

NEPALI Times

#669

16 - 22 August 2013

20 pages

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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
PAGE 16-17

MORALLY BANKRUPT
EDITORIAL PAGE 3



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MORAL BANKRUPTCY

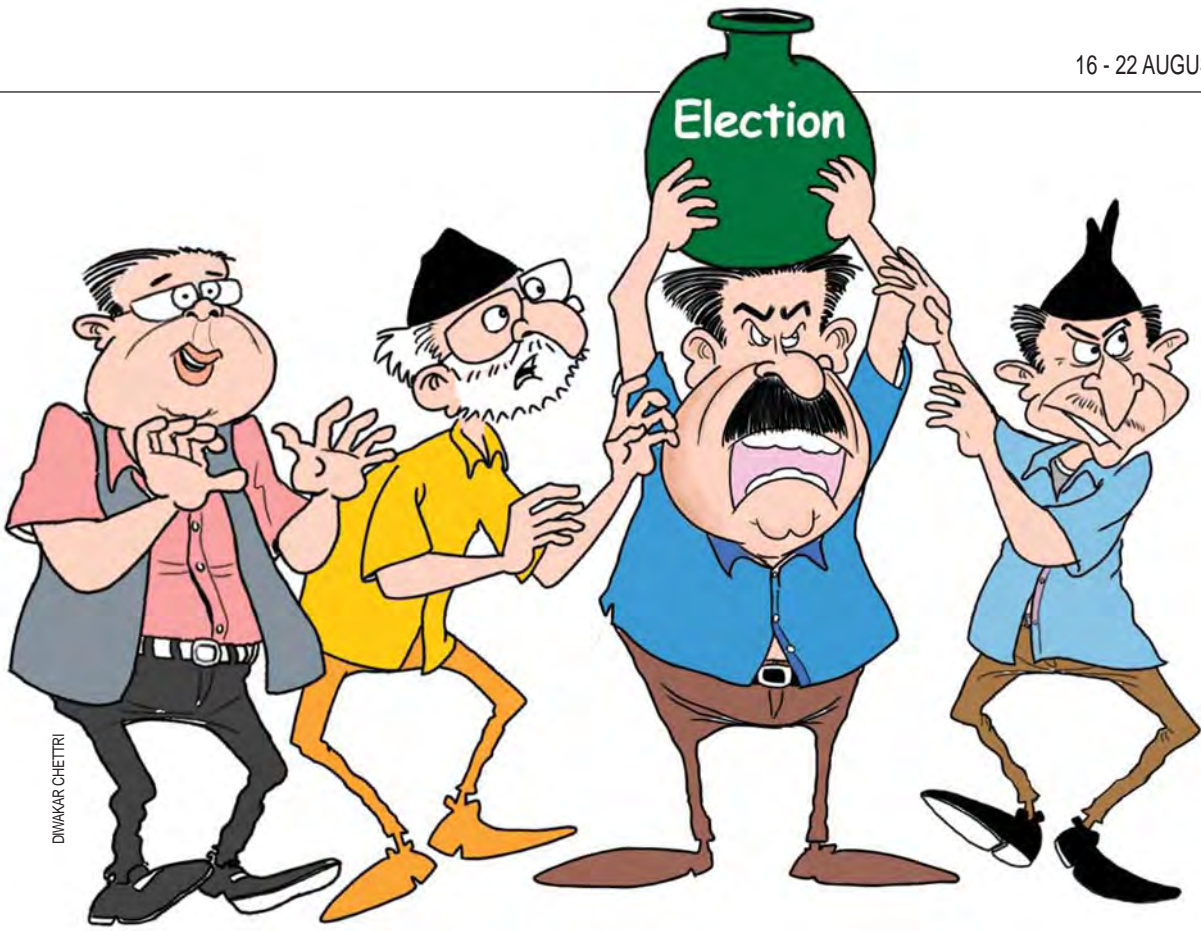
If Nepal was a business, it would have been belly-up by now. Politically, it continues to live on borrowed time. More worrying is the moral bankruptcy of the country's rulers. We have gone through a succession of autocrats, plutocrats, kleptocrats, and now we are giving bureaucrats a try.

But this regime was installed by the four-party syndicate and seems completely beholden to it. It would therefore be too much to expect Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi to even dare to ask the Attorney General to investigate the widespread and blatant irregularities in the way that the treasury has been plundered by previous Maoist-led governments in the name of the peace process. A file in the Peace Ministry detailing this has been suppressed. The price tag for demobilisation, assimilation, and 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 billions went to line the war chests of the comrades who cheated not just the people, but also their own fighters for a revolution that they actually believed in.

As Rameswor Bohara's investigative story on page 16-17 reveals, much of the Rs 20 billion was siphoned off, embezzled, double-billed, 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 20 per cent of their monthly allowance.

When UNMIN left, the re-verification team found that 2,456 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 accrued from the Rs 20 billion was the 1,421 ex-guerrillas who were finally inducted into the Nepal Army last month. 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.



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.

The war may have ended, but the wounds have not healed. Especially not for the parents of Krishna Adhikari of Fujel in Gorkha who had been protesting outside Baluwatar since January seeking justice for the murder in of their son in 2003 in Chitwan. Police removed them and threw them into a mental asylum and then trucked them back to Gorkha. The Adhikaris are back and have been on a hunger strike. The National Human Rights Commission this week instructed the Home Minister to act on the case, but every day that passes by, Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya Adhikari grow more frail.

Krishna Adhikari had gone to Chitwan to see his SLC results when he was captured by the Maoists, tortured, put into a sack, and dragged behind a motorcycle along the highway and then shot. The Adhikaris filed a police complaint in Gorkha against prominent Maoists, including Januka Poudel and Chhabilal Poudel, but were hounded out of their homes for doing that.

As is often the case, the Maoist first denied everything,

then they said this was a case of local enmity, later the accused said they had alibis, and on Tuesday Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal accused human rights activists of trying to tarnish his party at election time, and finally they said 'the army also killed people'.

According to Supreme Court orders, the police is duty-bound to investigate war crimes that have been reported even in the absence of a TRC. But the state, which is now made up of the former enemies, has tried to brush war crimes by both the security forces and the rebels under the carpet just like the murders of Dekendra Thapa and Ujjan Shreshta.

An apology may be asking too much from former revolutionaries for plundering the country's coffers and for past crimes. They have shown no remorse, and on the contrary continued to threaten families of victims and activists seeking justice. After murdering a whole lot of people, they looted the country, and they still think they can get away with it.

ON THE WEB

www.nepalitimes.com

NEPALI MAKE UP

Excellent article ('The Nepali make up', Trishna Rana, #668). In part the resistance to change comes from the old elite, yet what is particularly concerning - and perhaps explains popular xenophobic sentiments - is that the so called 'left wing' parties espouse the same parochial nationalism. In fact some of them are even worse than the right. They seem to think that xenophobia and extreme citizenship laws etc are somehow progressive, as they are protecting national 'sovereignty'. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Tamur

● Perceptions of nationalism differ depending on whether a person is rich or poor, educated or illiterate, a politician or an ordinary citizen. However, if Nepal is to survive, we need a common ground of nationalism.

Mirta

● As an ex-Nepali who gave up her green passport in exchange of a blue one, I feel no modicum of pride or honour in hailing from the 'Land of the Buddha and Mount Everest'. For starters China has equal rights to Chomolungma and Buddha was born at a time Nepal did not exist. But more importantly, what is it that we/you

Nepalis have done or achieved through our hard work that we can be proud of? 'American keti'

● I think the writer needs to be a little more specific while criticising the so called old elites. By saying that they are insane conservatives with imaginary worries, is simply an attempt to win an argument without a debate. What are the issues and what are the arguments, both for and against? She is simply trying to tell the world that the elites are wrong because they are idiots.

B

● It is very easy to pour scorn on the 'mindless plebeians' for their misguided nationalism, but much harder to try and figure out why this is. Sure, extreme nationalism is never justified but it is never just the province of the stupid. If Trishna Rana implies that it is, she does so from her ivory tower, turning up her nose at hundreds of Nepalis who have been branded 'insecure nationalists' and 'pseudo-patriots'.

Prem Ghale

COLD FEET

Yes, Nepalis voted for the Maoists in 2008 out of fear and to bring former combatants into the democratic mainstream ('Getting cold feet', Editorial, #668). But the other reason why people

put UCPN (M) in power is because it was a new party. Old parties had no clear vision and lacked leadership, which is true even today. Nepalis basically chose the best among the worst. The editorial should have focused on why people did not vote for the NC and UML instead.

Anonymous

INSECURE ELECTIONS

Corrupted leaders will not be able to deliver free and fair elections in November ('Insecure elections', Bihari K Shrestha, #668). I am not sure what will happen next, I just hope innocent Nepalis do not have to shed their blood again.

Himal Sharma

● I agree with Bihari Shrestha's arguments, except for the part where he says '... [politicos'] chronic lack of accountability is the fact that they come from the ranks of the feudal elite ...' These pack of beggars are nowhere close to being feudal elites.

Chandra Bahadur

● Election is mandatory to move forward. But even if polls are delayed by a few months, there needs to be consensus among all parties for long-term peace in Nepal.

Chaama

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Why is Anurag Acharya portraying Kathmandu as the ultimate villain ('Fluid political landscape', #668)? Does he have no one he can specifically blame like Bahuns, Chettris, Pahadis etc? Kathmandu is in fact the victim here. This city has been abused by cheats, looters, thugs, and murderers we call leaders. If you ask the residents, they will tell you that the entire city has been disfigured and destroyed by selfish leaders and the media. Leave Kathmandu alone.

B

COMPUTERS IN SCHOOLS

Sunil Pokhrel is absolutely correct in his criticism of the Department of Education's (DoE) decision to allocate a large chunk of money to equip Nepali schools with computers and internet ('Computers in schools without textbooks', #668). The DoE seems incapable of any strategic thinking about what is clearly a difficult problem and looking at its track record of inputs such as School Sector Reform Program, useless teacher training, naming and shaming underperforming teachers, inconsistency of DEOs permitting teachers from attending alternative teacher training etc does not fill me with confidence that things will improve.

Brian Metters

WIRED

Online media is undoubtedly on the rise, however, I do not see any significant difference or innovations in stories published online as compared to those in print ('Wired', Bhrikuti Rai, #668). The new generation is also following the traditional method of making news by lazily reporting on who said what and when. And social media has not yet proved itself as an alternate to print media rather it is merely replicating the old media.

Gopi Sedhain

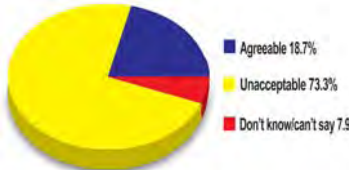


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Weekly Internet Poll #669

Q. What do you make of the CPN-M's 18-point demand?

Total votes: 1,020



Weekly Internet Poll # 670. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Should the HLPD postpone election dates to accommodate the 33 dissenting parties?



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Among 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.



INSIDE OUT

Muma Ram Khanal

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 constitution would be better. Some leaders held that the new constitution would be impossible to issue without any provision for single ethnicity-based federalism, while those opposed warned that the country would disintegrate if the path of federalism was pursued. It was perhaps too ambitious of us to expect the Constituent Assembly to accommodate such widely opposing viewpoints.

So the CA was dissolved.

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.

So the question on everyone's lips is: what guarantee is there that CA-2 will succeed where CA-1 failed? Many political parties, openly or secretly, do not want the new CA to come into being. The current political talk fest will only go to prove the hypocrisy and lack of statesmanship of Nepal's political leadership. The roundtable talks proposed by the Mohan Baidya Maoists entail demands for the revocation of all political agreements so far, including the one that formed the present government, the 11-point deal, the formation of the High Level Political Committee, and even the Interim Constitution. But treading that path will be a dead-end, taking us back to pre-2006. If we accept Upendra Yadav's proposition, we go back to the Madhes Movement

Who will bell the cat?

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


of the winter of 2007. And if we take on the demand of Ashok Rai and his ethnic party, we resurrect the situation in the CA before its dissolution.

The HLPC possesses no political and constitutional authority to force parties to take part in elections. And the CPN-Maoist, Madhesi People's Rights Forum, and Federal Socialist Party all seek the nullification

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 everyone is banking on the November elections being unlikely. The stubborn position

of the CPN-Maoist and its allies has only served as a good excuse for the others who secretly want polls postponed. Some of the leaders have even begun to profess that the CPN-M will participate in elections on condition that it is postponed until March next year.

Among Baidya's demands, it seems the one for postponement of the election will automatically be fulfilled and it will undeniably bring him great political victory. It will also lend the other parties a face-saving and blame-throwing way out of the debacle of November polls. The non-political government and its chairman and President Ram Baran Yadav will not lose much sleep over this outcome, either. If politics takes such a course and it is looking increasingly likely it will, the politicians will get what they want, but at the cost of seriously undermining democracy. 

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Strangers in a strange land

PETER SUTHERLAND

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.



ALL ON BOARD: Bangladeshi migrant workers flock near the Tunisian gate at the Libyan and Tunisian border after fleeing the civil war in Libya in March.

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 matricula 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

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New ride

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 show room of Mahindra Reva in Kathmandu.



Quality counts

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.

Millenium sale



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.

Keeping up

Kathmandu University School of Management (KUSOM) 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.

KUSOM
Ahead in Management

Teammates now

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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SUVASH DARNAL

This week was the second anniversary of the tragic death of Suvash Darnal, prominent journalist and activist and a fervent 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 Nepali 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 at Action Aid Nepal. He set up the Jagaran Media Centre to train Dalit journalists and also worked at the NGO, COCAP, and later Samata Foundation. Darnal had gone to the United States last year for a Stanford University Draper Hills Summer Fellowship and had just flown into Dulles airport in Washington DC. He was in a van taking him to the city which was side-swiped on the highway. He died on 14 August 2011 at the age of 31. His wife, Sarita Pariyar, pays tribute:

Champion of justice

Remembering Suvash Darnal on the second anniversary of his death

Where do I start? How do I start remembering someone who left us so suddenly two years ago?

Suvash had called from San Francisco airport before boarding his flight to Washington DC. He sounded very excited, having just completed his fellowship at Stanford. He was excited about what he had learnt and how he wanted to put them into practice through Samata, the organisation he had just set up in Kathmandu.



GUEST COLUMN
Sarita Pariyar

He was looking forward to meetings at the National Endowment for Democracy in DC before flying home. There was no premonition, no presentiment of the tragedy to come. Suvash never reached DC. On his way to the city he was killed in a highway collision that threw him off his vehicle.

By the time he was 31, Suvash had accomplished what many people take a much longer lifetime to do. We were married in 2007 and in those four short years I came to know a visionary and fearless champion of justice and reform. But there were many things I never fully understood about Suvash while he was alive, where his determination and his idealism came from.

Looking back, I can now see how the man I knew for four years was shaped by the previous 27 years that I hadn't know him. In the 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 Mujung of Palpa in a humble Dalit family and because of this it was 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 loitered, had casual conversations, and built social relationships. There was a special place in Suvash's heart for the Thatti in Mujung.

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 understated and 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 Mujung.

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 Bishwokarma, 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 Sundas and Binod Pahadi, 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 modest, good humoured, patient, diligent, responsible, and principled man.

When I married him he 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, Samana. His dedication, loyalty, commitment, sense of purpose, his capacity to bring people together, his ability to stand above factions, 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.np

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

Bigotry in real life

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

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

Maya is a Dalit and Jiwan's mother slapped her and threatened revenge. The next morning a village meeting was called at a school to sort things out. But when Maya reached the venue upper caste villagers beat her, tore her clothes off, blackened her face with soot, 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 Pokhrel, 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 Sundas, a Dalit from Belbari is also in police custody for the rape attempt.

After the incident Maya Sarki is staying with the human rights group, WOREC, in Biratnagar.

Bhrikuti Rai

It's the same story in India

Discrimination against Dalits in the Indian media is the norm

Dalit 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 are, or were, journalists. I also spoke to Dalits



LOOK OUT
Ajaz Ashraf

who entered the media directly. Altogether, I interacted with 21 Indian Dalit journalists, of whom 12 have left, or would quit journalism in case they were to get better career options. Caste-based discrimination was ranked as the principal factor why Dalit journalists want to leave the media.

Discrimination in its most severe form was experienced in the Hindi and other regional language media. Dalits having ambiguous surnames, often

adopted to conceal their caste, invited relentless questioning from upper caste colleagues. At the disclosure or identification of their Dalit identity, most of the 21 journalists reported harassment and deliberate targeting that was manifest in denial of promotions and increments.

When Naveen Kumar was employed in a premier Hindi tv channel, his boss began to pester him to divulge his caste. On Naveen's disclosure that he belonged to the Bairwa caste, his boss began calling him by his caste: "Bairwa do this, Bairwa do that."

Sangh Priy Gautam, a Hindi journalist in Agra, was laid off in Meerut and approached an influential acquaintance to recommend him to an editor in Haryana. Within hours, Sangh Priy received a text message asking whether he was a Brahmin. "Why do you want to know that?" asked Sangh Priy. The acquaintance replied: the editor (in Haryana) is Brahmin and wants to hire a Brahmin.

In Hyderabad, Chanti Kranti Kiran, who is the Input Editor

of V6 News, was asked within a few days of joining his first job what his caste was. In response to his reply, his boss said, "You were hired because we thought you were Brahmin."

Their experiences appear inordinately tragic because many of them had overcome terrible odds to enter the media. For instance, Santosh Valmiki, principal correspondent at the *Hindustan* newspaper in Lucknow, would as a child accompany his mother as she went from house to house cleaning toilets. He hawked newspapers to finance his college education. Despite over two decades of experience, he rued he was passed over for promotion. "Those junior to me in the profession have become editors," he said, arguing that connection and patronage are important to rise in career. But Dalits are poorly represented in the media and consequently have no friends in high places to bank upon.

In fact, at times, the desire to transform an unequal, oppressive society prompts Dalits to take to the media.

For instance, Ved Prakash, assistant producer in Total tv, decided to become a journalist following the beating he was subjected to by an upper caste bully in a Bihar village where he taught in a school. The upper caste villagers resented a Dalit teaching their children.

Satyendra Murli, now with *Hindustan*, witnessed his mother and sister thrown out of the village temple. In many ways, Dalits become sorely disappointed when they find that the Indian media, which professes to be progressive, tends to reflect the inequalities of the larger social system.

Instances of caste-based antagonism against Dalits was less prevalent in the English language media. But even here, one woman journalist had to face a boss who was harassingly curious about her caste because of her ambiguous surname. Dalit journalists in the English media also felt deeply insulted by the disparaging remarks of their colleagues against Dalit leaders in discussions. Their failings, they claimed, were often stereotypically portrayed

as arising from their caste.

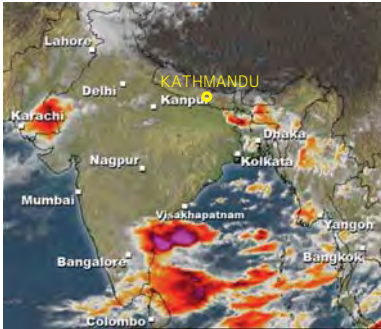
D Karthikeyan of *The Hindu* recounted such discussions in the newsroom of the newspaper's Madurai bureau until the conversations became so objectionable that he complained to the bosses. The bureau got a warning.

Many Dalit journalists were rethinking their decision to continue in journalism. Their poor presence in the media has serious implications for news coverage in India. Telugu columnist Mallepalli Laxmaiah says media coverage is determined by five Cs – controversy, crime, cinema, cricket, and corporate. "Violence against Dalits comes under crime and is consequently covered. All other aspects of their life don't make for a story," he said.

Perhaps this is why Indian mainstream media speaks to and about upper caste, middle class India. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Longer version of this story in *The Hoot*



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HOUSE OF MUSIC

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

PRANAV RAJOURIA

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



PICS: SUNIR PANDEY

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 arba, a unique instrument once

MUSICAL GEMS

ARBAJA

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

NAAGBELI

Newari 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.

KHAIJADI

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

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EVENTS



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

Goalmari, Bangladesh's Own Island, a photo exhibition by Bangladeshi photographer Munem Wasif on Bangladesh's water problems. *25 July to 15 August, 10am to 6pm, Alliance Francaise, Teku road, (01)4241163/4242832*



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

three-day writing workshop. *Rs 150, Runs till 16 August, 2 to 4 pm, photo. circle, Arun Thapa Chowk, Jhamsikhel*

Kathmandu book swap, Love Books? Love Coffee? Join other bookworms to exchange books and drink your favourite brew. *Second Saturday of every month, 2.30pm, Yellow House, Sanepa, ktmbookswap.wordpress.com/2013/08/07/august-bookswap/*



YUWAKYUWATI 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, Moksh, Jhamsikhel*

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. *Rs 900 per half litre, July to August,*

Kilroy's, Thamel, (01)4250440/41
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, (61)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, 4.45pm, Nepal Bharat Library, New Road Gate*

4th business square, a business presentation and sharing life lessons by entrepreneur of the month Amun Thapa whose online shopping portal Sasto Deal has captured people's imagination, with drinks and light refreshments. *Rs 900, 22 August, 6 to 9 pm, Embers Restaurant, Krishna Galli*



REFLECTIVE INSTANCES, a joint exhibition of four painters Bhawana Manandhar, Rajesh Manandhar, Niraj Chitrakar, and Ganesh G C. *2 to 19 August, Park Gallery, Pulchok, (01)5522307, www.parkgallery.com.np*

DINING



BUBBLY BRUNCH, let the subtleties of Arabian cuisine tease your palate, pasta if you're not too adventurous with food. *Rs 1,1000, 11am to 3pm, Saturdays, Shambala Garden and Club Sundhara, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999 (Ext. 7520/7515)*



MONGOLIAN BBQ, gobble generous quantities of roasted meat and wash it down with a glass of mocktail, with traditional music playing within earshot. *Rs 1,099, 7pm onwards, Shangri-La Village Resort, Pokhara, (061)462222 Ext. 5055*

Pagoda Chinese Restaurant, head to this jade palace if you're in the mood for Chinese. *Budhanilkantha, (01)4375 280, pvh@wlink.com.np*

The Heritage, escape the hodgepodge of the tourist hub as you

relish delights like paella and panna cotta. *Thamel*

Lhasa Bar, enjoy a beer or a splash of cocktail at this springboard for excellent young musicians starting out on the Thamel circuit. *Thamel, 985101043*

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

Capital Grill, this American style diner offers a large assortment of appetisers and entrees to suit everyone's tastes. *Bhatbhateni*

New Dish, grab filling meals like pork momos, spring rolls, and chop sueys with excellent value for money. *Khicha Pokhari*

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



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MUSIC



HAMI SABAI JUNGALI, catch the band Mukut perform their favourite covers as well as songs from their new album. Rs 300, 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 1,299, 7pm onwards, Fridays, Shambala Garden Café, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4412999 (Ext. 7520/7515)



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

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

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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.

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THE ART OF THE GODS

Overlooked for decades, the traditional art of paubha is finally making a comeback

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG



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 paubha 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

Handmade in Lalitpur

SUNIR PANDEY

Every other shop in the city of refinement is now 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 who 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

Sampurna Shakya, who owns a handicrafts shop here, has seen shops mushroom all around him. "With more Chinese buyers

MASTER STROKES:
Renuka Gurung puts finishing touches on her paubha at her home in Budhanilkantha (below). Lok Chitrakar at his studio in Patan Dhoka (right).

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 'Newari 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. 🇳🇵

nepalitimes.com

Paubha, #5
Bringing back the paubha, #393



ALL PICS: BIKRAM RAI

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.

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

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 Khachche - 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. 🇳🇵





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



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

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 writing, metamorphosing it instead into pure spectacle - this is exactly how this particular version of *The Great Gatsby* is, a pure unaffected extravaganza, and that too, in 3D. Even without watching the three dimensional version, one’s visual senses are overwhelmed. The camera zooms in and out from wide vistas into mansion rooms and people dancing, suddenly then swinging around to show yet another entirely unexpected panorama. This is what Luhrmann is good at, showing off cinematically and to maximum effect. Unfortunately, what he

THE GREAT GATSBY

lacks, perhaps out of laziness, is 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 usually 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 summarise 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 form of the brutish Tom Buchanan (Joel Edgerton) lives in East Egg, across the harbor.

Gatsby can see her house from his promenade, land-marked by the now famous ‘green light’. When Gatsby adopts Nick as his protégé we begin to understand it is only really to get to Daisy, Nick’s cousin. Eventually, after a great deal of hemming and hawing, Gatsby asks Nick to invite Daisy to tea; they had been in love before Gatsby went off to fight in the first World War and before Daisy was forced to marry Tom. So begins a sumptuous 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 Florence + the 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.

nepalitimes.com

Watch trailer

GIZMO by YANTRICK

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 fully customisable 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 texts, 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 12GB 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. A1 is also equipped with a micro HDMI out option which lets you watch movies, look at photos, and browse web pages on your HDTVs.



- Dimension** 8.22 x 5.74 x 0.44 inches
- Display screen:** 7.9 inches
- Weight:** 410 grams
- Resolution:** 1024 x 768 pixels
- Pixel density:** 162 ppi
- Operating system:** Android OS, v4.2 (Jelly Bean)
- Processor:** Quad core, 1200 MHz, Cortex-A7
- System memory:** 1024MB RAM
- Built-in storage:** 8GB

The 0.3 MP front facing camera is fine for Skype, while the 5MP rear camera is decent for taking pictures and recording HD videos at 1080p. Battery life of around eight hours on full charge also works in the favour of the A1, while regular tablet features like Bluetooth 4.0, Wifi, GPS, accelerometer, GPS, etc are all included. However, the lonely speaker at the back of the tablet is a massive disappointment: even when the sound is increased to maximum, the volume is inadequate. All in all, A1 is a capable tablet, which knows its limitations. It’s not the quickest, neither the best designed, nor does it boast the best screen resolution. But it works. It works because the A1 is a well balanced tablet with regards to price, performance, and features.

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

10%

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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 dabba 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

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. Light 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

A newly launched service feeds hungry office-goers fresh home cooked meals



BIKRAM RAI

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. 🇳🇵

9803496546
www.facebook.com/packmylunchnepal



SOMEPLACE ELSE



PICS: PM

EL MEDITERRANEO

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 yummy complimentary tapas and even a baked apple. By the end, I was convinced that I had to put it on my review list. This week I finally got around to going in again.

El Mediterraneo has a simple and inviting decor, white walls, blue ceiling, and wooden furniture, with a bar on the side. The menu was 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

and order straight. In simple terms gazpacho is a tomato-based soup, served cold. We were very impressed by El Mediterraneo's gazpacho - cold, refreshing, and smooth. The tomato, vegetables, and herbs had been puréed to a smooth consistency and the flavours blended well in every spoonful. The start was good.

Next we had tortilla de patatas (Rs 220), Spanish omelette with potatoes and onions. The eggs had been beautifully layered with potatoes and cooked just right. There wasn't much to complain about the dish, although personally I would have preferred a side of salsa or sauce to add a bit of spice to the bland combination.

For the mains we ordered seafood paella (Rs 480) and vegetarian fideos (Rs 400). Although we were wowed by the starters, the



mains didn't excite us much. When our seafood paella (like Biriyani, it says on the menu) arrived, it looked like the cook had simply dropped a dollop of rice on a white plate without any effort to improve its appeal. The dish certainly tasted better than it looked and I could feel the ingredients of the sofrito as I took a mouthful. But since the rice had not been cooked in seafood broth it lacked that specific flavour. I should also mention, I almost had to fish for

the seafood in my seafood paella.

Our vegetarian fideos looked even less appealing than the paella and unfortunately this time we were correct to judge the food by its cover. The noodles had been broken into inch-long pieces and cooked fine, but the dish lacked flavour. And I understand if the restaurant had to be stingy with seafood, but vegetables? The fideos could have used a little more.

The mousse de lima (Rs 170) or lemon mousse was the saving grace. It had been beautifully set in a glass and set to a fine consistency. The sweetness was just right and you could taste the delightful lemon flavour of the mousse. Highly recommended.

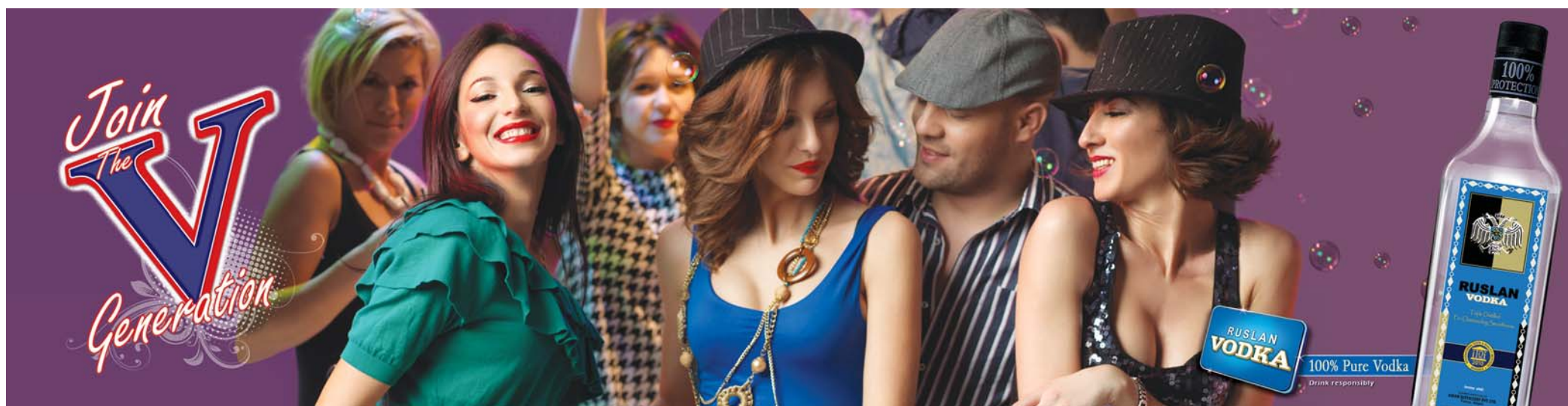
We also tried natillas, a Spanish custard made with milk and eggs, and topped with a biscuit. The custard hadn't set very well but the

flavour was quite good. However, I think the restaurant was supposed to add the biscuit only at the time of serving. Our biscuit had spent a while in the fridge with the custard. It was soggy and didn't add anything to the dessert.

Our beginning and end at El Mediterraneo was great, but the mains were disappointing. The restaurant has a unique positioning and can garner a niche if it pays attention to the details of a dish. Also, Chef Joshi would do well to train his staff in hospitality skills, which was the reason that bought me here in the first place. And a side note to diners: specify what kind of water you want, otherwise you will end up paying for an expensive mineral water. 🇳🇵

Buena suerte!
PM

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.



GETTING YOUR DAILY DOSE OF ZZZ ...



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
- 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 obesity
- 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



DHANYANTARI

Buddha Basnyat, MD

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 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 sleep is also influenced by anxiety level, lack of exercise, excessive daytime naps, medications, and alcohol and coffee consumption. These issues also need to be addressed so that we allow the “chief nourisher in life’s feast” to rejuvenate us. 🍷

the week in pictures brought to you by

SHOE · A · HOLICS

new arrivals spring summer 2013

Ground floor Mayalu Center
Jamal Sadak beside Samsonite
Tel 4225627

Ground floor below Laxmi Bank
Harihar Bhavan Pulchowk
Tel 5524812

HAPPENINGS



MIN RATNA BAJRACHAYA

PAK SAR ZAMEEN: Pakistani Ambassador Arshad Saud Khosa (*far right*) hoists the national flag to celebrate the country’s 67th Independence Day at Maharajgunj on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

TABLE TALK: Leaders of the High Level Political Mechanism during their meeting with CPN-Maoist chairman Mohan Baidya in New Baneswor on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

HISS: A priest offers milk to the snake idol at Nag Pokhari on Sunday morning on the occasion of Nag Panchami when serpent gods are worshipped.

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Instant recharge

From the makers of
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(Contains Monophosphate, Vitamins)

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ORIGINAL FLAVOUR

*Limited stocks offer available on specially marked packs of Glaxose 400gm and available in select cities/outlets only.
*Actual article may differ from the image shown herein.

Glucose is 100% glucose. Glucose is instantly available for energy since it is absorbed and utilized faster than other carbohydrates/proteins/fats.

67TH INDEPENDENCE DAY OF INDIA

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.



The External Affairs Minister of India Shri Salman Khurshid paid a goodwill visit to Nepal on 9th July 2013 to convey Government of India's support for the forthcoming Constituent Assembly-cum-Parliament elections in Nepal on 19th November 2013. Shri Khurshid met the top Government and political leadership of Nepal. During the visit, two letters were signed for GoI's support of approximately NRs. 800 million towards providing 716 and 48 vehicles to security agencies and Election Commission of Nepal respectively.



A GREENER WORLD
India's share of global market for low carbon goods and services to be US\$135 billion in 2020



ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE
Export of Indian Engineering goods is slated to grow at 27.8 per cent to reach US\$125 billion by 2013-14



PHARMACY TO THE WORLD
The Indian pharma industry is the world's largest exporter and fourth largest producer of generic formulations (in volume terms)



WORLD'S IT NUCLEUS
Nearly 75 per cent of Fortune 500 companies source their technology-related services from India

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 18 districts ongoing or completed
- Work on 16 roads/4 bridges ongoing or completed
- Other projects are in critical areas of drinking water, cold storage, river training, tube wells, electrification and capacity development.
- Since 1994, India has gifted 382 ambulances and 74 school buses covering 70 districts in Nepal.
- Eye care camps organized by Nepal Netra Jyoti Sangh through funding by the Government of India: Since 2001, a total assistance of NRs. 211 million extended by the Government of India. More than 1,07,000 surgeries performed, more than 37,000 students have been provided with optical devices 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: Raxaul (India)-Birgunj (Nepal), Jogbani (India)-Biratnagar (Nepal); Sunauli (India)-Bhairahawa (Nepal) and Nepalgunj Road (India)-Nepalgunj (Nepal). In the first phase, works have been taken up in 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 Jayanagar-Bardibas; Jogbani-Biratnagar, Nautanwa-Bhairahawa; Rupaidiha-Nepalgunj and New Jalpaiguri-Kakarbhitta. Work on Jayanagar-Bardibas and Jogbani-Biratnagar being taken up in Phase I with an estimated cost of NRs. 10.4 billion.
- First phase of Terai Roads Projects, currently under construction, cover 19 roads of 605 km in 13 Terai Districts worth NRs. 11 billion. Phase I will be followed by Phase II covering 845 km.
- Super-specialty Trauma Centre in Kathmandu with 200 beds facility at an estimated cost of NRs. 1.60 billion; Handing over to GoN expected soon
- 26-km long road that forms a part of 62-km long Kathmandu-Hetauda road connecting the Kathmandu Valley and the Terai Region constructed with Indian assistance; Additional work on the road to commence soon

FLAGSHIP COMPLETED PROJECTS

- Goitre Control Programme – Since 1973, GoI has provided assistance of NRs. 685.8 million for Goitre Control Programme. Availability of iodized salt at household level progressively increased (99.8% in 2010). As a result, rate of Goitre in Nepal has decreased from 55% in 1965 to 0.4% in 2007.
- Five-storied OPD complex of Bir Hospital, Kathmandu, constructed with a capacity to accommodate 2500 outpatients
- BPKIHS, Dharan, the largest public-sector hospital-cum-medical college outside Valley; Indian faculty support going on

- Manmohan Memorial Polytechnic, set up in 2009, became the first polytechnic providing technical education in 3 engineering streams and other vocational courses; Indian faculty support continuing
- 807 km of the East-West Highway from Mahendranagar to Mechi (Mahendra Rajmarg)
- 22 bridges on Kohlapur-Mahakali section of the East-West Highway constructed
- 904 km Optical Fibre along the East-West Highway and 80 stations of SDH equipment

EDUCATION

- Embassy of India awards 2999 scholarships annually in the field of Education to the Nepalese students.
- 2200 scholarships awarded to Nepalese students for studying in undergraduate and graduate courses in Nepal
- 569 scholarships awarded to Nepalese students for studying in India; The Mission conducts a COMPEX examination each year for Nepalese students to study in MBBS/BE/B.Pharm/B.V.Sc/B.Sc (Dairy Tech)/B.Sc (Agriculture) courses in India, which has been growing in popularity every year.
- 230 slots for short-term training in India for Government/non-government employees of Nepal under ITEC/Colombo Plan

EX-SERVICEMEN WELFARE ACTIVITIES

- Disbursement of pension worth NRs. 22 billion annually to GoI pensioners
- Welfare Schemes amounting to more than NRs. 110 million executed every year
- NRs. 10.2 million spent on educational scholarships for 223 students
- 1,25,000 medicine packets worth NRs. 19.1 million has been distributed this year and 1,26,000 medicine packets worth NRs. 20.4 million under consideration for coming year
- 17 Solar projects costing NRs. 332.5 million have been executed benefiting around 0.15 million people.
- 1049 drinking water projects are functional.
- Medical grants worth NRs. 17.9 million have been distributed to 304 beneficiaries this year.
- Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) – A cashless medical treatment scheme extended to Nepal Domiciled Indian Defence Pensioner. ECHS polyclinics being established at Kathmandu, Pokhara and Dharan, leading hospitals in Nepal will be empanelled for providing free treatment to members.
- Disbursement of other than pension (OTP) payments amounting NRs. 0.48 million
- Disbursement of AGI/MBS amounting NRs. 162.6 million



भारतीय राजदूत, काठमाण्डू
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA
KATHMANDU



सत्यमेव जयते



On the occasion of India's 67th Independence Day, I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to our friends in Nepal and the Indian community living here.

The dream of our freedom fighters was fulfilled on 15th August 1947. They fought for freedom not from British rule alone, but also from the bondages of caste, creed and superstitions. India achieved independence largely through Ahimsa and Satyagraha. It has since embarked upon a journey of nation building, guided by the principles of democracy, inclusive economic development and social empowerment. We salute the many Nepalese nationals who contributed to our struggle for freedom.

The steady rise in our social and economic indicators has only made us conscious that much remains to be done. India's model of inclusive growth is not a mantra. It is an essential component of our development trajectory.

India has been a long-standing partner in Nepal's quest for growth and progress. While we celebrate our freedom, we invite the peoples of our neighboring countries to share in our successes. This especially applies to the people of Nepal, with whom we share particular bonds of friendship, and deep rooted people-to-people ties. We extend our gratitude to the fraternal citizens of Nepal for the support and encouragement they have lent us in fostering strong bilateral ties with India.

We have to work hand-in-hand for the progress of our two countries.

संगच्छेत्वं संवदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वं सञ्जानानां उपासते ॥

(कृत्वेद 12/191.1)

(Walk together. Talk together. Let our minds understand together, like the Devas concurred and accepted their portions of sacrifice.)

Such cooperation will nurture and transform the lives of our peoples, and enrich our common inheritance and our shared civilizational values.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to convey my greetings to the Indian community living in Nepal, our friends and well-wishers and to the people of Nepal. We wish you success in your efforts in building a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Nepal.

Long live Nepal-India friendship

15 August 2013

Jayant Prasad



GROWING INDIA
6.3 million scholarships were provided to minority students in India in 2012



About 25 million children got the benefit of free vaccination in 2012; no new cases of polio were reported during the year in India

UPCOMING PROJECTS

- Sabha Griha at Birgunj
- Polytechnic at Hetauda
- Science Learning Centre at Lalitpur
- Eye Hospital at Kapilvastu
- Nepal-Bharat Maitri Pashupati Dharmashala at Kathmandu





Rs 20 billion: that is how much it cost to integrate 1,421 ex-combatants into the national army

THE PRICE

RAMESWOR BOHARA

A document prepared by the Ministry 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.

There also appear to have been major irregularities in roads, electricity supply, and other infrastructure, with double billing for construction already paid for by donors like GIZ. The cantonments and Peace Ministry were given more than Rs 180 million just to pay for electricity and even though that was for six years, sources at the Nepal Electricity Authority said the total was astronomical.

Even though sub-cantonments were only a short bus ride away, Rs 3 million was paid out for transportation of combatants 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 Bhattarai 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

TWO ARMIES INTO ONE: Former Maoist combatants go through their paces at the Kharipati base before their formal induction into the Nepal Army (*above*) and a female combatant goes home from Shaktikhor cantonment in Chitwan in 2011 (*right*).

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. 





OF PEACE



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
UNMIN-
VERIFIED

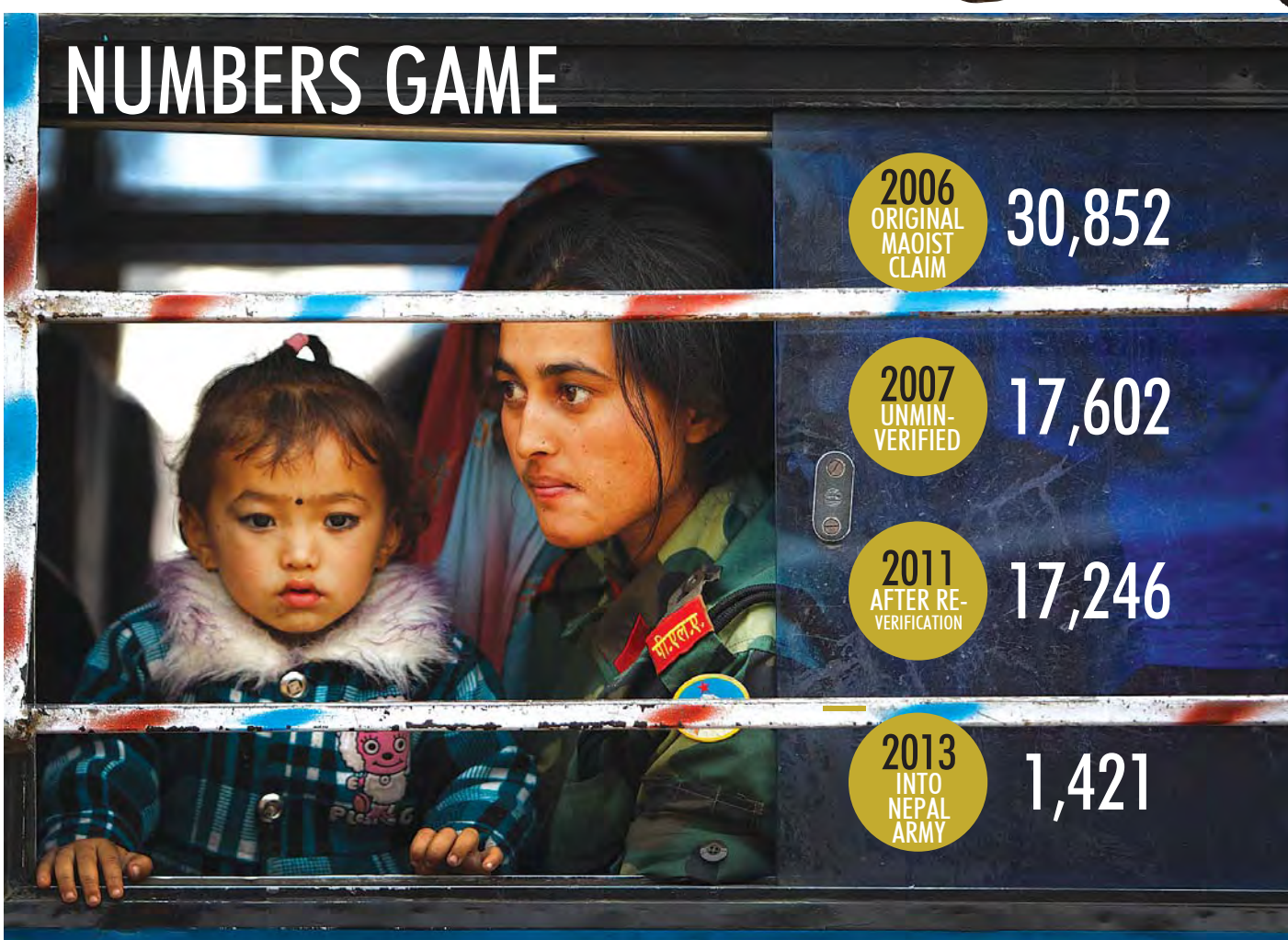
17,602

2011
AFTER RE-
VERIFICATION

17,246

2013
INTO
NEPAL
ARMY

1,421



No room for love

Naya Patrika, 13 August

नयाँ पत्रिका

Binita Duwadi and Bhim Bahadur Bishwakarma 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 disowned 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:

I was studying in 11th grade at Sidheshwor High School in Dhading when I first met Bhim. We became quick friends and fell deeply in love. Life felt complete with Bhim by my side. But my family came to know about our relationship and my life has never been the same.

They just couldn't accept the fact that I was in love with a Dalit, someone they considered inferior. My relationship with Bhim supposedly brought shame to our 'high caste' family and they threatened to kill me if I didn't agree to their demands. But how could I leave the love of my life for the sake of family honour? That too for something as superficial and outdated as the caste system? To me all that mattered was that Bhim was 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 Bhim's mother and younger brother after my family alleged them of kidnapping me. When I told the police that I had married Bhim out of my own will, they pressurised 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 who threatened to kill us. 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 embraced my new world with Bhim. I hope my family will come around and accept us. But if they are not willing to reconcile, I wish they would just leave us alone and let us live peacefully.

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 Nepalis' 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%

NEPALI TWEETS

Rubeena Mahato
कस्तो सजिलो, अधिकारी दम्पति कसैबाट संचालित, उज्जैन कि दिदि पनि अरुले उचालेका, डेकेन्द्र सुराकी, मालेहरु चाहिँ घोर्खो #Nepal
How convenient: Adhikaris are controlled by others, Ujjan's sister is being egged on, Dekendra was a spy. But murderers, they are faultless. #Nepal

Baburam Bhattarai
अधिकारी दम्पतिको अनसन प्रकरणबारे एमाओवादी पार्टीको आधिकारिक धारणा आज आउँदछ। रिटिटरको गठनले यसको समाधान हो। यसको राजनीति गलेहरुदेखि सावधान।
UCPN (M) will release its official statement on the Adhikaris' hunger strike. The TRC is the only solution to this. Beware of those who play politics over corpses.

Prateek Pradhan
कमरेडहरुको आधी जिन्दगी हुन्थ्यो र हिसाको राजनीति गर्दमा थियो वाकी जिन्दगी हुन्थ्योहरुको प्रतिरक्षामा जाने भो
Comrades spent half their lives doing politics of violence and murder, they'll spend the other half protecting murderers.

Amrita Lamsal
आजकाल नेपाली समाचार यासपाउन लागि पत्रिका भन्दा पहिले सामाजिक सञ्जाल हेनुपर्छ। ताजा उदाहरण पुष्प मरिचमान सिंह श्रेष्ठको नौघर। RIP Ex-PM!
To find out the latest news from Nepal, check social instead of reading newspapers. Case in point: ex-PM Marich Man Singh's death. RIP.



Going, going ...

Surendra Poudel, Nagarik, 14 August

नागरिक

The Nepal Embassy on 12A Kensington Palace Gardens in London is a national embarrassment. 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 shoddier. Rain seeps in 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 3.6 million, but not everyone signed on 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.

nepalitimes.com
Read Nepali Times' coverage of the sale of the embassy



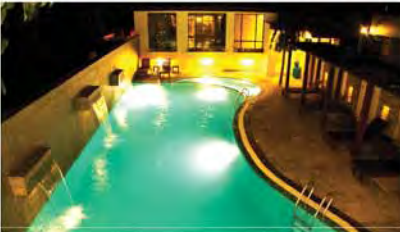
Basu Kshitiz in Annapurna Post, 14 August
अब्जपूर्ण पोष्ट

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



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

Baburam Bhattarai quoted in Annapurna Post, 15 August



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Myanmar to Kathmandu



Navin Jha, *Himal Khabarpatrika*,
11 August

हिमाल

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



PICS: DEVAKI BISTA

NOWHERE TO GO: 24-year-old Abu Sufiya and family (left) and 65-year-old Abdul Jalil (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.

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."

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Of gods and godmen

At the rate our god-fearing atheist comrades are turning to the opiate of the masses, one would think that Baddies have become fundooos 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.



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