A policewoman joins in the rejoicing (below) with other women at a function this week in Kathmandu in the run-up to Teej on Sunday. It is the day dedicated to women in Nepal who mark it by dressing in red, singing and dancing deep into the night on Saturday.

Nepal’s first human anti-trafficking activist group set up by former victims, Shakti Samuha, is awarded this year’s Ramon Magsaysay Award. Shakti Samuha’s Sunita Danuwar says although trafficking to India has diminished, Nepali girls are being increasingly trafficked to the Gulf countries and Africa. Young Nepali women work as entertainers in night clubs in Dar es Salaam.
The theory of revolutionary violence justifies the taking of human lives in order to overthrow an unjust political order. It has been seen historically as a legitimate, and necessary, means to an end when all other political measures have been exhausted. The argument is that a state that is either repressive or perpetuates structural violence through neglect and exclusion can only be brought down through revolutionary political violence. This Robin Hood doctrine was given the imprimatur of political legitimacy by Lenin, Stalin and Mao. Indeed, these three gentlemen were together responsible for the deaths of nearly 80 million people in the last century, justifying the bloodshed through the ‘scientific logic’ of revolutionary violence to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat.

History tells us that the Soviet comrades actually used the term ‘revolutionary terror’ or ‘red terror’. They were just following their guru Karl Marx, who had written: ‘There is only one means to shorten, simplify and speed up the path.

The chief ideologue of the Maoist party, Baburam Bhattarai, told this newspaper in an interview in 2002 that no price in terms of human life was too great for the liberation of the people, and added that the Khmer Rouge genocide was exaggerated and “western propaganda”.

The rationale and limits of revolutionary violence, and who should be held accountable for violations of human rights during the insurgency, has now come back to haunt Nepal’s revolutionaries. The Maoists took up arms in 1996 against a democratically-elected government, and although discrimination and social injustice were rife in society, this could have been addressed through political evolution. One didn’t need to kill 17,000 people to achieve it. Today, looking at the behaviour of the comrades, one is forced to ask: is this what it was all for?

SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET

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Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal told BBC Nepali in 2006 that he had given orders to execute enemies of the people with a bullet to the temple. This week, he dared human rights activists: “I gave the order to kill, arrest me if you can.” His spokesman, Agni Sapkota who is himself accused of summary execution, fell back on the usual Maoist argument that raking up war crimes would “reck the peace process”.

The Maoists may have suspended their armed struggle, but they have never to date publicly renounced the use of political violence. In fact, they continue to use the residual terror in the public mind of their past brutality to instill fear and acquiescence.

As former Chief Election Commissioner Bhojraj Pokhrel points out in his new book, they repeatedly blackmailed other political forces with a return to war if they didn’t get what they wanted. It may be too much to expect Maoists to change their spots, their ideology is intrinsically violent, intolerant and unrepentant of the suffering they caused.

Both sides in the Nepal conflict are now trying to protect each other from facing up to the atrocities they committed. It is now meaningless to segregate war crimes by who perpetrated them, the argument goes. Both now represent the state, and it is the state’s responsibility to deliver truth and justice to the families of victims like Krishna Adhikari, Maina Sunwar, Dekendra Thapa, the Doramba 18 and Bahrinath 36. The Maoists say individual insurgency-era killings should be addressed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), but their government was complicit in watering down the TRC ordinance until it was toothless and meaningless. The former enemies both want conflict to be buried, but the skeletons are rattling in their closets.

Far from endangering the peace process, addressing truth and justice will protect it. Without justice, there is no process, and there will be no long-term peace.
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A Raw Deal

India wants elections in Nepal in November, but is too preoccupied to pay attention to crucial details

Indian Ambassador Jayant Prasad will probably look back at his tenure in Kathmandu and describe it as “two eventful years in which nothing happened”. Prasad arrived in 2011, following his father’s footsteps, and assumed an office that had taken some hard knocks not just in Kathmandu, but even in New Delhi. It wasn’t the most popular job in town, to put it mildly.

So Prasad wisely kept a low profile, and didn’t get into unnecessary controversy which was probably easier for him because of his more relaxed personality. Yet, this did not mean that the hidden Indian hand in Nepali politics was not busy behind the scenes. There are underscorest of Indian politics that have a bearing on the neighbours: Tamil Nadu politics in Sri Lanka, West Bengal in Bangladesh and in Nepal it is the BIP’s Hindutva ideology and the open border. The fact of the matter, whether we like it or not, is that Indian influence in Nepali politics is stronger than what we, as a citizen of a sovereign nation, would like it to be.

India’s intelligence agencies are often accused of micro-managing people and institutions through unsavoury Nepali political middlemen much to the detriment of India’s own long-term national interest here. However, by and large, the Indians are as exasperated with our politics as we are, and New Delhi’s interest as well as capacity to dictate the course of politics in Kathmandu is often overstated.

Lately, there has been speculation about whether or not the elections will take place as scheduled in November, given how India’s own elections in May 2014 is already generating heat. There is some wishful thinking among India-watchers that the BJP would like Nepal’s polls to be deferred till next year. There is a feeling that Prime Minister Mamnoon Singh has just too much on his domestic plate to be scratching his head about Nepal.

In past few months, there has been long drawn out political figures officially invited to New Delhi and shake hands with India’s movers and shakers. Each of the leaders came back with exactly the same message: everybody in Delhi wants Nepal to hold elections at the earliest and draft its constitution.

“There is a rare convergence of views on Nepal in the Indian power centre on the need to push for elections,” Prashant Ila of The Hindu newspaper told me on the phone from Delhi this week. India has done everything it can to send positive signals about the CA elections, and pledged massive logistical support.

After being caught flat-footed in 2008 when the Maoists surprised everyone by winning, New Delhi appears to be playing the political figures, just in case. The Nepali Congress has always been the favourite for India’s own Congress politicians, as seen by the common South Asian identity that will not only ensure our workers’ safety and strength but also promote in the market.

Even cooperation within trade and business—which should theoretically be easier to deal with than politics—is littered with barriers. The private sector, surprisingly, is reluctant to let go of its domestic market. Strict regulations impede the movement of goods, money, ideas.

A suggestion for the next summit in Delhi in 2014 is to bring the queue of Nepali public relations is that the GDP growth rates are higher than what they are in the region, but the region is still underdeveloped. The biggest challenge is to ensure that the benefits of growth are distributed fairly. The region needs to focus on human capital development and education. This will help in boosting the productivity of the region’s workforce and attracting foreign investment in the region.

The South Asia region is also facing challenges related to political instability. The region has a history of conflict and political instability. The countries in the region need to work together to address these challenges and find solutions that benefit all parties. The region could benefit from increased regional cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, and infrastructure development. By working together, the countries in the region can create a more stable and prosperous future for all.
Creating jobs

For the past seven years, Global Academy of Tourism and Hospitality key Education (GAFE), a hospitality management school in Mandikatar has been providing vocational and academic education based on the Swiss model of teaching.

Nepali Times caught up with CEO Khem Lakai to discuss what the institution has to offer young Nepalis.

Nepali Times: What inspired you to start this program in Nepal?
Khem Lakai: I studied in Switzerland and when I was visiting Bahrain, I met a lot of young Nepalis who were working menial jobs. The skills they possessed were far better than the jobs they were doing. So I decided to come back home and help give people jobs in my own country.

What can hotel management graduates in Nepal do?
Despite our political problems, Nepal is still a top tourist hot spot and our cultural and geographic location will keep tourists coming. Tourism will always be one of our biggest earners, but what we need are well-educated, skilled Nepalis who can maintain a high standard of professionalism. There is still social stigma attached to the hospitality sector and we need to change this so that people see it as a dignified profession.

How does the Swiss model complement the Nepali education system?
Switzerland is the number one place for hotel management and tourism. They have a strong infrastructure, their tourism products are diversified, and they give a high degree of respect to vocational courses. The people who work in the hospitality industry are not only passionate about their jobs, but also extremely competent. And no matter how unconventional their profession is, they are proud and never degrade it. We need to replicate this mindset in our country.

How is GATE different from other colleges that provide hospitality training?
The Swiss model is based on two core values: competence and practical knowledge. Rather than just rote learning, we make sure that our students have practical experience and know how to work in the real world.

Where are GATE graduates today?
Some are team leaders in Qatar, and some are working in different international hotels across the globe. Some work in event management, in banks, while some have started their own business and are providing jobs.
Sunita’s long walk to freedom

DEVAKI BISTA

Sunita Danuwar is now 39, but when she remembers the first five months of abuse and torture she suffered in a Bombay brothel 25 years ago, she still has nightmares.

Born in Dolakha to a family from an under-privileged caste, Sunita was five when her parents moved to India’s Jammu and Kashmir state to seek their fortune. They found work in a potato farm, and nine years later the family was still poor and living at the margins of society.

Even before she turned 14, Sunita was helping her family’s income by crushing rocks by the roadside. One day, she was tricked by a friend and a truck driver into eating sweets laced with drugs. She was sold and taken on an overnight train to Bombay.

When she regained consciousness, Sunita found out she was in a brothel. The owners tortured her and didn’t give her anything to eat or drink, but Sunita says she managed to avoid being forced to have sex with customers. Exasperated, the owner sold her to another brothel for INR 100,000.

“I refused to sleep with their clients,” recalls Sunita, “but the new madam ordered her male staff to gang-rape me.”

Most of the women forced into sexual slavery in the brothel were Nepali, and some girls were as young as nine.

Rich clients would pay up to INR 4,000 per hour to take them to private quarters, but the going rate at the brothel was INR 40. Foreigners, businessmen, army and police personnel were regular visitors.

Within five months of Sunita’s captivity, activists and police raided Mumbai’s red light district and rescued 500 girls, among whom Sunita was one of 200 Nepalis. Many of them were referred to Nepal where Sunita found she didn’t have a home, her relatives weren’t willing to help, and she had lost touch with her parents.

The Nepali government refused to recognise them as citizens, and seven of the 12 young women in Sunita’s shelter had HIV. They were determined to help other trafficked Nepali girls so they didn’t have to suffer what they went through.

Sunita finally got their citizenship papers and returned to life in her new life. She got married in 1998, gave her SLC in 2010, and is currently enrolled in an undergraduate course. She and fellow survivors from Mumbai set up Shakti Samuha in 1997, the first Nepali anti-trafficking organisation run by victims of trafficking themselves.

On 31 August, Sunita Danuwar the President of Shakti Samuha and her colleague Laxmi Puri were standing on the stage of the Philippine International Convention Centre with five other recipients of this year’s prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award in Manila. It was a well-deserved recognition for a Nepali woman who battled overwhelming odds not just to survive trafficking and sexual slavery, but is determined to help others like her.

Once refused citizenships by their own country, human trafficking victims become national heroes

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation’s citation praised the founders of Shakti Samuha for their exemplary work to abolish human trafficking and help survivors to live with dignity and purpose.

On return to Kathmandu on Wednesday from Manila, Sunita said although human trafficking to India was declining, Nepali women were being increasingly trafficked to the Gulf countries.

Sunita said she will plough the $50,000 prize money into Shakti Samuha, but more than the money is it the recognition of the work of her organisation that will encourage her, she says.

Sunita and Shakti Samuha follow two other pioneering Nepali women who have been voted CNN Heroes in the past three years for their work to help destitute women and children: Anuradha Koirala of Maiti Nepal and Pushpa Kamal Dahal, chairperson of Maiti Nepal and Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

Other Nepali recipients of the Magsaysay Award are Malabah Chandika Regmi, chairperson of Shakti Samuha, but more than the money is it the recognition of the work of her organisation that will encourage her, she says.

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This has been one of the wettest monsoons in the past decade, and it’s still coming. The average July precipitation in Kathmandu this year has reached 1020mm, compared to the normal average of about 400mm. The city witnessed the first few days of September having some heavy rain. However, the eastern Tarai is suffering a drought, with only 40 per cent of paddy crop planted in Saptari. Overcast with light night rain this weekend.

The 18,000 strong crowd at the Dasrath stadium was reduced to silence. After conceding to Pakistan in the 13th minute, it looked like Nepal was bound to leave empty-handed despite starting the day with a chance to leapfrog into the semifinals with one game to spare.

But fifteen-year-old Bimal Gharti Magar had other things in mind. When a cross was fired from the right wing, Nepali players bombarded into the d-box and the Pakistani goalie could only flap at the ball. Bimal had already peeled away from the defenders in anticipation and fired a one-touch volley into the net to make Dasrath Rangasala erupt in joy and relief.

Running across the field chased by his fellow teammates, Magar looked equally jubilant. With this important goal, the teen became Nepal’s youngest goalscorer in international football and an overnight celebrity.

The impromptu celebrations at Rangasala had louder echoes on the social media, with Nepalis discussing Bimal’s wonder strike late into the night.

“I had been waiting for this moment for a long time. It is a dream come true for me to score for my team,” said Magar to the press after the match. “The massive number of audience at the home ground was very encouraging.”

For the U-16 player, the goal was not fluke but a result of years of hard work. Since joining All Nepal Football Association (ANFA) Academy in Butwal at the age of 13, Magar had been training tirelessly to improve his game and earn him a place in the national squad. In the last three years, the boy from Nawalparasi had left his mark on the U-16 and U-14 matches he had played.

At the recent SAFF U-16 Championship’s group level matches, Magar scored six goals in three matches, including a hattrick against Bhutan and a brace against Pakistan. It was his goals that propelled Nepal into the finals before they lost to India.

“Bimal’s performance in the last few years have given hope to fans and coaches who were often left disappointed with Nepal’s wayward finishing,” says Bal Gopal Maharjan, Nepal’s U-16 coach, who considers Magar’s discipline as his biggest asset.

Although the youngster is far from the finished article, Maharjan is convinced his raw talents can be honed into that of a champion if he is nurtured properly.

The young football star is currently studying in grade 10 and has been living at the ANFA Academy’s hostel in Lalitpur for the last two years. A fan of Argentina and Barcelona player Lionel Messi, Magar says he wants to emulate the skills, success, and humility of his hero.
GUNLA, the Newari month of festivities is ending this week. Be alert with your cameras for any last moment street parades.

Street style, street art has a new home in Kathmandu. Tings Tea Lounge, Lajimpat, prasadadtings.wordpress.com

INDRA JATRA, celebrate the founding of Kathmandu City. 18 September, Basantapur Durbar Square

Kachahari Camp and Dash, watch a documentary on Nepali activists who are seeking to transform society through theatre. 6 September, 3:30pm, Russian Culture Centre; 7 September, 3:30pm, Mandala Theatre

The spoken word, slam it, jam it, cram it, wham-bam it with the poetry collective Word Warriors. 7 September, 3 to 5pm, The Yellow House, Sanepa, theyellowhouse.com, np/contact.html

Miss Vroom Vroom, if you own a scooter and think you set the streets on fire, ride here for a shot at the crown of Scooter Queen. Rs 1,099, 7 September, 10am onwards, Syakar Safety Riding Training Center, Gwarko, 9841927317

CAN softtech 2013, the latest in technology in Nepal. Runs till 7 September, Bhirkut Mandip

SYMPHONY OF THE SOIL, filmed in four continents, this film examines humanity’s relation with soil. 6 September, 5:30pm, Softyes Media Arts, Jhamsikhel, 014552486, 9832487376, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5QYZ-LRXW4

FALCHA, give yourself away to the twin pleasures of lemon jeera chicken and mutton handi kabab. Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur

Bubbly Brunch, let the subtleties of Arabian cuisine tease your palate, pasta if you’re not too adventurous with food. Rs 1,200, 11am to 3pm, Saturdays, Shambala Garden and Club Sundhara, Hotel Shangri-La, (01)4462999 (Ext. 75126755)

Mongolian BBQ, SPILL your generous quantities of roasted meat and wash it down with a glass of mocktail, with traditional music playing within earshot. Rs 2,099, 7pm onwards, Shangri-La Village Resort, Pokhara, 061462222 Ext. 5005

Falafel, give yourself away to the twin pleasures of lemon jeera chicken and mutton handi kabab. Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur

Yak Restaurant, serves authentic Chinese food, try the malai tosh, chicken with fungus and spicy pork spare ribs. Boudha, Kathmandu

Shangrila Kitchen, try the majestic Gyakok and a wide variety of cocktails, 9pm to 12 pm, Hotel Tibet International, Boudha

Sal’s Pizza, almost round, almost cheap, always delicious, the cheesiest pizzas in town. Lajimpat, behind Jazz Upstairs

Bhumi Restaurant & Bar, savor delicious Newari, Nepali, and Indian cuisine in a welcoming environment. Lajimpat, (01)4433293

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

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

Mongolian BBQ, SPILL your generous quantities of roasted meat and wash it down with a glass of mocktail, with traditional music playing within earshot. Rs 2,099, 7pm onwards, Shangri-La Village Resort, Pokhara, 061462222 Ext. 5005

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

Bhumi Restaurant & Bar, savor delicious Newari, Nepali, and Indian cuisine in a welcoming environment. Lajimpat, (01)4433293

Einstein’s Cafe, a classic for Newari-Bollywood. Lajimpat, (01)4433293

Silver Spoon, a space to sip and savor. Lajimpat, (01)4433293

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MUSIC

Tuborg stage shows, your favourite Nepali rockstars at a town near you. 14 September, Dharan, Public School; 21 September, Pokhara, Pradarshani Maidan; 5 October, Kathmandu, Dasrath Stadium

CANCION DEL MARIACHI, listen to latin and gypsy jazz with Monsif Mzibri and Hari Maharjan and drink jugs of sangria. Every Saturday, 7pm onwards, New Orleans Cafe, Jhamsikhel

NEWAZ IN BLACK, the band is back with a brand new album, live performance guaranteed. 6 September, 7pm onwards, Attic Bar, Lajimpat

LET YOUR HAIR DOWN

Celebrate womanhood in Nepali style. Feast with fellow women deep into the night on Saturday. Dress in red, sing, dance, and fast for your existing or prospective groom – preferably close to a Shiva temple – on Sunday. On Monday, break your fast after puja to Ganesh, the lord of appetites. And on Tuesday, round up your festivities with prayers to the wisdom of the saints.

Date
7 September – ‘Dar khane’ feasts
8 September – Teej
9 September – Ganesh Chaturthi
10 September – Rishi Panchami

GROWING LIBRARY

The Kathmandu Book Swap wants you bookworms to come together to talk books, swap them, and drink a lot of coffee. Take along at least one book that you’re willing to lend. All books get passed around, so you can talk about each of them. Best of 3 rock-paper-cissors decides who gets a particular book if two or more people want to borrow one book for this month. They’ll keep track of who borrows what so it will eventually come to you.

Date: 14 September, second Saturday of every month
Time: 2.30pm
Venue: Cafe Soma, Jhamiskhel

Knockout

With the group stage matches done and dusted, the South Asian Football Federations Championship 2013 enters the knockout rounds.

Semi-finals – 8 and 9 September
Final – 15 September
Dashrath Rangasala Stadium, Tripureswor
Tickets: Rs 200 to Rs 700, at venue
Live coverage on Kantipur TV
http://www.youtube.com/user/saffchampionship

GETAWAYS

MONSOON MADNESS, dive into the heart of monsoon at Pokhara this weekend. Rs 4,999, 2 nights / 3 days Package on twin sharing, shangrilavillage@gmail.com, www.hotelshangri.com, (03)4420053, (061)462222

Haatiban Resort, climb up to Chandragiri in the morning for a royal view of Kathmandu Valley and jog down to the hotel for a relaxed evening. Pharping, Kathmandu, (01)4753756

Glacier Hotel, a lovely place to stay complete with a waterfront terrace, free wi-fi, children’s playground, and probably the best spa in town. Gaunghat, Lakeside, Pokhara, (061)4375372

SHIVAPURI HEIGHTS COTTAGE, escape the noise of Kathmandu and enjoy fresh air and fresh food in a tranquil air. Rs 3,500 per person per night incl. dinner and breakfast. 5841371927, 9802012245, info@shivapuricottage.com

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Books are expensive and some of them hard to find, so go share and find like-minded people bringing what they have to the study table

Date: 14 September, second Saturday of every month
Time: 2.30pm
Venue: Cafe Soma, Jhamiskhel
http://kitmbookswap.wordpress.com/2013/08/29/september-bookswap/
Every summer, almost all of the adults and children strong enough to walk living in the Nepal Himalaya make a difficult journey to the higher reaches of the mountains, risking their lives in search of yarsagumba.

The fungus mummifies the caterpillar and then thrusts out of the soil. This tiny protuberance looks like a blade of grass, and that is what harvesters spend weeks each spring searching for.

For some, it’s two or three day walk to a scenic Himalayan meadow at 4,300 m here in the Tsum Valley of Upper Gorkha. The villagers don’t waste any time to pack their lunches, and head up the slopes where a slight misstep can be a fatal fall.

Yarsa has now earned itself the name ‘Himalayan viagra’ and one quality piece can fetch $20. The best pickers can find 70 pieces per day, and make a fortune.

Mingmar (pictured right) is 28 and has left his wife, two children and a newly born baby boy back at home, and walks up the mountain everyday from his stone summer shepherd hut close to the snow line with his cousin and their young friend, Kumar. They crouch and crawl all day in mulled silence, picking through blades of grass and staring at the soil with hawk eyes. A lucky picker lets out an excited cry, as he lifts a yarsa stalk. Others rush over, and the treasured piece is wrapped carefully in a plastic bag.

They break for a brief lunch and some barley brew. “Hey, how much did you find so far?” someone asks Mingmar. “Just a few,” he replies. Then it is back to the slopes and every group has their own secret spot.

By afternoon, it is snowing, but Mingmar is still focused on his work, crawling up the slope on all fours. He is the sole.

What 20 years ago was a strange grass growing on a caterpillar is now Himalayan gold.

RINZIN NORBU LAMA
in GORKHA

KATHMANDU
TIBET
CHINA

ACTUAL SIZE

$24,000/kg
$38,000/kg
$97,000/kg
breadwinner of the family, and knows that every yarsa stalk is cash income.

“I realise I have to help my parents somehow when they are alive because if they die when I am busy in my studies I would regret that,” he says with sadness in his eyes. “I decided to abandon my studies and help them as much as I can.”

Even though Tsum has been declared a holy no-violence zone where animals cannot be killed, it doesn’t seem to apply to the caterpillars. In the evening a Tibetan-Chinese middleman, arrives to buy the day’s harvest. He can sell the yarsa for three times the price across the border in China. In this two-month season, Mingmar hopes to earn up to Rs 3 million.

*Life in Transit*, a 24 hours long video documenting Mingmar’s life will be available online at www.globalives.org end of September.
The Portrait of a Lady

This week I am writing about one of my favourite directors, the New Zealander Jane Campion. While she is one of my favourites because of her unique feminine sensibility when it comes to her craft, it is not just because she is a woman that I am so enamoured of her films. For anyone who has seen her searingly brilliant film The Piano (1993) which brought Campion firmly into the limelight and won an 11-year old Anna Paquin and the phenomenal Holly Hunter Oscars for Best Supporting Actress and Best Actress respectively, you will probably have several images of the film indelibly embedded in your head. This remarkable film about a young mute woman, Ada (Holly Hunter) is a remarkable study of the feminine psyche. Clearly this is a subject that Campion excels at: her next film The Portrait of a Lady came out in 1996 rather surprisingly to somewhat mixed reviews. Adapted from the Henry James novel of the same name, The Portrait of a Lady is a thoroughly engrossing psychological study of a young woman, Isabel Archer (played by a luminous Nicole Kidman), and the people whose lives she affects. The novel is a disconcertingly astute portrayal of people and their motivations, and the film with its excellent cast more than brings those famous characters to life. With John Malkovich as Gilbert Osmond, Isabel’s malevolent and insidious husband; Barbara Hershey as Osmond’s scheming and amoral former lover Madam Merle; Martin Donovan as Isabel’s gentle, deeply perceptive but ailing cousin, Ralph Touchett - who has loved her for years; and the ever charismatic Viggo Mortensen as Caspar Goodwood, Isabel’s other long suffering admirer, the film is as gripping as the book, following Isabel’s evolution from a free-thinking, spirited creature into a hunted, proscribed spouse who becomes a shadow of her vibrant, self romanticised being through her own supposedly independent choices.

Campion’s latest endeavour is a six part series titled Top of the Lake, a mini-series starring Elizabeth Moss as Robin Griffith, a detective who is investigating the disappearance of a twelve-year old pregnant girl. It has received glowing praise thus far and is due out soon.

Campion most often concentrates on the unique trials of being a complicated, imperfect woman in this difficult world. As always, I await her new endeavour impatiently, and with a great deal of hope. During the wait, everyone who has missed her films thus far can catch up on the adventures of Ada, Isabel and Fanny. You will be rapt, you may weep, hopefully some of you will be altered forever– that is the power of Jane Campion’s cinema.

Attention to detail

Jagadamba Press is Nepal’s most modern printing facility, and a one-stop shop that ensures reliability, precision and speed for all your publishing needs.

Happenings

Sea of Red: People take pictures of the rally organised by Young Communist League near Sundhara on Saturday.

Justice for All: Anuradha Koirala (right) of Maiti Nepal participates in a candlelight vigil organised in support of Ganga Maya and Nanda Prasad Adhikari at Bir Hospital on Monday.

We Did It: Bimal Gharti Magar (centre) celebrates with his team members after equalising for Nepal against Pakistan on Tuesday.

Wired: Vice President Parmananda Jha visits CAN SoftTech 2013 at Bhratru Mandap on Wednesday.
South Asians who conned Wall Street

America is either a melting pot or a salad bowl, depending on who is talking. But in The Billionaire’s Apprentice it is mainly populated by Indians. Indian Indians, that is, not native Americans. The crooks in this true story are of South Asian descent (Rajaratnam, king of kings, and Rajat Gupta, his apprentice), and the other important players (Preetinder S Bharara and Sanjay Wadhwa) from the US federal government who painstakingly bring them both to justice.

Author Anita Raghavan is also of Indian descent, used to work for the Wall Street Journal, and has done a magnificent job of using tapped phone transcripts that US courts allowed to be used for the first time in a insider trading scandal for her book. Rajaratnam, a mathematics wizard originally from Sri Lanka, founded Galleon, a hedge fund company. He has nurtured his talent well in the dog-eat-dog world of Wall Street and has been duly rewarded. He is a billionaire, but his addiction to making more money insatiable. Rajat Gupta is a handsome Indian businessman philanthropist, who is a millionaire but aspires to be a billionaire by becoming friends with Rajaratnam. Harvard-educated Rajat Gupta, one of the most accomplished Indian-Americans, sits on the board of many important financial organisations such as McKinsey, Goldman Sachs, and American Airlines. After a board meeting, he would secretly phone his friend Rajaratnam and illegally share juicy financial nuggets prompting Rajaratnam to sell or buy certain stocks and make big bucks instantly. The exquisite irony is that neither Rajaratnam nor his apprentice, Rajat Gupta, needed to be cheats as they were already rich and well respected in American society, from its President (Gupta was a guest at the White House at least on one occasion) to ordinary Americans who marvel at these elite South Asians for making it into the American system.

Rajaratnam comes across as a smart Bollywood gangster type in appearance and actions. The gentle character of Rajat Gupta thus contrasts sharply with Rajaratnam’s rowdiness. The two characters represent the people and the generations of South Asians who were “twice blessed”: to be born after Indian Independence in 1947 which allowed social advancement and world travel, and the civil rights act in the US in 1965 which did away with limited annual immigration of only 100 Indians to America. More were welcome based on their skills.

For many Indians like Rajat Gupta who had attended the fiercely-competitive Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and were ready to take on the world, America with its changed immigration policy clearly became a beacon of hope in the Indian darkness. Throughout his trial Gupta continues to deny any wrongdoing. It appears he has rationalised his actions. Whiffs of pervasive corruption from South Asia have clearly been transported to greedy, welcoming Wall Street.

To a South Asian audience this book also feels like a cautionary tale from the Hindu Purans of prodigious talent, hard work and immense wealth all turning in to ashes. Buddha Bhanayat

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**Embers Restaurant**

As soon as the brushetta arrived on our table, we knew we were in for a treat. The classic antipasto was packed with all the right flavours. Perfectly layered grilled eggplant, tomato and capsicum topped with sour cream and a peanut based green paste worked gracefully together to give us a flavorful bite. The fried prawns at Embers had us competing for each piece. The prawns coated in a golden batter were crispy on the outside and juicy on the inside. And the spicy dip perfectly complemented the prawns.

For the mains we ordered tenderloin fillet steak (Rs 585) and honey braised duck (Rs 645). As we waited for our mains to hit the table, we were asked to try crispy corns. The corns reminded of Bu Keba’s Twaaka Makkai and were fun to munch on with the roasted red chillies leaving a nice aftertaste.

The steak was served with organic salad, fries and topped with red wine sauce. The meat was tender and cut into easily. A bite and you could tell it had been marinated well. The creamy red wine sauce had a hint of black pepper that added to the dish. The honey braised duck was sliced into just the right sizes to share and had good meat and fat ratio. Although the taste was good, I wished the meat had been a little softer.

Despite being packed to the brim, we took a risk and ordered a cheese cake (Rs 285) to share. Even on a full tummy, the cake was delicious, delicious, delicious! Embers has a lot going for it. Serve good food and maintain the space, and Embers will soon be a crowd favourite.

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**Embers Restaurant**

How to get there: walk along Krishna Galli, Pulchok. Embers is between Bhat Bhateni supermarket and Punchakamya building.

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Poisoned environment

One of the deadly chemical agents used in the gas attack on a suburb of Damascus last week was Sarin. This is an organophosphate compound which is also extensively used as pesticides in South Asia, including Nepal.

Organophosphate has been classified as a chemical or bioterrorism agent, especially after the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway in 1994 when the victims complained that “their world went black” followed by all the symptoms of “SLUDGE”. Sarin is a vapour form of organophosphate that first causes injury to the eyes leading to pupillary narrowing and partial blindness after exposure. These symptoms can potentially be fatal depending on the amount ingested or inhaled and just how promptly the treatment was started. The main cause of death is respiratory depression triggered by the undestroyed acetylcholine which is widely distributed in the brain.

The most essential drug used to treat organophosphate poisoning is derived from plants (datura, deadly nightshade, mandrake, among others) from the Solanaceae family and is called atropine. Atropine effectively blocks the effects of acetylcholine. Ironically, the word atropine comes from Ateopos, one of the three Fates in Greek mythology, who decides how humans should die. In the case of organophosphate poisoning, atropine is clearly a life-saving antidote. It is easy to imagine how atropine could be in short supply in war-torn Syria. In South Asia the organophosphate poisoning tragedy can be prevented in large measure if there is political will. So long as a small amount is available, the gas in that case was methyl isocyanate.

There is no enforced regulation in India or Nepal of the sale of organophosphate pesticides. The Bhopal gas disaster in 1984 that killed nearly 4,000 people in India or students who failed exams in August were poisoned by food taken pesticide. Sadly, this poison is available over the counter at ordinary shops, sometimes sharing shelf space with food items.

In South Asia the organophosphate poisoning as the doctor takes the history and examines the patient with this affliction, a truly preventable human tragedy unfolds. Many patients are young women who have tried to inflict self-harm because they had a quarrel with their husbands, or were abused by in-laws. Local brands of organophosphate compounds go by names like nuvan, metacid, dalf, and sochur. Medical students use the acronym “SLUDGE” (salivation, lacrimation, urine incontinence, diarrhoea, gastrointestinal cramps and emesis or vomiting) to help remember the effects of this pesticide in patients. The chemical inhibits the natural destruction of an enzyme called acetylcholine in the human body which then sets off a cascade of secretions.

Organophosphate has been extensively used as pesticides in South Asia, including Nepal.

Gaming delight

Released in June 2013, the Nvidia Shield is an Android based premium portable gaming device from the legendary gaming graphics card manufacturer Nvidia. Although at first glance, the Shield might look like a screen stuck on an Xbox style gamepad, a lot is going on underneath that simple exterior.

The Nvidia Shield sports a 5-inch HD touch screen (1920 x 1080) on top of the physical gamepad, and you have the option of controlling the device either by using the touch screen, or via the gamepad. While the Shield’s HD screen allows for an impressive display, making the games look splendid, the 1.9 GHz quad core processor, 72-core Nvidia GeForce graphics processor backs it up with a powerful performance.

Android users will find themselves familiar with the look and feel of the Shield’s operating system as it runs on Android’s Jelly Bean version 4.2.1. A huge catalogue of games is available for download from Android’s Google Play store, or from Nvidia’s own Tegrazone store (some free, others paid), although not all games are compatible with the gamepad. But worry not for these games are playable via the Shield’s touch screen. At the moment, only a couple hundred games are compatible with the gamepad, with Riptide GP 2 looking particularly impressive but the number continues to soar as Yantrick types this review.

An attractive feature of the Shield is the option to connect the device to your HDTV via a Mini HDMI output at the back, and using the HDtv as the display. Another unique and impressive feature is it’s ability to stream and play games from your PC to the device over Wi-Fi, given both devices are connected to the same network. However, be aware that your PC needs to be equipped with an Nvidia GTX 650 or higher video card to utilise this awesome feature.

A device with the capabilities of the Shield requires serious juice. Sporting an immense 7350mAh battery (compared to 2600mAh battery on the Galaxy S4), the Shield is capable of 5-6 hours of intense, graphics heavy gaming / videos and 10 hours of casual gaming, internet browsing, music, and videos.

The handheld gaming scene has traditionally been the playground of Nintendo’s Gameboy and Sony’s PSP. But with the launch of the Shield priced approximately at Rs 31,000, things may be changing soon for Android users will find themselves familiar with the look and feel of the Shield’s operating system as it runs on Android’s Jelly Bean version 4.2.1. A huge catalogue of games is available for download from Android’s Google Play store, or from Nvidia’s own Tegrazone store (some free, others paid), although not all games are compatible with the gamepad. But worry not for these games are playable via the Shield’s touch screen. At the moment, only a couple hundred games are compatible with the gamepad, with Riptide GP 2 looking particularly impressive but the number continues to soar as Yantrick types this review.

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The anatomy of radicalism

The politics of riot and terror have a long evolutionary history in India

When the Indian Mujahideen’s bomb-maker, Yasin Bhatkal, was caught in Pokhara last week, there was justifiable jubilation in India. Yasin spilled the beans on interrogation, revealing that Nepal’s scenic lakeside resort has become a hideout of choice where Indian extremists can lie low.

But few know that Yasin was radicalised by what he erroneously believed was just retaliation to the 2002 anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat. Pogroms and terror require an ambose and ideology to flourish, and Hindu and Muslim communal politics date back to decades before India’s independence.

The RSS among Muslims was the Jamaat-e-Islami, which drew its inspiration from Maulana Maududi, who wanted to capture political power to establish an Islamic state and shariah. But at partition Maududi migrated to Pakistan, leaving behind a rump which was renamed Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH). It continued to harp on its original goals, absurdly unfathom of the demographic reality of divided India, and declined participation in elections un-Islamic.

Roundly rebuffed in two Indian general elections, the JIH rescinded the ban on Muslims, other than those constituting its cadres, from casting their ballots. Subsequently, it redefined its goal as Iqamaat-e-deen, or establishment of religion. Now, much like the RSS, it floated its own political outfit. However, the JIH’s worldview remains sharply religious and socially conservative.

These groups and their divisive ideologies were mostly confined to the margins of the Indian polity, until they were brought to centre stage in the 1980s. In response to growing militancy in Punjab, Indira Gandhi, on return to power in 1980 but still anxious about the durability of her support base, began to play the Hindu card, thereby legitimising what had been decidedly the RSS’s policy till then.

It was also the decade in which Hindu-Muslim riots occurred with alarming frequency and severity. Ultimately, the opening of the lock of the Babri Masjid in 1986 and its eventual demolition six years later sparked off countrywide tension which the Sangh Parivar rode to power. Subsequently, it became the principal alternative to democracy.

The rise of the Sangh-BJP and the palpable partiality of the Indian state in tackling the riots stoked the anxiety of Indian Muslims, leaving them with no option but to struggle (jihad) for the establishment of the Caliphate. Thus, the old idea of jihad was back in currency.

In 1996, SIMI issued a statement declaring that Indian secularism and democracy had failed the country’s Muslims, leaving them with no option but to struggle (jihad) for the establishment of the Caliphate. Thus, the old idea of jihad was back in currency. Post-9/11, the BJP-led government banned SIMI, and many of its activists went underground. Among them was Yasin Bhatkal. The Gujarat riots radicalised this group further and was born the Indian Mujahideen.

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In the weeks to come, we will be provided deeper insights into Yasin’s motivations. Nevertheless, this much can be said: the politics of riot and terror are linked through ideas Muslim ideologues had propounded decades ago. Such ideas are reinterpreted and applied to contemporary reality.

You can scarcely count ideas of jihad until the ambience in which it thrives is also transformed. Eight months away from India’s general election in May 2014, the RSS has been trying to kerb communal cauldron in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh simmering. Narendra Modi, suspected to have allowed the targeting of Muslims in 2002, is flaunting his prime ministerial ambitions. One wonders what India’s radicalised Muslims are thinking.

IN NET: Indian Mujahideen co-founder Yasin Bhatkal was arrested in Pokhara on 30 August

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IN NET: Indian Mujahideen co-founder Yasin Bhatkal was arrested in Pokhara on 30 August.
BHRIKUTI RAI

Juna Rai (right) looks back at her life from a teenage guerrilla to the young soldier and mother that she has now become. “It only seemed like yesterday when Sagar Dai took that picture,” she recalls.

It was 2006, and Sagar Shrestha (above) saw Juna on lonely sentry duty on a foggy morning in Daburang Bhanjyang of Bhojpur, guarding a Maoist base. He took the picture with his Nikon SLR, but never expected it would become so famous. Juna’s war weary demeanour came to symbolise battle fatigue among fighters, and the role of women in the Maoist army.

“She was looking on as her comrades took part in morning drill,” recounts Sagar, who submitted his photograph for the book, A People War and also to Associated Press.

“We had to take care of our weapons more than our lives back then, that is the only reason I was holding on to the SLR so tightly,” explains Juna, “but I still wonder why people find the photo so fascinating.”

The photograph was included in Kunda Dixit’s book, A People War, published by nefa~laya in 2006.

Juna’s Rai’s iconic picture has gone around the world, toured the country as part of a travelling photo exhibition seen by 500,000 people, and has been used in movie posters and lately even in Kathmandu’s new street murals.

It was only when Dixit’s sequel, People After War, came out in 2009 did it become known that Juna’s brother, Bhuwan, was in the Royal Nepal Army. The siblings actually took part in the battle of Bhojpur and Diktel on opposite sides, and could have ended up killing each other. Nepal’s conflict wasn’t just a civil war, it was a sibling war.

After languishing four years in the Udaypur cantonment, Juna was among 1,422 former guerrillas inducted into the Nepal Army last month. She has lost her long tresses, and is proud to call herself a ‘soldier’ now in the same army as her brother.

“There are no words to describe how happy I was during the passing-out parade in Trisuli,” says Juna, showing us pictures of the ceremony. Inspired by her family’s martial tradition (her grandfather was in the British Army and uncle in the Indian Army) Juna always fancied herself in uniform. As a lance corporal in the Nepal Army, she is now undergoing a bridge course to receive her insignia and was in Kathmandu this week for a short break.

“It is difficult to believe that life still turned out good after all those years, and I am glad...
A brother and sister who served on opposite sides during the conflict are now part of the same army.

Four years ago, speaking to this paper, Juna was optimistic about joining her brother Bhuwan in the same army. “Luckily we didn’t encounter each other, or else we may have killed each other,” she said. During the conflict Juna and Bhuwan prayed for each other’s safety even though they were on opposing sides.

Bhuwan is currently posted in Jhapa, and Juna will probably be assigned to the army unit guarding the Sukla Phanta Nature Reserve in western Nepal. Juna says Bhuwan tried to dissuade his sister from joining the army because he said it was hard work. But Juna says: “I joined anyway, because I realised nothing in life comes easy, I have never shied away from challenges.”

Juna is now 27 and married to Kumar Tamang who was also a guerrilla who took voluntary retirement because of injuries. Their seven-year-old son Sachin lives with Juna’s sister Guna in Sunsari. Having lost her own mother when she was two, Juna talks to her son every day. “I hope he will understand that I am in the army only to ensure a better future for him,” she says.

Juna has no regrets about joining the Maoist army, and believes she was fighting for justice and equality. “The changes we fought for will take time, but at least we prepared the ground for it,” Juna says. She admits there were misgivings among her comrades about joining what they were trained to regard as an enemy force, but everything went smoothly.

Bikram Rai

THE END OF A SIBLING WAR

A brother and sister who served on opposite sides during the conflict are now part of the same army.

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Bikram Rai
All-party meeting to postpone elections, Chairman, CPN-M rounds table meeting. Prepare for polls and even if CPN-M keeps out says: Polls on 19 Nov with CPN-M out, but elections on 19 Nov with CPN-M out, but Sushil Koirala being pro-election. CPN-M boycotts or takes part in polls since it will rightwing by bringing CPN-M into polls. Whatever CPN-M decides to do, says: Postpone polls if CPN-M decides to do, UCNP (M) if CPN-M takes part by splitting Maoist vote and weakening party in the Madhes.

Madhav Kumar Nepal: If Baidya comes on board, postpone polls. If CPN-M takes part by splitting Maoist vote and weakening party in the Madhes. Bijay Gachchhet: Polls in November with or without Baidya. Advise from early polls and coalition with UCNP (M) to self.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal: Chairman, UCPN (M): Says: Elections on 19 Nov with CPN-M out, but postpone if they require. Advantages over CPN-M if CPN-M doesn’t take part in polls, and, otherwise, branches of international community for being pro-election. 

Sushil Koirala: President, NC: Says: Hold polls on 19 Nov even if CPN-M keeps out. NC: Benefits if CPN-M boycotts or takes part in polls since it will weaken UCNP-M.

Jhajhath Khanal: Chairman, UML: Says: Hold polls on 19 Nov whatever CPN-M decides to do. UML: Benefits from split vote bank if CPN-M takes part or doesn’t.

Mohan Baidya: Chairman, CPN-M: Says: Postpone elections, all-party meeting to decide on main points of constitution. Wants: More time to prepare for polls and come out stronger than UCNP (M). Buy time with demand for all-party roundtable meeting.


Navin Singh Khadka: on BBC Nepal, 2 September At a time when the international community is being accused of supporting divisive federalism in Nepal, what do Nepal’s neighbours think? Do India and China also support federalism in Nepal? Raj Kumar Lekhi, former head of the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities says: “The interests of India and China are different from western and European countries. They don’t say it directly, but we get the feeling that they fear federalism in Nepal is going to create problems in their own countries.”

British ambassador to Nepal, Andrew James Sparkes says: “In the recent visit by Maoist leader Prachanda to both India and China, neither of those countries told him to drop federalism. In fact, they wanted to know what kind of federalism was being proposed. Everyone knows that these two countries are concerned that Nepal might have more states than feasible, because they have their own issues which they must address.”

India plays a big part in events that transpire in Nepal. Its bureaucracy and, more importantly, intelligence agents have become increasingly active. But Kamal Thapa of the Rastra Pratisthan Party says he isn’t surprised about this. “All the internal power centres were always in one way or another influenced by external power centres,” says Thapa. “Everyone talks about India, but even the Indian establishment has various departments. Among them, RAW has been active and has had more influence than anyone else, especially since we know that they even gave the Maoists military training.”

Former minister Ghanashyam Bhusal of the UML agrees with Thapa. He says: “It doesn’t seem that India’s political class is responsible for all the unwanted meddling in Nepal. Events show that it is India’s intelligence agency that is most influential here.”

Even though India says that Nepal has a strategic importance, it has been years since an Indian prime minister visited Kathmandu. I asked Ashok Mehta, former Indian Army general and Nepal export why. “This is a failure of Indian politics and diplomacy,” says Mehta. “But India has legitimate security concerns because of the open border. And this was highlighted by the detention within Nepal of leaders of Laskhar-e-Talib and Indian Mujahideen.”

Nepal’s efforts to address Indian security concerns was most apparent during the Babarum Bhattarai-led government, and some say the planned handing-over of Tribhuvan International Airport to Indian management was also a part of this. But Mehta says: “From 1950, through 1990, and right up to 2011, India has not changed the way it sees Nepal.”

Nepal’s government has repeatedly said it trims its activities to address India’s concerns. Bhusal says, “We wanted to discuss these things. Upgrading the airport and addressing security concerns is no big deal. But until there is a formal proposal, we will never see eye to eye and this delay in the transition process will continue.”

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What do you think is more important, holding elections on 19 November or postponing if Baidya’s party will take part? Holding elections 54% Postponing 36%

Do you think elections will still take place on time? Yes 44.4% No 35.4%

Will Nepal’s politics be more complex if the CPN-M does not participate? Yes 43.5% No 14.8%

If major parties have unity 27.8% Do you think elections will still take place on time? Don’t know 13.3%

What they really, really want Himlal Khabarpatrika, 8 September

Neighbour’s keeper

Bijay Gachchhet: Coordinator, UDMF: Says: Polls in November with or without Baidya. Advise from early polls and coalition with UCNP (M) to self.

Baburam Bhattarai: UCNP (M): Says: Polls on 19 Nov with or without Baidya. UCNP (M) will not participate in the Madhes. 

Upendra Yadav: Chairman, MPP-N: Says: Polls on 19 Nov with or without Baidya. UCNP (M) will not participate in the Madhes. 

Mohan Baidya: Chairman, CPN-M: Says: Postpone elections, all-party meeting to decide on main points of constitution. Wants: More time to prepare for polls and come out stronger than UCNP (M). Buy time with demand for all-party roundtable meeting.


Ram Chandra Poudel: Vice-president NC: Says: Postpone if CPN-M agrees to polls, otherwise tell it on 19 Nov. Wants: Baidya taking part will benefit NC by dividing Maoist vote bank.

Jhajhath Khanal: Chairman, UML: Says: Hold polls on 19 Nov whatever CPN-M decides to do. UML: Benefits from split vote bank if CPN-M takes part or doesn’t. 

Mohan Baidya: Chairman, CPN-M: Says: Postpone elections, all-party meeting to decide on main points of constitution. Wants: More time to prepare for polls and come out stronger than UCNP (M). Buy time with demand for all-party roundtable meeting.


As Ganga Maya and Nanda Prasad Adhikari continue their hunger strike in Bir Hospital for the fifth week, an entire country awaits in anticipation to see whether the state will follow through with its promise of prosecuting their son’s murderers. The couple’s struggle is emblematic of the deep-seated impunity that has plagued Nepal since the end of conflict. How fairly and efficiently the government handles this case will set the precedent for thousands of other families.

Post-war reconciliation and justice for victims and their families remain painfully slow, but we finally managed to end one aspect of the peace process this month. On 26 August, 70 former Maoist combatants became captains in the Nepal Army they had fought a decade long war against. As Chairman of the Interim Election Council, Khil Raj Regmi, handed over insignias to the new graduates, those gathered at the military academy in Kharipati heaved a collective sigh of relief.

Nepal’s messy, protracted transition has taken us seven agonising years. But from squabbling over the number and ranks of combatants to the opposition of the Army in admitting ‘politically indoctrinated’ individuals, the country has come a long way. The successful integration, management, and rehabilitation of the PLA is undoubtedly a notable achievement.

More than 17,000 Maoist soldiers languished in seven cantonments across the country for years. Keeping them there any longer would not only have run the state’s treasury dry, but increased the potential for future unrest. “Six years in the camp was the worst time of our lives, we were treated like prisoners,” recalls Bimala Pant, who graduated with her husband Ram Bahadur Lama from Kavre. “It was far more terrible than the war because we joined the PLA of our own accord and were ready to die for the cause, but we hadn’t signed up for this.”

The couple list the 2006 People’s Movement, transformation of Nepal into a secular republic, growing political awareness and participation specially of women and marginalised communities and their demands for increased recognition as major accomplishments of the conflict. But they are quick to point out that army integration is not the end of the peace process as everyone has been so eager to claim.

Lama told me, “Writing a constitution is not easy. There are many players and it is natural for the process to be delayed. We made immense sacrifices during the 10 year conflict and the parties too need to sacrifice their self-interest for the greater good. Nepalis deserve a new constitution, the leaders owe it to the people.”

Two months before elections and countless High Level Political meetings later, the big four and the fringe parties seem to be finally nearing an agreement. Disillusionment among voters – many for the first time – is growing. At this late hour, the political parties need to think beyond winning and losing because the constitution is neither a competition, nor an end goal. It is simply the first step among many that will help us build a more inclusionary and fair society.

Those who actually put their lives on the frontlines have swapped their uniforms for a new, stable life. They are keen to leave their past behind and want Nepalis to judge them based on what they now do with their future.

Says 30-year-old Keshav Raj Dhami from Bajura who was the winner of the best male cadet award, “We set a peaceful precedent by becoming the first country to bring together former warring sides into the same army. Now we need to take this a step further, draft an inclusive and just constitution, and close the chapter.”

Yet reckless leaders like Mohan Baidya continue to threaten - from the comfort of their offices - a return to bloodshed if their demands are not fulfilled. Even if another large-scale armed conflict seems quite unlikely, using it as a political slogan shows just how out of tune some leaders are with the aspirations of ordinary Nepalis.

When we are trying to draft Nepal’s modern history, why do the political parties insist on standing on the wrong side?
Vermicultural revolution

For the class warriors that they claim they be, the Baddies sure have a knack for shooting themselves on the foot. Pakuda once told GPK during the war he wouldn’t talk to the “servant” when he could talk directly to his “master”, viz: Kingji. BRB has repeatedly insinuated that comrades in the UML were a) “impotent” b) “politically promiscuous”, c) third-gender, or d) all of the above.

It may be because they remembered this slight that members of the LGBT community decided this week to join the bi-sexual UML en masse. The homophobic Maobuddies once again went to town poking fun at the alleged sexual orientation of the United Marxist Leaning comrades. We all knew Sunil Babu had no love lost for Babu Ram, but why did he chose to join the UML? We all knew Sunil Babu had no love lost for Babu Ram, but why did he chose to join the UML? We all knew Sunil Babu had no love lost for Babu Ram, but why did he chose to join the UML?

The Baddies aren’t just insensitive to the gay lesbian bi-sexual and trans-sexual community, they have also demonstrated their speciest attitude towards the animal kingdom, and that could be because it hasn’t been declared a republib yet. PKD has often passed objectionable and derogatory remarks about chicken, comparing them to the Nepali Congress. What an insult to roosters in general and cocks in particular. And he went on to compare his party to the eagle. What an insult to eagles.

We often hear such speciest language in every day political discourse, and as a Nepali Ass I consider it my duty towards fellow mammals, reptiles and molluscs to lodge a complaint against proponents of hate speech that deliberately malign us in this way. Ever since biped primates climbed down from the acacia trees in the Rift Valley, sheds their prehensile tails, and started riding around in mopeds, humans have treated us animals abominably. In referring to Nepal’s current political scenario as a “snake pit” think of how disparaging it is towards our hissing comrades. In referring to Nepal’s current political scenario as a “snake pit” think of how disparaging it is towards our hissing comrades.

CORRECT: Vermicultural experts at the CIAA still don’t know who first used the word “earthworm” to mean “bribe”. CORRECT: The only fly in the ointment was that Baidya still refused to take part in elections. CORRECT: Finally, towards the end of the cocktail reception, the host mustered the courage to whisper to the Dash Baddie that his fly was open. CORRECT: Kathmandu’s canines yowled with joy on being told that the country was going to the dogs again.

INCORRECT: Comrade Yummy said the earthworms she amassed during road-widening would not be sufficient to finance her election campaign. INCORRECT: The popular Vulture Restaurant in Nawalparasi will henceforth offer derring do birds cloth napkins. INCORRECT: Birds of a feather flock together in the Cash Manists.

CORRECT: Except chicken. Bop Big Plop air dashes to China and on return, he has suddenly toned down his rhetorical from threats of Armageddon to threats of unity with the Mao party before elections. But because he has burnt his bridges with PKD, it looks like the Dhobighaut alignment with BRB is being revived, much to Awesome’s consternation. INCORRECT: The Chief Justice selfishly kept a lion’s share of the portfolios. INCORRECT: The Censor Board has decided to allow Lion King to be screened only if it is renamed Lion President. INCORRECT: The popular Vulture Restaurant in Nawalparasi will henceforth offer derring do birds cloth napkins. INCORRECT: Birds of a feather flock together in the Cash Manists.

CORRECT: vermiculture finance her election campaign. INCORRECT: The only fly in the ointment was that Baidya still refused to take part in elections. INCORRECT: Finally, towards the end of the cocktail reception, the host mustered the courage to whisper to the Dash Baddie that his fly was open. INCORRECT: Kathmandu’s canines yowled with joy on being told that the country was going to the dogs again.

INCORRECT: It is quite acceptable in politics to lick the ass of one’s coalition partner. INCORRECT: …but only if he has been a visionary statesman for donkey’s years. INCORRECT: The only fly in the ointment was that Baidya still refused to take part in elections. INCORRECT: Finally, towards the end of the cocktail reception, the host mustered the courage to whisper to the Dash Baddie that his fly was open. INCORRECT: Kathmandu’s canines yowled with joy on being told that the country was going to the dogs again.

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