying to find a husband for me from our caste and have even agreed to give him Rs 400,000. Am I a doll to be bought and sold in the market? Is it really such a big crime in this country to fall in love with someone from the ‘wrong’ caste? And what does it say about our society that tries to separate two people in love? I stand by my decision and have happily been a hard-working man and he loved me. I never thought my educated family would stoop so low. They said I should commit suicide rather than be with someone who did not have their consent. When I refused, they planned to get me married to a Brahmin man.”

Last month I left home and eloped to Kathmandu. But even here the torment didn’t end. The police arrested Biram’s mother and younger brother after my family alleged them of kidnapping me. When I told the police that I had married Biram out of my own will, they pressured me to change my statement. I stood my ground. My brother handed me a packet of poison and said I would be better off dead.

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Surendra Poudel, 14 August

The Nepal Embassy on 12A Kensington Palace Gardens in London is a national monument. The walls of the magnificent building are cracked and so are the pillars that keep it standing. The wall paint and wallpaper are flaking off.

Drainage pipes installed a century ago have holes in them because of the rust and everything spills onto the walls. The second floor is shoddy. Rain seeps through the roof and plaster on the ceiling inside has peeled off, leaving large brown patches in place of white.

The government in Nepal is least bothered about the embassy’s upkeep and is in fact looking to sell the property in hopes of pocketing any windfall. Renovations will set back the state by Rs 630 million, but if it allocates Rs 50 million every year, repair work can be completed within 10 years. If sold now, however, Nepal stands to gain Rs 75 billion.

In the past decade, many high-level advisory committees have been formed and millions doled out to sponsor junkets for Nepali officials, but nothing concrete has happened yet. In April, a team of experts visited the UK and Germany for research and came up with a proposal. The trip cost Rs 1.6 million, but not everyone signed on to the document. It was submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May, but as with the older agreements, it still hasn’t been made public. The fate of the embassy remains in limbo.

Weekly Bazar Poll #23

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

Do you think Nepal should adopt a federal system?

| Mid April | Yes | 46.3% | No | 41.2% | Don’t know | 12.2% | Won’t say | 0.3% |
| Mid June | Yes | 52.2% | No | 31.8% | Don’t know | 14.9% | Won’t say | 1.1% |
| Mid August | Yes | 52% | No | 29.5% | Don’t know | 17.4% | Won’t say | 1.1% |

Basu Khiitiz in Annapurna Post, 14 August

There is no way there can be single-identity ethnic states in Nepal.

Baburam Bhattrai quoted in Annapurna Post, 13 August

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

NEPALI TWEETS
After communal violence broke out between Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar’s western state of Rakhine in June last year, hundreds of Rohingyas fled the country and sought refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh and India. Around 51 refugees made it to Kathmandu and are currently living in Kapan and Bansbari area. The families have no documents to prove their identities, have lost contact with those back home, and say they are not planning on returning to Myanmar anytime soon. They are trying to make a living in the Valley with the support of the Muslim community here.

Mohamed Aayas came to Kathmandu two months ago with his wife Noor Jahan Begum and their five children. The family first fled to Bangladesh and then to the Indian town of Aligarh in West Bengal. However, when the Indian police began questioning their whereabouts, they came to Biratnagar via the Jogbani checkpoint and made their way to Kathmandu. “Our landlord in Aligarh told us about the UN office in Kathmandu where we could get refugee cards so we came here,” says Aayas who works as a construction worker in Kapan. While fleeing Myanmar, the family found a nine-year-old girl called Noorkalima stranded on the way and brought her to Nepal with them. Aayas does not know if her parents are alive.

Hadim Hussain, who owned several hectares of farmland and ran a fishery business, had a good life in Rakhine. But after clashes broke out, he was arrested and tortured by the police. “The police caught my brother so I came to Bangladesh, moved to Assam after a while, and finally reached Biratnagar via Jogbani,” says Husain. “I saved Rs 3,000 cleaning buses and toilets and came to Kathmandu with that money.”

Like many others who fled the violence in Myanmar, Mohamed Aayub too has no idea what happened to his family whom he had to leave behind. “Our entire village was burnt down and I ran away to save my life,” says Ayub. “I couldn’t even look for my wife and family members, it was too dangerous.”

PICS: DEVAKI BISTA

Navin Jha, Himal Khabarpatra, 11 August

NOWHERE TO GO: 24-year-old Abu Sufiya and family (left) and 65-year-old Abdul Jali (above) and family are among the 51 Rohingya Muslims who fled Myanmar after communal violence broke out in Rakhine last year. They currently live in Kathmandu.
The rate our god-fearing atheist comrades are turning to the opiate of the masses, one would think that Baddies have become fundoos too.

Taking the lead in this is the CM, as behooves the hierarchical structure of the party. It was PKD who set the tone by worshipping a water buffalo on the holy banks of the Kosi in Chhatara to appease the gods. The next step for the Great Helmsman is to slaughter a water buffalo and sacrifice it to his hirsute European gurus which include Comrades Marx, Engels, Lenin, and the follicular-challenged Chairman Mau himself. It is only a short progression in the step-by-step ascent up god’s scheme of things to emulate kingji and do a panchabali, which involves the ritual sacrifice of five creatures: a buffalo, a sheep, a goat, a duck, and a pumpkin. The Ass is glad to note that donkeys are not on the list. But for someone who is used to human sacrifice, this must really be a piece of cake for Chairman Awesome.

The Great Leader was seen with the Dear Leader in tow at a recent Bol Bam parade, clad in saffron headgear and praying together to Lord Shiva to create what they destroyed. Interestingly, they were in the illustrious company of none other than Comred Amrace. Looks like even our patron deities need patrons from across the political firmament to protect them in this worldly realm. Not able to block the National Human Rights Commission from instructing the Home Minister and police to investigate the Krishna Adhikari murder case, the Chairman seems to be beseeching a higher-up authoritarian. PKD’s transformation from Bol Bomb to Bol Bam is now complete.

Maoism was never an atheist doctrine as we were led to believe all along, it was actually monotheist. But with Mr Zedong now thoroughly discredited not only in the land of his birth (and death) but also in Nipaw, comrades are falling at the feet of any godman that moves. Taking the cue from his boss and possibly under the impression that money can’t buy you divine love, Comrade Krishna was seen at the Evangelical Gospel Assembly Church being blessed by two parish pastors. Hands folded, eyes closed, Shri Krishna appeared to be in deep contemplation about how to get the cash out of the stash at election time. Problem is, a lot of that cash still has His Erstwhile Majesty Gyan’s crowned mugshot on it.

The CIAA has started digging selectively for dirt, arresting people for transformer scams and minor bribes, when the Rs 20 billion that the Baddies purloined in the name of taking care of their comrades in the cantonments doesn’t look like being investigated any time soon. For example, it seems the Peace Ministry kept giving out salaries and budgets for years towards the upkeep of 2,500 ex-guerrillas who did not exist. But who cares, when the headman is anointed by none other than Injun godman, Co-pilot Baba.

We all thought it was the joke of the week that Baidya Baba told the High and Mighty Political Mechanics that he would take part in elections only if there weren’t going to be elections. But it’s not a joke anymore. The Mechanists told the media after Wednesday’s talks that, indeed, they were willing to postpone elections if that was what it took to bring Kiran Kaka into the fold. So, folks, just as the Ass predicted, you can go ahead with your November getaways. There ain’t going to be no elections till next year.

The Mule’s mole at Lazingpat says PKD went to try to convince MBK to reunite the party before elections because otherwise both the Dash and Cash were in deep manure. Such is the power of persuasion of Kaka Ba that he instead convinced PKD that elections were just a ruse to finish him off once and for all and they should unite not to fight in elections, but against it.

A