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#675

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BIKRAM RAI

WAKE UP

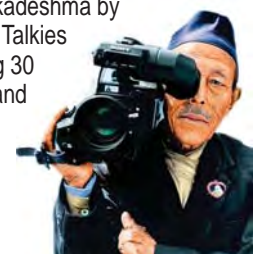
In any other country, a headline like 'Murderers allowed to contest elections' would belong in satire magazines. Not in Nepal. In fact, when the Supreme Court ruled on Monday to shelve a writ petition against allowing candidates with moral turpitude from filing their candidacies, it scarcely raised an eyebrow. There can be no other proof of the moral bankruptcy of this so-called 'technocratic' regime. Except for a handful of civil rights activists who picketed the Election Commission on Tuesday (left), no one seemed too bothered, least of all the international champions of democracy and the rule of law. Elections seem to be so important that we are willing to overlook war crimes, murder, torture, and plunder of the state. Nothing should distract us from that goal. Chief Justice-cum-prime minister Khil Raj Regmi seems to have gotten the message and flew off to New York on Thursday, as if he didn't have a care in the world.

TORPOR AND TURPITUDE
 EDITORIAL PAGE 3



FILM SEASON

Kathmandu hosts two international film festivals in the coming week. Film Southasia is now in its ninth year, showcasing top documentaries from the region. Ekadeshma by Underground Talkies is showcasing 30 short Nepali and international films.



PAGE 6-7

INSTITUTE OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT STUDIES
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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

TORPOR AND TURPITUDE

The Election Commission, probably under pressure from political figures who felt alluded to, took umbrage at the ambassadors of various countries making statements about the forthcoming elections and instructed them to refrain from doing so. To be sure, the way some members of the western diplomatic community in Kathmandu hold forth loudly and frequently on Nepal’s internal affairs in a patronising way often smacks of double-standards. Kathmandu-based ambassadors are not averse to expressing opinions in public, something they would never be allowed to do in India or Sri Lanka. One reason is that after 1990, we got so beholden to donors and our self-esteem sank so low that we didn’t mind being lectured to.

A country that wants to be treated with dignity must first put its own house in order. If we want others to take us seriously, we must first take ourselves seriously. A country that has no idea where it is going has no right to complain about being told which way to go. How can we complain about what Nepal-based ambassadors say in public when our own ambassador in Qatar refuses to relinquish her job, even though she has been sacked by the party that appointed her and has received her marching orders from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs? Neither does it behoove us to complain about the Indian embassy in Kathmandu micromanaging our internal affairs when our external affairs is in such disarray that the Nepal embassy in New Delhi has been ambassador-less for the past three years.

What the German ambassador said or didn’t say in Tanahu should be less important to Baburam Bhattarai and the Election Commission than the fact that the convicted murderer he got out of jail and has been



BIKRAM RAI

A country that has no idea where it is going has no right to complain about being told which way to go

coddling for the past three years is going to be a candidate from the same district where he masterminded the homicide of Ujjan Shrestha in 2004. The Supreme Court on Monday has upturned its own precedent by quashing a writ petition demanding that candidates with moral turpitude should not be allowed to contest elections. As veteran bureaucrat Bihari Krishna Shrestha puts it in a

Guest Column on page 4, at this rate the second Constituent Assembly is going to be ‘of the crooks, for the crooks, and voted by the people’.

When Bhattarai stepped down as prime minister to be replaced by Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi, we all thought that, if nothing else, there would be more respect for the rule of law. But Regmi is presiding over a state that is allowing the candidacy of a person whom the Supreme Court convicted for murder and sentenced to life imprisonment when he himself was chief justice. There is a slew of other examples, but you have to go no further than Monday’s Supreme Court ruling for proof of the collapse of the rule of law and of the moral bankruptcy of this so-called ‘technocratic’ regime.

Except for a handful of civil rights activists who picketed the Election Commission on Tuesday, no one seems to be too bothered by this. Least of all the international champions of democracy, the rule of law, and the multilateral agencies based in Kathmandu. For them, it’s elections or bust. Nothing should distract us from that goal. Regmi has got the message and set off for New York on Thursday as if he didn’t have a care in the world. The only silver lining is that Nepal is not much worse than Bihar used to be. There used to be a time not too long ago when Pappu Yadav and others won elections in India while they were serving time in prison. Lalu Yadav campaigned for elections from behind bars during the so-called Fodder Scam. But Bihar cleaned up its act; it has had two successive peaceful and independent elections which has put into office a visionary chief minister and an accountable government. If Bihar can do it, there is no reason why Nepal can’t.

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

BHAIRABNATH

The torture endured by lawyer and journalist Jitman Basnet and others during the so-called ‘civil-war’ is a terrible blot in Nepal’s history (‘The ghosts of Bhairabnath’ by Kunda Dixit, #674). Basnet’s story is a timely reminder of the atrocities committed by the Army. Recent events like the Adhikari family hunger-strike have turned the focus of the country on Maoist atrocities and in the public’s current anti-Maoist mood, it is all too easy to forget the sufferings inflicted by the security forces.

Stories like this also make the need for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission all the more pressing. Everyone talked about it during the peace process negotiations, but no one seems interested in it any more. The Maoist don’t want the TRC without ridiculous pre-conditions and neither does the Army. The other parties don’t have the spine to go it alone on this. This leaves it to individuals and the media to do the job of the TRC. But as recent events have shown, neither is particularly good at it.

- Both sides of Nepal’s decade-long war share the blame. However, the manner in which ‘state forces’ behaved was disgusting. The Maoists rebels can be given some leeway because they were part of a haphazard, disorganised group and they lost their sensibilities at times. But the Army was meant to

‘control the war’ and provide ‘security’ to commoners. Instead, it barbarically tortured and killed ordinary Nepalis in cold blood because of careless or intrinsically unreliable information. If the Army thinks the Basnet case (and others) are isolated events, then it should have the guts to identify and punish those involved. Even the Maoists could be urged to do the same if the state force sets an example by doing so.

DÉJÀ VU

Amazing reprint of the editorial from February 2008 in this week’s issue (‘Déjà vu’, Editorial, #674). Unfortunately nothing seems to have changed as far as the behaviour of the parties is concerned.

- Nepali Times should stop writing new editorials and just reprint old ones like this. Nothing ever changes in Nepali politics anyway. And that is why nothing is going to come out of the November elections which is being forced on us by the Indians.

- How are polls going to hand power back to the people? The great people of Nepal will be electing the same great 601 they elected back so many years ago.

FAITH IN REVOLUTION

Anurag Acharya is either highly optimistic, or badly misinformed if he thinks the Maoists ‘have realised

that secularism is not just about non-discrimination between the faithful, it is also about being tolerant of them’ by inducting priests into their ranks (‘A faith in revolution’, #674). The party is capable of contradicting its rhetoric on every issue - India, China, monarchy, capitalism, Kathmanduites, Bal Krishna Dhungel, Adhikari couple - if the flip-flopping is likely to prolong its stay as the main bully within the larger political structure. The sooner ‘senior’ writers learn to accept this ‘fact’ and stop being unnecessarily hopeful, the higher the chances of avoiding the ‘fly by night, it’s all right, free and fair polls’ courtesy Carter Foundation debacle like the previous elections.

ELEPHANTS RISE

Hopefully the success of the chain-free pen in Chitwan will encourage others in Nepal to change the way they look after working elephants (‘Working elephants rise up, you have nothing to lose but chains’ by Lucia De Vries , #674). The animals are happier, but they are still ready to do their work and mind their mahouts.

- How encouraging to see the results of allowing elephants to live without restraints. Thanks to all involved for making it possible.

SHIT

I wonder if Rose George has mentioned anything about fecal microbiota transplantation (FMT) in her book, *The Big Necessity*, which is basically using

a healthy donor’s faeces to populate the gut of a patient with a serious clostridium difficile infection or even Crohn’s or ulcerative colitis. (‘Oh, shit’ by Kunda Dixit, #673) There have been reports in quite a number of medical journals and an article in *The New York Times* about how FMT was successfully used to treat symptoms of patients with the above conditions. The thousands of good bacteria (some we don’t even know about yet) that colonise our gut and are also present in the faeces of a healthy individual is something that we can put to good use. After learning about FMT, the way I now view faecal matter has completely changed.

- Until the last century, people in Europe used to throw the contents of the urinal pan out into the street from the window. In France, the thrower shouted ‘garde l’eau’ to warn passersby and in Nepal that is where the word ‘binabhi’ came from.

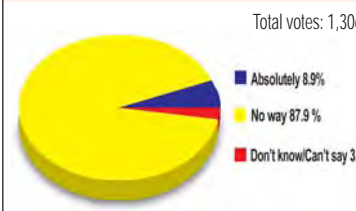
HANDBOOK

In his review of former Chief Election Commissioner Bhojraj Pokharel’s book, *Nepal: Votes for Peace*, Kunda Dixit claims to ‘read between the lines’ how reluctant UNMIN was to investigate intimidation and threats by cantonment Maoists (‘Election handbook’, #671). This is quite untrue. UNMIN made every effort to investigate any allegations within its mandate, whether or not there was a formal complaint. During

the election campaign, it gave priority to deploying fully its limited number of arms monitors at all Maoist army cantonments and investigating allegations regarding the conduct of combatants outside cantonments. Indeed it had no enforcement mandate, but it took up general and specific concerns with the Maoist leadership. When it wanted to investigate some complaints made in the media, the parties publicising them could provide no information which made it possible to investigate them. However, among the reports by international and domestic observers, those which were most critical of abuses by the Maoists and other parties were those released by UNMIN in conjunction with OHCHR-Nepal, made public not retrospectively but during the campaign. Your readers can still find them online.

Times nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll #675

Q. Do you agree that there should be 601 CA members again?



Weekly Internet Poll # 676. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Would you consider becoming vegetarian over Dasain-Tihar holidays?



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Dedicating Nepal's 1st DM (Cardiology) and DM (Nephrology) of graduates to the nation



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Dr. Praveen Mishra
Secretary, MoH&P,
Govt. of Nepal



Mr. Nagender K. Pampati
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Dr. V. Natraj Prasad
Director

The College of Medical Sciences-Nepal, Bharatpur and the Kathmandu University dedicate the first DM (Cardiology) and DM(Nephrology) graduates to the nation and also dedicate the 2nd DM.(Neurology), M.Ch (Urology) and M.Ch (CTVS) graduates to the nation. On this happy occasion, we wish to thank the Nepal Medical Council, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health & Population, Govt. of Nepal for their unstinted support and cooperation in bringing out the highest academic excellence in the field of medical education in the country.



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Principal
Prof. & Head,
Dept. of Neurology



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Kathmandu University 1st
M.Ch (Urology) Graduate



Dr. Dinesh Chapagain,
M.Ch (CTVS)
Kathmandu University 1st
M.Ch (CTVS) Graduate

We also thank Ministry of Health and Organ Transplant committee for giving us the permission to conduct renal transplantation for the first time in private sector. On this occasion College of Medical Sciences, Bharatpur dedicates its first five free renal transplantation services to the poor and needy patients recommended by Health Ministry.

Salient features:

- The College of Medical Sciences, a pioneer Medical Institution in the country, is the First Medical College to establish the first Cath Lab outside Kathmandu valley.
- First Private Medical college to start eight Superspeciality courses in the country i.e., DM (Neurology) DM(Nephrology), DM(Cardiology) DM(Gastroenterology) M.Ch (Neurosurgery), M.Ch (Urology), M.Ch (Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery) and M.Ch(Surgical Gastroenterology).
- Completely central air-conditioned Teaching Hospital in the country.
- The first Teaching Hospital to have the 100 bedded ICU, largest in the country, .
- Completely non- referral hospital in Central Nepal also providing free dialysis services.
- Providing free maternity services, making the Hospital women welfare oriented.
- The Department of Cardiology has performed 145 angioplasties and 450 coronary angiograms till date.
- The Department of Neuro Surgery has performed over 1,000 Neurosurgical operations till date and is using the innovative cisternostomy technique in trauma surgeries.

Observing the observers

Politicians and their proxy government is pitted against the people

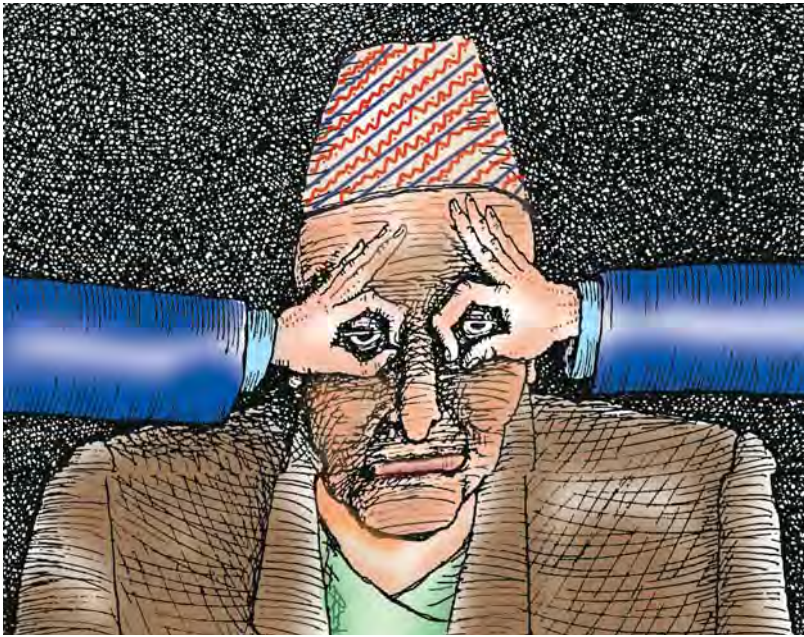
Just as in the 2008 elections, international election observers have parachuted into Nepal. They can be seen at the domestic terminal with their local guides waiting for flights to various corners of the country.



GUEST COLUMN
Bihari K Shrestha

Election tourism was the order of the day in 2008, too. And even though the Maoist party rode roughshod over voting, observer-in-chief Jimmy Carter instantaneously gave the polls his official seal of approval. Even observers who observed irregularities were muted.

This time around, the drama will be heightened because perfidious politicians who have taken the people for granted will be going back to the people to beg, buy or threaten them to vote for them again. All this is being supervised by an effete government led by a chief justice who wears two hats. His government is the hapless rubber stamp of the



four party syndicate, otherwise reverentially known as the High Level Political Committee.

If we were forced to dismantle the fundamental democratic principle of separation of powers, then we should at least expect leadership with vision, statesmanship, and independence. Chairman Khil Raj Regmi heaves like the puppet he is and the rare instance when he shows decisiveness, it is to insist on travelling to New York for the UN General Assembly despite an uproar.

But nowhere is his pitiable weakness more resoundingly betrayed than in allowing a murderer convicted during his own tenure as chief justice of the Supreme Court to not just walk free, but to contest the November election from the very district where he was involved in a cold blooded murder.

The CA1 turned out to be a symbol of incompetence and dishonesty of elected

representatives: a bloated 601 member proxy assembly that was whipped into submission by the main parties. Following criticism, the HLPC had agreed to shrink the CA2 to 491 members which, although still king-size, was an improvement. However, the feckless HLPC gave into a rump Madhesi party's demand to increase it to 585 and a week later, a 'socialist' party insisted on 601 as conditions for taking part in elections. So back to 601.

This sinister numbers game was preceded by them successfully ganging up against the Election Commission which wanted a threshold for parties to be represented in the CA under the proportional category. The EC just wanted to make sure that it could keep the number of parties at a manageable level. The EC was blackmailed by a handful of crooks masquerading as politicians holding the country ransom.

By enlarging the membership to a ridiculous 601 members and by doing away with the ballot threshold, the 150 registered parties have been trying to be assured of at

least a few seats for themselves in the reincarnated jumbo CA. In its earlier avatar the CA1 included many who sold their red passports, were convicted killers, kidnappers, or were simply corrupt.

Since it doesn't look like anything is changing this time around and given the calibre and credentials of the candidates, Nepal's democracy, for all practical purposes, will continue to be a government of the crooks, for the crooks, but voted by the people.

Back in an election in 1999, then Chief Election Commissioner Bishnu Pratap Shah, in sheer exasperation for the sordid reputation of candidates in the fray had questioned the relevance of a 'free and fair election' if the choice for the voters happens to be between smugglers and dacoits. Fifteen years down the road, the question resonates even louder with the people. So one wonders, what good will thousands of national and international election observation tourists do to contribute to the building of democracy in Nepal in the real sense of the term? 🇳🇵

CONGRATULATIONS

BEST NEW ARTIST

Joint Family Internationale
Netaji

BEST VOCAL COLLABORATION

Lata Mangeshkar & Ramkrishna Dhakal
Bachunjelilai

BEST SONG ORIGINALLY RECORDED FOR A MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK

Rajaure Santosh
Yo Manai Usto

BEST MALE POP VOCAL PERFORMANCE

Lochan Rijal
Chetana

BEST PERFORMANCE BY A GROUP OR DUO WITH VOCAL

Joint Family Internationale
Netaji

FOLK RECORD OF THE YEAR

Kamalikant Bhetuwal
Jhimjhim Pareli

BEST POP COMPOSITION

Joint Family Internationale
Netaji

BEST ROCK COMPOSITION

Mukti & Revival
Nagarkot

BEST ARRANGEMENT

Kiran Kandel
Bachunjelilai

BEST COMPOSITION

Hari Lamsal
Panko Foka

BEST ROCK VOCAL PERFORMANCE

Mukti & Revival
Nagarkot

BEST FEMALE VOCAL PERFORMANCE

Rajina Rimal
Paniko Foka

BEST MALE VOCAL PERFORMANCE

Manoj Raj
Paniko Foka

POP / ROCK ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Mukti & Revival
Sandhaibhari

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Deep Shrestha
Yatra-2

SONG OF THE YEAR

Yadav Kharel
Sarangiko Taar

RECORD OF THE YEAR

Manoj Raj
Paniko Foka

“The prerequisite for investment is stability”

German Ambassador Frank Meyke has been in the news recently about remarks he is supposed to have made during a visit to central Nepal. In an interview with *Nepali Times* Meyke clarifies his position and talks about his optimism for Nepal.

Nepali Times: You recently visited Tanahu and other districts. What is your sense of the general mood of the Nepali people you spoke with?

Frank Meyke: The main purpose of my visit was informing myself about the progress of German-Nepal development cooperation projects. These projects in the fields of hydropower, renewable energy, and vocational training show remarkable results. The general mood of the participants in the meetings of these projects was accordingly optimistic and festive. It was impressive to realise how much people are looking forward to the elections on 19 November.

How much has the prolonged political transition affected German development assistance?

German-Nepal development cooperation has been long-lasting, reliable, and successful since its beginnings more than 50 years ago in 1961, independent from political developments of the day. Sustainable reduction of poverty is, however, only possible if there is significant private investment, development cooperation alone is not sufficient. The prerequisite for investment is political stability and a strengthening of democracy. In order to achieve these objectives, free, fair, and inclusive democratic elections and conducive economic policies of the elected government are important steps.

You also inspected hydropower projects on the Marsyangdi River that Germany has helped build. What are the prospects for future investment in energy infrastructure?

Energy efficiency and renewable energies will remain a priority for German development cooperation and we will discuss the future scope of our cooperation in consultative meetings with the newly-elected government. In 2012, the German government committed 18 million euro of fresh funds for the energy sector. Regarding energy infrastructure we will support connections to the Trisuli corridor through new transmission lines and substations. Furthermore, our activities focus on renewable energies, in particular on solar systems for drinking water supply, schools, health posts, and other municipal institutions. German development cooperation also provides advice with regard to energy efficiency measures, for example by means of Investment Grade Energy Audits conducted by the Energy Efficiency Centre (EEC) under the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

Media coverage of your remarks about not voting for parties that organised bandhas has raised some hackles. Was something lost in translation, what is it that you said exactly?

The position of Germany and the whole EU regarding bandhas is most recently expressed in our press statement of 12 September 2013, according to which bandhas 'also undermine our joint development efforts and Nepal's investment



MIN RATNA BAURACHARYA

perspectives'. Of course I never said anything that would amount to advising voters on how to vote. Economic and political policies and party manifestos renouncing the use of bandhas would certainly be helpful in encouraging investment, both domestic and foreign.

With less than two months to go for polls, what is your assessment of the current election climate?

I extend my congratulations to the Election Commission and the government for successfully preparing the elections. We can be confident that everything will be in good place on time. There is now a general mood of confidence among the people of Nepal regarding elections. As a member state of the European Union, Germany contributes to the overall support of the EU for Nepal's elections, including the EU Observation Mission. Furthermore, Germany is contributing to the Nepal Peace Trust Fund which is also to support the elections.

Are you optimistic about which way Nepal will go in the next five years?

There are very good reasons to be optimistic about this country. I have only one year of experience here as German Ambassador, but I see the resources of Nepal, first of all the hard-working people who, with economic success and sufficient employment, could work in Nepal instead of going abroad. You have hydropower, tourism, agriculture ... what is needed for sustainable reduction of poverty is political stability as a prerequisite for investment both domestic and foreign. The next steps to achieve these objectives is elections for the Constituent Assembly. And I can't stress this strongly enough: local elections as soon as possible. It is encouraging to see that in the 11-point agreement the newly-elected government is to hold local elections by 15 April 2014. It would be a very positive step towards stability, indeed, if local elections are held as soon as possible. This way you create the prerequisites necessary for investment and employment and thus for a politically stable, democratic and economically successful Nepal.

EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS

Newbies

Him Electronic, the authorised distributor of Samsung in Nepal debuted a series of products at a program last week. New models of Samsung UHD TVs and Samsung refrigerator 3050 series are now available in the market.



Festive offer

Sykar Company has launched a new festive scheme that rewards customers who spend above Rs 3,000 at its electronic stores. Buyers can win anything from cash discounts upto 25 per cent, cash prizes, and electronics from Philips that will be announced through a lucky draw.

Grab it

On the occasion of its first anniversary, Index Furniture is organising a clearance sale from 15 September to 15 October. Discounts ranging from 10 to 50 per cent are up for grabs on a variety of items including bedroom sets, sofas, living spaces, and kitchen sets.



Sign up

Dragonair has announced a lucky draw campaign for new subscribers of KA Specials, its free e-newsletter. Individuals who subscribe to the newsletter from 15 September to 15 November can win Dragon Air branded giveaways.



Raining gifts

Authorised distributor for Toshiba Appliances in Nepal, EOL has introduced Power Fest offer.

With every purchase of a TV, vacuum cleaner, refrigerator, and washing machine customers can win guaranteed prizes including speakers, LCD/LED TV, wrist watches, pen drive and iron. This offer is valid from 24th September for a limited time period.



Colour play

NMB Social Initiative with technical assistance from Srijana College of Fine Arts organised the 2nd NMB Bank inter-school heritage painting competition last week. 112 students from 112 schools across the nation participated in the competition.

Hard work pays

Dairy Development Corporation's general manager Siyaram Prasad Singh handed over cycles to 38 booth men for their excellent performance.



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Set

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यो योजना २०७०, असोज १३ गते देखि कार्तिक २३ गतेसम्म लागुहुनेछ ।

Awakening documentary

Technology doesn't make good films, good storytellers do

We predicted some seven years ago that Nepal was in a threshold of documentary revolution. Everything was in place: technology was more



INTERESTING TIMES
Mallika Aryal

affordable and user-friendly, Nepali media was free, three (sometimes more) international film festivals took place in

Kathmandu every year, and there was no dearth of ideas or enthusiasm.

Nepalis are the perfect audience - we are young, excited, and we love documentaries. We watch non-fiction films in the same theatre where we watch Bollywood flicks. We believe documentaries must not be screened for free. At film festivals, we watch films critically, reject mediocrity, and demand quality work. This will be evident next weekend at Kumari Cinemas where



PRASIT STHAPIT

films at the 9th edition of Film Southasia will be screened from 3-6 October.

Our love affair with documentaries started with the Himalayan Film Festival in 1994. The event morphed very quickly because Nepal is more than just the Himalayas. As the festival evolved into Film Southasia in 1997, a generation grew up watching quality films from all over the region and the world.

In Nepal, documentaries have changed the way we think about events. Dhruba Basnet's 2001 film *The Killing Terraces* brought the images of war to Kathmandu. A number of war films followed after Basnet's film.

Just as we moved away from 'Himalyan' films in the late 1990s, it was time to move away from war films. Nepal was changing, war was no longer in the hinterlands. The uprising had moved to Kathmandu. Everyday, still

photographers were putting out beautiful, heartbreaking images of the people's struggle during such a historical event. With technology being more accessible than ever, we naturally assumed that filmmakers and enthusiasts were going out there and doing the same. Unfortunately, only some footage from the 2006 April Uprising turned into a handful of forgettable documentaries.

After 2006, Nepal changed rapidly - Madhes rose in an uprising, Constituent Assembly Election took place, we ended the 240-year-old monarchy. Yet, documentaries that looked at these events critically were not produced. And this slump was not just in political documentaries. Nepali filmmakers' examination of social and cultural issues also suffered. Although there are some excellent filmmakers

who still consistently produce documentaries in Nepal despite all odds, their numbers are small. Young filmmakers don't have role models to look up to. With veteran filmmakers gone and no new crowd coming in, the predicted Nepali documentary revolution has lost steam.

Documentary making is a long, arduous, and an extremely lonely process. Funding is a challenge but there are resources out there to help filmmakers - foundations, awards, and crowd funding. The much bigger challenge in the world of documentaries is good storytelling.

Technology has made it easier for us to produce and edit films, but technology doesn't make good documentaries, good storytellers do. We are a country full of good stories, colleges full of young media studies students with novel ideas and inexhaustible excitement. They aspire to be good documentary filmmakers and are hungry to learn. Storytellers can be trained, cinematic grammar can be taught, and good editors can be groomed.

As we attend Film Southasia '13 and watch the best works to come out of the region in the last two years, we must reflect on how far we have come as a documentary audience. As filmmakers, documentary film and broadcast producers, film festival organisers, television channel owners, journalists, film critics, and documentary enthusiasts we must understand there are ideas and excitement to be harnessed within this young Nepali crowd.

Our audience wants good stories, the world wants to hear Nepali stories, and we want Nepali films to travel internationally to festivals. Our work with the audience is done and we have established that there is no shortage of enthusiasm and ideas. Now our work needs to focus on finding good teachers to critique, encourage, and assist with these ideas so that we produce world-class documentaries that compete internationally.

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Transgender: Pakistan's Open Secret (2011)
4 October at 5pm, Hall 2
Duration: 53'
Language: Urdu
Country: Pakistan
Director: Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy
Many among Karachi's transgender community scrape a living through dancing, singing, and begging on the streets. Others earn money catering to the sexual needs of men in the city's seedier districts.



No Fire Zone (2013)
5 October at 1pm, Hall 1
Duration: 93'
Language: English
Country: UK
Director: Callum Macrae
No Fire Zone is the definitive story of the final, traumatic months of the 26-year-long Sri Lankan civil war as told by the people who lived through it.



Elemental (2012)
5 October at 1.15pm, Hall 2
Duration: 93'
Language: English, Hindi (with English subtitles)
Country: India/ Global
Director: Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee, Gayatri Roshan
Three individuals are united by their connection with nature and desire to confront some of the most pressing ecological challenges of our time.

FESTIVALS OF FILMS

Take a break from Dasain shopping and give your wallets a rest as Kathmandu gets ready to host two international film festivals. Film Southasia, now in its ninth year, makes its return with screenings of 55 movies from across the region in what promises to be an absolute visual treat. Ekadeshma too returns for its second edition with 30 short films by Nepali and international students. Organised by Underground Talkies, a production-house based in Kathmandu, the three-day long fest includes interactive sessions with the makers. Here is a sneak peek of the amazing stories that will unfold in the coming weeks.



No Burqas Behind Bars (2012)
5 October at 4.45pm, Hall 2
Duration: 77'
Language: Dari
Country: Afghanistan
Director: Nima Sarvestani
Takhar Prison. 40 women, 34 children. Four cells, no burqas. Women tend to be faceless in public in Afghanistan, burqas covering them from head to toe. Their identities are masked, they are rendered invisible and voiceless.



Invoking Justice (2011)
5 October at 11.15am, Hall 2
Duration: 86'
Language: Tamil
Country: India
Director: Deepa Dhanraj
Fed up with male-dominated jamaats (councils), where they cannot be represented, Muslim women in South India set up their own council in 2004.



Char ... No Man's Island
6 October at 2.15pm, Hall 2
Duration: 88'
Language: Bengali
Country: India
Director: Sourav Sarangi
Fourteen-year-old Rubel smuggles rice from India into Bangladesh. He has to cross the River Ganga (Padma), which acts as the international border in this area.



The Voice of God (2011)
6 October at 1pm, Hall 1
Duration: 9'35
Language: Unknown, English
Country: India
Director: Bernd Lützel
If God came down to earth and tried to earn a living in Bombay, he would probably end up as a successful voice-over artiste, lending a voice to thousands of films.



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Sarwanam Theatre, Kalikasthan

www.ekadeshma.org
9841239505

Maanasi,
28 September at 5pm, QFX Kumari
Duration: 18'20
Country: Nepal
Director: Kiran Pokhrel

Chhora
28 September at 5.40pm, QFX Kumari
Duration: 25'
Country: France/Nepal
Director: Subarna Thapa

Sahasi Chori
28 September at 1pm, QFX Kumari
Duration: 20'
Country: Nepal
Director: Erin Galey

The Contagious Apparitions of Dambarey Dendrite
28 September at 1.20pm, QFX Kumari
Duration: 18'30"
Country: Nepal
Directors: Pooja Gurung and Bibhusan Basnet



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EVENTS



CRITICAL MASS, join hundreds of other cyclists to encourage a biking culture in Kathmandu. *27 September, Tundikhel*



GO GIRLS, celebrate International Day of the Girl Child by participating in a cycle rally. *11 October, 7am, Basantapur to Jawalakhel, info@kcc2020.com*

Treasure of Himalaya, an exhibition of photographs that document the omnipresence of water in the mountains of Nepal and India. *10 September to 8 October, 10am to 6pm, Alliance Francaise, Tripureswor*

Swim and lunch, enjoy your weekends with a dip in the pool and savour mouthwatering lunches with a glass of beer. *Rs 999, Saturdays,*

11am to 6pm, Waterfront Resort, Pokhara, (61)466 303/304, www.waterfronthotelnepal.com

Creators, creatures, created, an exhibition of mixed media works by Italian artist Tarshito. *29 September to 13 October, 5.30pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, siddharthaartgallery6@gmail.com, (01)4218048*



DASAIN AAYO, make merry with copious amounts of food, drinks, and good ole family love. *5 to 18 October*

Prost!, beer, barbeque, bands, games, and DJ. *5 October, 12 to 11pm, Trisara, Lajimpat*

You do me no harm, join Word Warriors and break barriers through the spoken word. *5 October, 3 to 5pm, The Yellow House, Sanepa, www.theyellowhouse.com*



NEPAL MUSIC EDUCATION FESTIVAL 2013, don't miss the chance to learn from renowned maestros like Mariano Abello, Natalia Calderon, and Juan Ortiz. *28 September, 8am to 6pm, www.katjazz.com.np*

DINING



LHAKPA'S CHULO, Nepali dal-bhat, Newari khaja, Swiss Rösti, Italian Risotto, and Thai green curry - take your pick. *Jhamsikhel*



CAFE BEYOND, delicious, simplistic take on Korean main courses and snacks are a refreshing change. *Bhaktapur Darbar Square*

Tushita Restaurant, offering a mix of Nepali, Indian, Chinese and continental dishes, with a selection of popular Nepali snacks. *Lajimpat*

Oktoberfest Nepal 2013, the true Oktoberfest Tradition at Hotel Radisson with live performance by German band Toni Hof and Buam. *Hotel Radisson, 4 to 5 October, call 9843633833 for tickets*

Friend's Cafe and Bar, the non-vegetarian twin of OR2K, the restaurant serves Middle Eastern and Israeli delicacies. *Mandala Street, Thamel*

Le Sherpa, past the dustbowl chaos on the road outside, culinary paradise. *Panipokhari, Lajimpat*

Oktoberfest@Nanglo, celebrate the Bavarian tradition of beer drinking with a Germany-inspired food menu. *Runs till 6 October, Nanglo Café and Bar, Darbar Marg*



HONACHA, one of Kathmandu's oldest existing eatery serves authentic Newari fare. *Krishna Mandir, Patan*

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MUSIC



THIS IS JAZZ, celebrate Dasain with Natalia Calderon, Mariano Abello, Juan Ortiz, Bob Sands, Paul Pax and some of the finest Nepali artists. *Rs. 999, Patan Museum, Lalitpur, Tickets available at Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Moksh Live, Summit Hotel, Kar.ma Coffee, (01)5013554, 9841970148*

Tuborg stage shows, your favourite Nepali rockstars at a town near you. *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*

Shastriya sangeet, dabble in the magic of Hindustani classical music every new moon night. *5 October, 3pm onwards, Ram Mandir*

Metal Dasain, head towards the festive season with the power chord ringing in your ears. *5 October, 11am, Purple Haze, Thamel*

GETAWAYS

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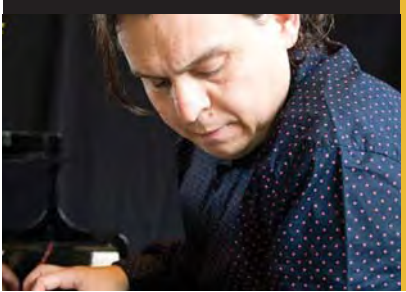
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HARMONISE



Party with musicians Yaite Ramos Quartet (Brazil), Claudia Quintet (USA), Mike del Ferro (Netherlands), Nick Aggs (Australia), Eliane Amherd (Switzerland), Cadenza Collective (Nepal), and 4th Element (India) at the 11th Jazzmandu Festival.

JAZZ FOR THE NEXT GENERATION MUSIC COMPETITION

24 October, 2.30pm to 4.30pm, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel

VALLEY JAMS

25 October, 7.30 to 9.30pm, Lajimpat, Thamel, Patan

JAZZ BAZAAR

26 October, 2.30pm to 10pm, Gokarna Forest Resort

RED HOT LATIN JAZZ

27 October, 7 to 9pm, Hotel Summit, Kupondole

JAZZMANDU MASTER CLASS

29 October, 1.30 to 3.30pm, Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel

JAZZ AT PATAN

29 October, 6 to 8.30pm, Dhokaima Cafe, Patan

JAZZMANDU FINALE

30 October, 6 to 10:00pm, Alliance Francaise, Tripureshor

www.jazzmandu.com

Turkish delight

Smile Nepal brings you 'A Musical Voyage to Turkey', the best of Turkish music and dance to raise funds for the education and rehabilitation of street children.

Singer Aylin Sengun Tasci, who will lead the band of musicians, is one of Turkey's most accomplished classical singer and also the art director at the state's classical music academy while Burcu Yuce is an acclaimed dancer, performing modern, belly-dancing, and sufi dancing with equal expertise.



Turkey has been at the crossroads of many remarkable civilisations down the centuries and the resulting amalgam is apparent in the diversity of its music. Friday's concert, featuring the Ud, violin, percussions, and the Kanun (a kind of dulcimer reminiscent of the santoor) - with a dancer performing alongside - will present to you the sonic pinnacle of this Asian-European giant.

"This is the first time we're having Turkish music in Nepal and I am sure it won't be the last," says Fatma Günseli Malkoch, Nepal's consulate general in Turkey. Turkish cuisine will be served after the performance and the national football team's autographed jersey will be on auction to raise money for Smile Nepal.

A Musical Voyage to Turkey

Featuring Aylin Sengun Tasci, Burcu Yuce, M Hamdi Degirmencioglu, Mert Degirmencioglu, Oray Yay, Sukru Ozoguz, and Mete Aslan

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FIT FOR A KING



LAWRENCE MILLER

Standing in Sundari Chok at Patan Darbar Square is an experience fit for a king. The ornate and richly iconographic Tusha Hiti step-well, the large stone slab that once served as King Siddhinarasimha Malla's outdoor bed, the intimate proportions of the space, all transport visitors to another time and place.

Built in 1627 by King Siddhinarasimha, Sundari Chok is Patan Darbar's earliest surviving courtyard and the most finely preserved instance of Malla architecture in the Valley. The medieval quadrangle is also noted for its intimate scale: few places (or palaces) around the world are so evocative of ceremony and gravitas. For its unique atmosphere and its intricate, largely intact relics, Sundari Chok is one of the most important historic sites in the Kathmandu Valley.

Ten years ago, there was no evidence of such reverence. Many examples of the rich iconographic program, largely carved in stone on the lower level of the courtyard, had been looted. Hasty construction during a material

scarcity after the 1934 earthquake left many of the palace walls mired in damp and rot. An entire façade built after the earthquake in no way resembled its adjoining walls. The once sacred courtyard, until 1993, had been set up to house a temporary jail. With support from the German government, the US Ambassadors Fund, The Prince's Charities, Ludwig Kuttner, Beatrix Ost, Prithivi B Pande, and Pratima Pande, the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT) set in motion a restoration project that would soon return Sundari Chok to its former glory.

Founded in 1991, KVPT has been restoring historic sites in Kathmandu for over two decades. It is overseen by Rohit Ranjitkar and Thomas Schrom along with a team of Nepali staff. The trust works in conjunction with the Nepali government's Department of Archeology to identify historically significant sites in the Valley most in need of restoration. Notable past efforts include the overhaul of the Kal Bhairab shrine, the Itumbaha Monastery, and various temples at Kathmandu Darbar Square. The Patan Palace Restoration Plan is the organisation's most large-scale project to date and Sundari Chok, its crown jewel.

But the route to restoration is not always a straightforward one. Besides the aforementioned structural challenges, KVPT was faced with a conceptual challenge in a 1934 re-construction of the rear wing. Rather than set the wing in a new style, the trust has decided to keep it as a testament to the earthquake. The resulting plan is a balance of authenticity and utility.

For KVPT, quality and user experience rank above all else. "We sometimes get complaints about timing," says Ranjitkar. "But they



The palace was left unoccupied during the Shah reign after 1775. This view shows the southwest corner.

GUSTAVE LE BON, 1885

Patan Darbar Square's earliest surviving courtyard is getting ready for a return to glory



ALESSANDRA FONZOKVPT



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF KVPT UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

FACELIFT: Tusha Hiti (*above and left*), here, yet unrestored. The royal step-well is the main focal point of Sundari Chok with its extensive iconographic program. Prior to restoration, many idols were damaged or missing. The well was not used for bathing, as is sometimes believed, but for the king's religious rites. In 2011, the copper tap was recovered by Nepali Police after being stolen a year earlier. A replica will adorn the fountain while the original will be displayed in a nearby wing as part of a new Architectural Gallery, set to open in 2015.



go away as soon as we're done. But complaints about quality, those are with you for a lifetime."

One way KVPT ensures quality is by employing local craftspeople instead of contractors. Going into a restoration, Ranjitkar says you don't know what problems you'll find "until you get your hands dirty". Since the trust can't always plan ahead, it pays craftspeople by the day to ensure that they'll address structural problems as they surface. Additionally, Ranjitkar visits the site on a daily basis.

The organisation also employs the latest in construction and restoration technology to guarantee the longevity of the projects. As Kathmandu Valley is prone to earthquakes, the staff wants to make sure that in the next 30 to 40 years, the reconstructed sites won't turn to rubble. KVPT has worked with engineers to develop new, non-invasive methods to considerably strengthen the structures against seismic damage. Additionally, in partnership with professors and students from the University of Applied Arts Vienna, the trust employed laser technology at the Sundari Chok to help clean

stone figures and iconic ivory framing. It is through a focus on intricate details that KVPT believes the restored buildings can regain their former stature and sublimity.

When the Sundari Chok restoration is completed in 2015, it, along with the recently restored Mul Chok, will become the Nepal Architectural Galleries, an extension of the Patan Museum. While Mul Chok will host exhibitions on the history of Nepali architecture, Sundari Chok will be an exhibit in-and-of-itself. The quadrangle will hearken back to its original design as much as possible, up to the mud floors and walls. Visitors will be prompted to take off their shoes to experience the building just as the king once did.

"There's a large bay window in the southwest corner," says Ranjitkar. "I want people to sit there and look out over the city just as Siddhinarasimha Malla would have." 📺

nepalitimes.com 🖱️

Facelift for the Patan Palace, #564
Before and after in Kathmandu Valley, #75
Watch Rohit Ranjitkar's talk 🗣️



Photo taken this week during mid-restoration. A poor restoration attempt after the 1934 earthquake required entirely new roofing.





Ai Weiwei: Never Sorry

In 2008, Alison Klayman, a TV producer for PBS and NPR, met an extraordinary man called Ai Weiwei in Beijing. I say ‘man’ and not ‘artist’ because while Ai Weiwei’s deeply conceptual art has made him undeniably famous, it is his humanity in its entirety that



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

feeds his art and makes such an unforgettable impact on all who come into contact with him and his work.

Weiwei, as he is called by his contemporaries, friends, and followers, is a burly man, teddy bearlike, with a jolly laughing face, and a beard that only adds to his general air of benevolence. Slowly though, through over the course of Klayman’s documentary, the steely moral interior behind this avuncular façade starts to emerge

making it apparent that Weiwei is a knight in shining armour behind his seemingly soft exterior.

Today Ai Weiwei is famous as the dissident artist who fearlessly stands up to that opaque and formidable edifice that is the Chinese government. In addition to speaking out for every kind of freedom of expression in his beloved China, Weiwei also actively tackles the machinations and the systemic corruption of a government that refuses to be criticised; actively cooking up charges and excuses to implicate and imprison any and all of its detractors.

It is when Weiwei, horrified by the loss of thousands of children’s lives in the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan due to substandard government schools, takes up the internet as his weapon to expose the establishment’s shoddiness that he truly draws attention to himself.

As his blog is shut down, Weiwei turns to Twitter, playing the establishment with short,

philosophical, but pointed tweets which soon gain a following of millions of fellow Chinese who call him ‘teacher’ and come to gawp at him wherever he is, whether eating a meal on the street while resisting police efforts to film him while doing so, or at his studio where people turn up just to hand over money to help with him with his trumped up tax evasion bill, slapped onto him by a government that doesn’t quite know how to contain this wayward child.

This film is an intimate portrait of a man, a giant of our kind, who fights with every aspect of his being to try and create some kind of change in a seemingly intractable China. As Weiwei puts himself in increasingly more and more danger by refusing to back down, we the viewers are forced to ask ourselves, what does it take to really change the world?

In light of the recent shameful circumstances in our own country where artistic freedom was annihilated to assuage pseudo-religious concerns, *Never Sorry* is a must see for everyone in developing societies such as ours where democracy is struggling to rear its head amidst numerous clamouring voices, all of which should be heard regardless of how controversial they may seem. It is only with real dialogue and an unshakeable commitment to the freedom of speech that any new constitution will truly represent the concerns of all of our citizens.

[nepalitimes.com](#)

Watch trailer

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HAPPENINGS



BIRDSONG: President Ram Baran Yadav presents the Bird Conservation Lifetime Achievement Award to ornithologist Hari Sharan Nepali at Tripureswor on Monday.



ON TRACK: Participants of the 7th Real Kathmandu Marathon run towards the finish line of the 42 km race on Saturday. Uttam Khatri of Nepal Army Club won the marathon, completing the race in 2 hours 32 minutes.



SURROUNDED: Army chief Gaurav SJB Rana, UCPN(M) leaders Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Hisila Yami at journalist Sudhir Sharma’s book launch in Darbar Marg on Sunday.



LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT: An army patrol on a security exercise in Indrachok on Monday morning.

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Built in 1890 by Prime Minister Bir Shumsher, Lal Darbar is one of the very few Rana palaces that retains its original grandeur. After being converted into Hotel Yak and Yeti in 1977, the palace is home to thousands of travellers every year and serves Nepali meals to hundreds of hungry diners at its namesake restaurant.

Located on the ground floor, Lal Darbar Restaurant used to be a theatre and traces of yore can still be seen in the high-rising, spacious platform. The snow white

SOMEPLACE ELSE

marble floor, a large crystal chandelier

hanging down from a 30 feet ceiling painted in colourful zodiac signs, and ornate glass mirrors give guests a true sense of how it must have felt like being in Bir Shumsher's palace. When we reached the restaurant at 8pm, the last of the motley song-dance troupe was performing at one corner of the hall while a few tourists occupied the open bar nearby, taking snaps. When the last troupe departed so did the tourists, leaving the two of us in full command of the empty, but opulent hall.

The head waiter recommended the six (Rs1,200) or twelve course (Rs 1,800) meals for us. Nepali eating habit generally consists of a plethora of snacks with drinks, followed by the main meal;



LAL DARBAR



sweets or yoghurt are optional, so we settled for the 'smaller' course. As we waited for our dinner we ordered a plate of fried potatoes (Rs 200) as starters. The crisp slices of large potatoes, a perennial favourite among diners across the world, with skin intact and a hint of garlic came as a real treat.

The first of the six courses - a mini meal in itself, enough to satisfy most diners - was an assortment of hors d'oeuvre, a Newari specialty: beaten rice, boneless mutton barbeque, boiled egg, spinach, and freshly made chutney, an inevitable addition in every Nepali meal. The rest of the course included kidney beans,

fried spicy mushrooms, our choice of bread, momos, kwanti, and then the usual rice-daal-vegetables.

The kwanti is a slowly cooked mix of nine varieties of bean sprouts, a healthy and tasty dish found all over the country, but not up to the mark at Lal Darbar. The mutton cooked with the skin, is the favoured dish of many Nepalis and the gravy is delicious. But the leathery skin and lusty bones hardly allow a taste of the meat and requires an acquired taste even for locals to chew and swallow. The meal was completed with sikarni - dessert made from creamy yoghurt flavoured with nuts and sweet spices - of balanced consistency

and a fragrance of finely pounded cardamom and cinnamon.

The intent of the management seems to be to give visitors a sneak peek into Nepali cuisine, music, and dances from different parts the country. With Nepali and Indian eaters largely missing, the meals are tempered down to suit the perceived tastes of international visitors. However, this unique dining hall should aspire for and can achieve much more.

It is a pity that the raised platform is now barred with some non-descript panels that ruin the symmetry and style of the majestic hall. I suggest opening up the platform and introducing more skilled performers. Give them

a background of moving images depicting the country and its people. Alter the menu: reduce the number of courses and offer exclusive set menus to represent specific cuisines: Newari, Himalayan, Thakali, or a fusion of Mughlai and Nepali, a specialty of the palaces. Introduce Indian food to entice the increasing flow of our southern neighbours and local diners. Tourists would prefer to see Nepali faces around their table. 🇳🇵

Rainbow Diner

How to get there: from Narayanhiti Palace walk towards Nepal Investment Bank at Darbar Marg. Hotel Yak and Yeti is on your left.



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Making Everest possible

Few climbers today have heard of the Scottish mountaineer, Alexander Mitchell Kellas (pic, above). But decades before Edmund Hilary and Tenzing Sherpa summited Everest in 1953, Kellas was championing the mountaineering abilities of the Sherpas.



A chemist by profession, Kellas quickly recognised the unique physiological qualities of the Sherpas in climbing high-altitude peaks. While climbing the Himalayas in the beginning of the 20th century, Kellas treated Sherpas not simply as porters but true companions. He also marvelled at their sense

of humour and ability to work hard while battling immense adversity. Recent scientific findings suggest Sherpas may be protected against altitude sickness, confirming the Scot's intuition.

Alexander Kellas was a pioneering high-altitude physiologist of his day. He carried out ground-breaking research on hypoxia (low oxygen) at high altitude and how it impacts the body. During an era when many scientists challenged the notion that the world's tallest peak could be climbed at all, Kellas, based on observations from his own studies and calculations, went on record to say that Everest could certainly be climbed with supplemental oxygen. He even went a step further and remarked that climbing Sagarmatha may be possible even without supplemental oxygen. Few believed him.

Kellas' reputation was based on a number of Himalayan climbs which he carried out in lightweight style instead of having a whole army engaged to climb a mountain as was customary in those days. Kellas thoroughly travelled around Kanchenjunga and because of his explorations, mapping, and photography of that region, it was eventually possible

to climb that mountain. In his famous treatise on *A consideration of the possibility of ascending Mount Everest* (written around 1912), Kellas notes that for the last 1,000ft of the climb, the ascent rate would be around 300ft per hour. In fact, the rate of ascent of the first two mountaineers who climbed Everest without supplemental oxygen in 1978—Reinhold Messner and Peter Habeler—was similar to what Kellas had predicted decades ago.

One of the most important explorations that Kellas carried out was the 1921 reconnaissance expedition to Mount Everest with George Mallory and his team from the Tibet side. Mallory's description of Kellas in a letter to his wife is vivid: "Kellas is beyond description Scotch and uncouth in his speech. He is very slight in build, short, thin, stooping and narrow chested. His appearance would form an ideal model for an alchemist ...".

Born in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1868 Kellas had enormous stamina. He could keep going without food and adequate shelter for days at a time when he journeyed through the Scottish Cairngorm Mountains. He led a lonely life away from social contact and appears to have had bouts of psychosis later in life. Climbing in the Himalayas with locals and performing high altitude studies clearly offered him tremendous relief.

Kellas fell ill with the diarrhoea in Tibet (in a place called Tinki Dzong) during the reconnaissance expedition to Sagarmatha in 1921. Unfortunately even though he was strong and fit, the disease was very severe and unrelenting. This was before the era of effective antibiotics which can easily treat travellers' diarrhoea today. He succumbed to the illness even as he was about to consolidate both his scientific and climbing achievements. 🇳🇵

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Of mice and magic

Apple does not do 'ordinary' and you would not expect an Apple mouse to be ordinary either. Behold the superbly designed, futuristic looking Magic Mouse. The aerodynamic curvature of the device's touch-sensitive soft white shell, paired with the silver underbelly is enough to make any Applehead salivate.

The Magic Mouse works only with Mac computers equipped with Bluetooth wireless technology and Mac OS X v10.5.8 or later. Utilising Bluetooth technology to connect to your iMac or Macbook, the gadget is Apple's answer to the plethora of wireless mice available in the market today. The initial setup is simple enough and most users who have previous experience pairing Bluetooth devices should have the mouse up and running in no time. Apple claims that its Magic Mouse laser tracking gives 20 times the performance of standard optical tracking and the wireless tracking really is brilliantly smooth. You will be impressed by how responsive and sensitive the laser tracking is on almost all surfaces when compared to a traditional optical mouse and that too without a pad. The Magic Mouse is powered by two AA batteries and a fresh pair should last at least a month on heavy use.



The feature that really sets apart Apple's mouse from its competitors' is the multi-touch feature. Multi-touch features have been around in Apple devices like the iPhone, iPod, and the iPad, and the company has adapted that same technology to work seamlessly with the Magic Mouse. The mouse detects touch gestures as you swipe, flick, scroll, and pinch your way through web pages, photos, videos, and documents as if you really are touching what is on your screen. Further, the ambidextrous design and the customisable option for lefties means this mouse does not discriminate against left-handed Appleheads out there.

A Magic Mouse is included with all new iMacs. However, for owners of Macbooks and Macbook Pros, the device is available from Sastodeal at Rs 11,000.00. Although 11k might seem expensive for a mouse, that's the price you expect to pay for a premium Apple product. Gamers and geeks, get ready to splurge your Dasain money on this baby. 🇳🇵

Yantrick's verdict: coupled with a wireless Apple keyboard, the Magic Mouse is the perfect accessory for a wire-free iMac workspace.

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What's with the skullcaps?

Nepal has two months to go for polls, India's general elections are six months away, and bizarre things are happening as campaigning picks up.

But even by subcontinental standards, nothing can quite surpass the spectacle of India's Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) bringing to its rallies people



LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

sporting skullcaps and burqas and herding them into a reserved enclosure as happened in Jaipur last week at a BJP rally where its prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi was star speaker. Other state units of the BJP have promptly taken their cue from Jaipur.

For whom is the BJP creating the sight of an enclosure brimming with skullcaps and burqas? Conventional wisdom tells us: Muslims, obviously. But why ask Muslims to sport these markers of identity when they are already flocking to the rally? Well, it's because the BJP harps on the presence of Muslims as evidence that the community has rethought its opposition to Modi.

What the BJP hasn't explained is why. Is it because its saffron brigade has made some kind of reconciliation with Muslims? Or is it that the possibility of Modi becoming prime minister of India has filled Muslims with such dread that they are trying to appease him through participation in his rallies?

BJP leaders will tell you that Muslims and other social groups are enamoured of Modi's governance model and the supposedly dazzling development he has ushered in Gujarat. Since the model of development will soon be replicated countrywide and Muslims will benefit, they have decided to forget the grisly pogrom in Gujarat in 2002.

But this explanation is ahistorical, for it wasn't the Gujarat riots which alienated the Muslims from the BJP. Indeed, the relationship between the BJP and Muslims has been fraught for decades,



HINDUSTAN TIMES

dating back to 1925, when the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) - which is to the saffron brigade what Sonia Gandhi is to the Congress - was established in Pune. The RSS wants to create a Hindu Rashtra in which those whose holy land and motherland are not the same, are to live as second-class citizens.

This idea influenced the RSS to perceive Muslims as foreigners and as 'other'. This is why the Sangh's pet political projects - the Ram Janmabhumi movement, the anti-cow slaughter campaign, the demand for a Uniform Civil Code - have all been directed against Muslims. This hostility underlies several instances of Hindu-Muslim violence, a conclusion several commissions probing the riots have reached in the past.

Muslims, on the other hand, are acutely aware of the ideological thrust of the BJP. Worse, they have experienced the trauma of macabre riots, are killed at random or are expelled from their lands. This is why Indian Muslims have always tended to rally behind a political party best placed to trounce the BJP, or its earlier avatar the Jan Sangh, which too was the political wing of the RSS.

The BJP hasn't tried to address Indian Muslims' historical aversion of it. It hasn't disavowed the RSS ideology, nor has the party or Modi expressed regret about the Gujarat riots.

We can explain the presence of Muslims at BJP rallies through the realities of Indian politics. For one, a thousand or two Muslims rooting for the BJP doesn't

mean a sweeping shift in the community's position. Two, they could have been there for political patronage: benefit me, take my vote, and I will come to

The BJP is wooing liberal Hindu voters by a show of the markers of Muslim identity at its rallies

your rally. Three, major political parties always bus people to their rallies. In Jaipur, there was the additional lure apart from a free ride to the city: free skullcaps and burqas.

The BJP's use of skullcaps and burqas is aimed at the secular, liberal or leftist Hindus; at religious Hindus, who are appalled by the party's exploitation of religion for political ends; Hindu women, who find its gender views restricting and stifling; and the many lower castes,

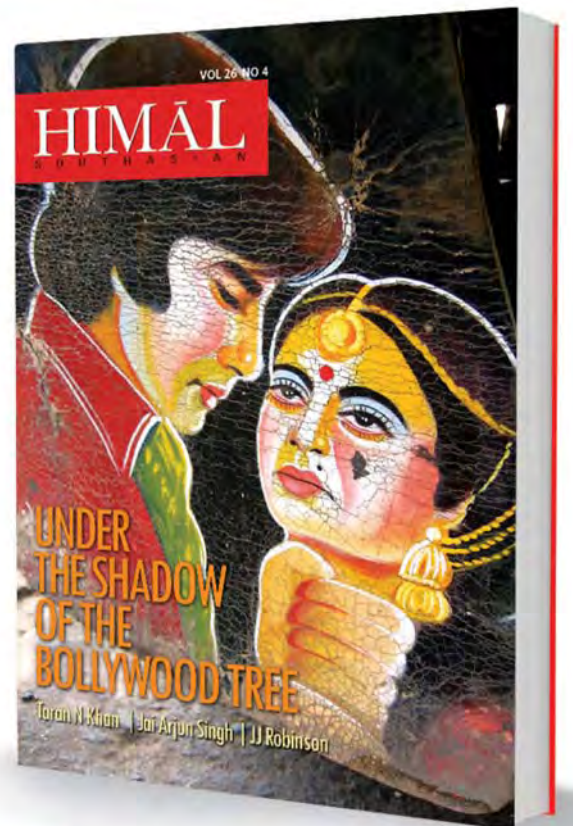
who have deep suspicions and reservations about the BJP's and RSS's Brahminical worldview. They recoil from the BJP because of its exclusivist political policies and the show of skullcaps is meant for them.

Indeed, through these sartorial symbols the BJP is telling them: "Look, the Muslims are joining us in spite of Modi, why do you still have reservations about him?" Alas, to borrow from Shakespeare, the BJP doth protest too much. 🇮🇳

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WATER COLOURS

Jean Philippe works with images and Serge Verliat with words. The photographer has pooled his talent with an anthropologist and geographer for a unique exhibition to look at the importance of water in the Himalaya, that is on at the

Alliance Francaise till 8 October. Verliat, 59, has visited Nepal and India often for his anthropological research and was fascinated by the way farmers cultivated crops and eked out a living on impossibly steep slopes. He was struck by how they used

and conserved water and by its role in their daily lives and in festivals and religious rituals.

"It is a great lesson in courage and zest for life and I have always wanted to share this experience, to pay tribute to the splendour of these mountains," says Verliat.

Verliat met 72-year-old

The sacred and the profane

Cleaning up the rivers that once cleansed our souls

How can rivers that are so sacred be so dirty, is a question that struck American environmental journalist Cheryl Colopy when she travelled across India and Nepal. She couldn't find the answer and so applied for a Fulbright fellowship to research the subcontinent's waters, rivers, and lakes.

In *Dirty, Sacred Rivers* Colopy travels across the subcontinent's water towers in the mountains of Nepal and India accompanying glaciologists and hydrologists studying the impact of climate change. She examines the appalling opportunity cost of Nepal's inability to harness its hydropower and talks to experts about receding water tables, salination, and the worsening cycles of floods and droughts. But the bulk of the book is devoted to South Asia's inability to meet the growing water demand of its increasing and increasingly affluent population.

Colopy avoids the trap of trying to find cultural reasons why Hindus in particular seem to not care about cleanliness of their sacred rivers and mountain tops. There would probably be clues in the fatalism and determinism prevalent in our cultures, but as Colopy correctly points out, the reasons boil down to mismanagement, lack of accountability, poor governance, faulty and inappropriate engineering paradigms, and ill-

advised development. The result is the destruction of rivers in the name of progress and the stench of sewage on the banks of the Yamuna in New Delhi or the Bagmati in Kathmandu which provides overpowering olfactory proof of societal decay.

Dirty, Sacred Rivers takes us from the shrinking Gangotri and Ngozumba glaciers in India and Nepal, the ineffective embankments on the Kosi in Bihar that has made the problem of monsoon flooding worse, down to the mangrove swamps of the Sundarbans. The book doesn't read like an academic treatise, instead with her descriptions of the landscapes and the colourful characters she meets along the way, it feels more like a travelogue told in the first person. It would be of interest to even those who are not very interested in rivers.

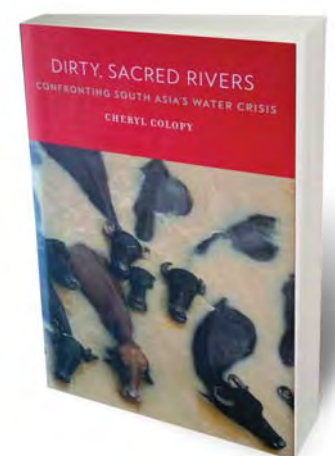
Water is so important for life, for human society, and for civilisation that we ignore it at our own peril. Colopy doesn't understand why India's capital, which has built an underground metro of international standards, cannot clean up the Yamuna. India's Supreme Court directed the Delhi municipality to restore the Yamuna's waters to 'bathing quality', but raw sewage continues to pour into the sacred river. Why? Water expert Ramaswamy Iyer sums it up: "It's just not a priority." Why not, one wants to ask. A man covering his nose by the banks of the Yamuna tells Colopy: "It is

not the river that is dirty, it is our minds and hearts." But how Delhi deals with sewage management in the coming years will have serious lessons for Kathmandu.

Colopy's book isn't just a tale of woe about South Asia's water crisis. She tracks down pioneers who are trying to come up with solutions. In India she meets Bindeshwar Pathak of Sulabh Toilets, Sheel Raj Sethi, designer of the 'eco-san' latrine. Waste mismanagement in South Asian cities is largely a result of the status symbol of a flush toilet that uses chlorinated drinking water to wash waste into non-existent sewage treatment systems. In Nepal, she meets Roshan Raj Shrestha an urban planner who practices what he preaches in his eco-home with rain harvesting, toilet waste, and compost used to fertilise his garden.

She travels to Melamchi and talks to experts about how the much-delayed white elephant may not actually solve Kathmandu's water shortage. She questions why the original Norwegian plan to generate electricity from the tunnel at Sundarijal and make Melamchi a multi-purpose project was abandoned.


She devotes an entire chapter to the *dhunge dhara* Malla-era water spouts and their network of channels that are still a vital part of Kathmandu's water supply system. She speaks to water experts



Dirty, Sacred Rivers
Confronting South Asia's Water Crisis
by Cheryl Colopy
Oxford University Press, 2012
400 pages
www.oup.com

like Ratna Sansar Shrestha and Dipak Gyawali and is clearly convinced by their arguments.

Colopy's book should be essential reading for all urban planners, water specialists, and the private sector to examine the interface between traditional water management practices, current mismanagement, and how climate change is set to make the whole problem much more acute.

South Asia's water crisis is already having political implications and this will only intensify in future.  Kunda Dixit



ALL PICS: JEAN PHILIPPE

photographer Jean Philippe and the two decided to work together on a photographic documentation of the waters of the Himalaya and celebrate its fragility and beauty.

Philippe's exquisite images, perfectly framed and composed on a 6x6 Hasselblad, borders on the sublime. Since water is central to the subcontinent's culture and religion, Verliat and Philippe look at the important role of holy rivers and lakes in Hindu rituals and festivals.

"Rivers and lakes for Hindus

are evidence of the generosity of the gods, the most striking manifestation of their compassion," explains Verliat, "the purity of the water is the incarnation of divine perfection. It allows you to regain the original purity that is sullied by daily life."

The exhibition features 32 images of water-related themes from Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Ladakh, and the Indo-Gangetic plains of India and Nepal and the duo have also

made a film about Himalayan rivers.

Not everything is pretty: there are images that show how Nepal and India have mismanaged their holy rivers with garbage, sewage, and filth. There are pictures of Mansarovar lake, which has mythical importance in Hinduism, the funeral ghats along rivers in India, and women taking dips during the Chhat festival in Nepal. Rivers are therefore an essential part of birth, death, and rebirth. 🇳🇵



'Water, Himalayan Treasure'

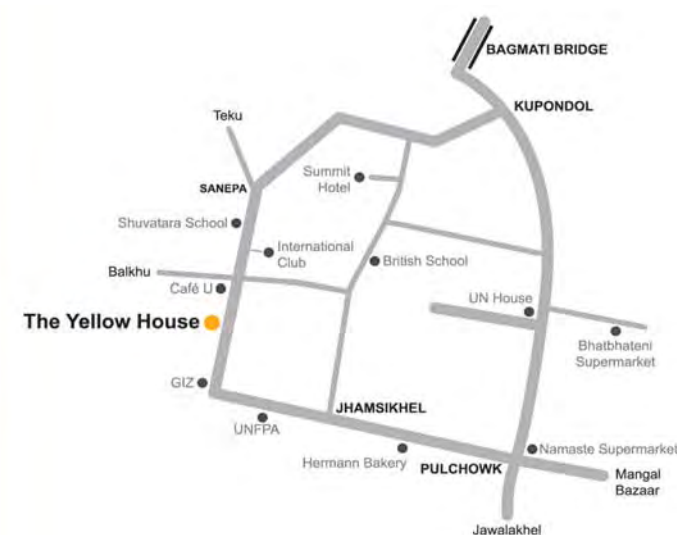
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Won't say 0.7%

UCPN(M) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal
quoted in *Kantipur*, 26 September

Campaign trail

DASH DONATION DRIVE

Jana Aastha, 25 September

RUKUM -- While other parties are trying to raise campaign funds by mobilising cadre, the CPN-M is going around sending letters to individuals and institutions to stop elections from happening. Baidya's cadre have gone office-to-office on a list of 500 individuals, asking civil servants to fork out a minimum of Rs 20,000. "The CDO of Rukum knows what is going on, but he hasn't reacted," one staff told *Jana Aastha*.

OBSERVER WORK PERMITS

26 September, *Annapurna Post*

The Labour Department has written to the Foreign Ministry and the Home Ministry to require international election observers to get work permits, but the Election Commission is against the proposal. The EC has argued that it would be against international norms since observers are volunteers. The Labour Department cited the case of the Carter Centre which came in 2008 and has maintained an office here ever since, but it said academics and diplomats would not need permits. The EU is sending 100 observers, Carter Centre will have 85, and the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) will have 54 observers. The EC has also invited election commissioners from all

South Asian countries and officials from Australia, Japan, and South Korea. Former Election Commissioner Surya Prasad Shrestha termed the work permit idea "daft".

PROGRESSIVE NATIONALISM

Baburam Bhattarai's *Facebook* page, 19 September

We went to Sindhuli early yesterday and came back late today, so I could only read today's newspapers after arriving in Kathmandu. Two stories disturbed me. One: armed Indian police raids a house in Bardiya. Two: German ambassador instructs local people on whom to vote and whom not to vote for in the upcoming elections. Yesterday, I talked with local people in Sindhuli about how we drove back the English

forces in the 18th century. Today, I am a mute spectator when such blatant transgressions are being made on Nepal's sovereignty. Nepali rulers took up a policy of surrender after the Treaty of Sugauli in 1816, which is why we are weak and poor and have to suffer such humiliations today. I admit to also being carried away at times. My PhD thesis, the early protests, and the 40-point demand were all manifestations of this. But in light of all the worldwide and regional economic, political, and social changes and the recent

revolutionary transformation within our own country, I now understand we cannot win this external struggle for nationalism without unity at home, without providing our citizens with rights or without making our country prosperous. We must free ourselves from the yoke of the Sugauli Treaty with a new strategy befitting the 21st century. That is what I mean by progressive nationalism. Come, let us make this country strong, prosperous, and united so we may together protect its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

ONE MAOIST PARTY ENOUGH

Kantipur, 26 September

KATHMANDU -- Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal has said the country doesn't need two Maoist parties and called for Mohan Baidya's CPN-M to rejoin the main party. "The need of the hour is reunification of our two parties and I ask Baidyaji to join us and fight the election together," he told a ceremony to mark the defection of three Madhesi CPN-M leaders into the UCPN (M).

EXTORTIONIST TO BE PROBED

Kathmandu Today website, 26 September

Mohan Baidya of the CPN-M has started an investigation to figure out which three cadre from his party took a letter to Lajimpat addressed to UCPN (M) Chairman Dahal. The letter demands support for the party's campaign to sabotage elections. It says: 'We hope that your organisation will extend monetary, physical and moral support for our struggle to boycott the elections.'



Breaking up is hard to do

Raju Chettri in *ratosurya.com*, 25 September

My decision to quit the UCPN (M) after two decades was not impulsive, it was to come to terms with my past. I made up my mind late at night and my gaze turned to the book in my bedroom: *Barrack Break*. It reminded me of one of the darkest days in my life when the Nepal Army broke my hands and rendered me disabled because I refused to reveal the whereabouts of my comrade. I have no regrets about the path I chose. My parents tried to stop me, but I told them that if I die I will die to create a better world. I joined the war, but I now feel I joined it at the wrong time.

I had no expectations of personal gain from the war



or the party. I never asked for any posts or appointments. However, I am deeply disappointed by Baburam Bhattarai and his cronies. Because I supported the Bhattarai faction during the intra-party feud, the establishment treated me badly. Friends supported him unrelentingly throughout the party struggle and he became prime minister as a result. But everything changed after the man entered Baluwatar. He forgot his roots.

Bhattarai is hypocritical and conceited. He talked big about creating an ideal state, but in reality he simply lined up his pockets and set up an empire with his wife. Prachanda is better in this regards because he at least uses the money (notwithstanding how it was collected) for the party's cause. But again I am not sure if this is only a façade.

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More bowtick carbuy

The best indication that erections are around the corner is that the Very Impotent Person rooms at airports around the country are chock-a-block full of politicians flying from hither to tither and back. Every politician worth his/her/its salt feels it is his/her/its god-given right to be able to use the VIP lounge which is actually just a dingy windowless room smelling strongly of Very Important Piss. But what the heck, it's the thought that counts. These days, rival politicians find themselves sharing the same room waiting for their flights, and the back-slapping, leg-pulling, and guffaws emanating from the VIP lounge makes one wonder why we have a political crisis in this country.

Now that everyone and their grandmother is allowed into the VIP room, it is no longer enough of a status symbol for the High-and-Mighty Political Mechanics. What sets them apart is the right to be able to drive right up to the plane in their own SUVs and be allowed to take at least a couple of hundred kard karrying karyakartas to the tarmac to garland arriving knetas. Airport security rules don't allow it, but wtf, this is a country where all rules are made by the Four Party Syndicate, so they can break



it. As parties get into campaign mode in earnest, even second-tier leaders have started going right up to the plane to receive and send off their leaders. The top-most leaders are in the horns of a dilemma: how to set themselves apart from the hoi polloi? We hear that Brother Number One is getting his business tycoon crony to buy a personal helicopter just so he can one-up the rest. But one place PKD will not be chopping off to anytime soon is Rolpa, where those who voted for him last time have said they'll garland him with shoes if ever comes near their Base Area again. The Dashos have said they will be boycotting elections, but apparently they will be fielding some candidates

through proxy parties to try to defeat key Cashies. Rumour has it that the 25-year-old Baglung Maoist cadre, Padam Kunwar, who punched Awesome during a party rally last year, is going to be standing against him.

Ever since The Slap That Shook Nepal, PKD is not taking any chances with security. Under his instructions, no one is allowed near the Great Helmsman during his campaign rounds these days. A video on YouTube shows an induction ceremony for defectors from the Dashos last month during which Awesome's security detail can be observed holding on tight to every new cadre as they approach the chairman

to receive a vermilion tika. Another YouTube video exposes Awesome's real intentions behind taking part in elections could be even more damaging than the Shaktikhor Tape.

Meanwhile, Brother #2 has decided not to contest elections from Gorkha #1 because in 2008 he got 48,000 votes from a constituency where there are only 42,000 registered voters this time. So he is moving to Gorkha #2. The Doc also got flamed by hate mail for a Facebook posting in which he suddenly turned into a rabid knationalist to lament the raid by Indian police in Nepali territory. If BRB has suddenly become an India-basher, it can mean one of two things: the sun is rising in the west, or elections are drawing near. The clincher, however, must be Butt-rye engaging in a slanging match on Twitter, in which he lashed out by calling a top editor 'a mere salaried journalist' thus revealing his true class bias.

BRB still has a sizeable following but a comrade is known by the company he keeps and Brother #2 is beginning to notice that the dirt is beginning to rub off on

him. BRB's biggest liability, despite her remarkable earthworm-gathering capability, is the First Lady herself. Then, there are people like Baby Krishna Dhungel, a convicted murderer, whom Lal Dhwoj insists on protecting. Disgraced Ambassador Maya Devi is about to be declared persona-non-grata not just by Qatar but by her own country and BRB continues to mollycoddle the puerile plenipotentiary.

The War of the Hyphen and Bracket Baddies shows every sign of intensifying. The Cash are using the huge stash of hard currency war chest at their disposal to their advantage and putting the droopy rupee to good use by buying off key Dash central commissars. Not as well endowed, the Dashies are circling their wagons and are on an extortion spree, shaking down anything that moves: DDC secretaries, LDOs, school teachers, government ministries, and businesses. On Wednesday, they even left a letter at the Paris Hill HQ addressed to PKD asking him to support in cash or kind their effort to sabotage elections, failing which they threatened unspecified 'bowtick carbuy'.



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